

Dominant Types
in British and American Literature



D O M I N A N T T Y P E S
I N B R I T I S H & A M E R I C A N
L I T E R A T U R E

Volume I. *Poetry and Drama*

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P R E F A C E

Although practice differs widely in various sections of the United States, most colleges offer an introductory course in literature, often at the sophomore level. Such a course is usually a survey of English literature or a study of English and American literature by types. The former stresses historical development, background detail, and authors' lives, bringing the student from *Beowulf* to Thomas Hardy or thereabouts in measured stages; it usually serves to prepare the student for major work in English literature in the upper division, and ordinarily limits itself to poetry, a bit of drama, and the essay, with emphasis on poetry.

The latter course, "types," gives samples of the various broad divisions of literature—poetry, drama, essay, biography, and fiction—and often includes history, treatise, letter, and other subtypes. It usually serves to afford the general student experience in studying form and content, learning analysis and evaluation, achieving reading comprehension and enjoyment. The present text is designed for use in just such a course, although, because selections are arranged chronologically in each division, and because the introductory essays and the headnotes give a cumulative effect of developments and movements, it is readily adaptable to some survey or hybrid courses as well.

It is the feeling of the editors that an introductory course for the general student should be based on a different principle from that of a course for future majors; the course for the general student is a place to woo the uninitiated into the company of believers, a meeting-ground for a sort of secular evangelism. The ideal study materials, then, must be sound enough, but also, relatively speaking, appealing in their own right. Some "classic" material must be left out or de-emphasized because presumably the student may not be ready for

it; and there can be little good in forced feeding if only regurgitation is to result.

Thus poetry has been divided into only two broad types (see also I, 5) to minimize confusion and because editors and instructors alike do not always agree on which types and subtypes are most important. (Instructors will find, however, that the ballad, epic, sonnet, ode, epitaph, et cetera, can easily be located in the Table of Contents and rearranged for intensive study. A suggested listing is provided on I, pp. 633-639.) In classic poetry, the editors feel that there is adequate representation of major and minor figures; in modern poetry, with so many names of merit to select from, choices are more or less arbitrary (Aiken, Williams, MacLeish, Feating, Patchen, Schwartz, and others could be represented here every bit as well as those who are). But space and permission costs call for some limit, and no anthology is, of course, wholly satisfactory. The editors realize that if a student could buy, or a library could furnish, sufficient copies of every important poet, an ideal situation would obtain.

The nine plays presented range from an early English comedy of the fourteenth century (*The Second Shepherd's Play*) to a recent American drama notable for its expressionism and satire (*The Adding Machine*). No nine plays can fully represent the growth and development of drama in England and America, but these have been selected to suggest those dramatic techniques and types of conflict which have positive reading appeal. Each of the nine represents a stage in the evolution of drama, and each is teachable, understandable, and readable.

In selecting essays the editors were governed by the following aims: to represent the work of both British and American writers; to illustrate the essay as a genre appearing in the

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several periods of British and American literature; and to give examples of formal and informal essays, as well as of various subtypes found within those broad divisions, such as the critical essay, the satirical essay, and the humorous essay. In making their selections the editors had due regard, too, for essays which are both readable and teachable. They tried, moreover, to give a representation of the essay large enough to serve the varying purposes of teachers and to appeal to the diverse tastes of students.

Perhaps because of its historical and reflective content, biography has not until recent years been popular among readers of college age. However, either because today's students are more mature or because biographical selections have been more judiciously made, the type has increased in popularity. The editors have attempted to choose, from the mass of English and American biography and autobiography available, nineteen selections which entertainingly reveal human nature and profoundly affect our thinking about people.

The fiction included is not intended to represent the "best" stories which have been written in England and America during the last century. Any attempt at such selection seems to the editors both silly and presumptuous. But the sixteen short stories and three long ones reprinted are as representative as possible of the widely varying forms and moods of the type. Each story is interesting, understandable, and, according to its kind, admirable or distinctive, or both. Their excellence should demonstrate the vitality of the genre and reveal sound reasons for its widespread popularity.

Selections are restricted to British and American authors because of tradition in that regard, because translations nearly always offer problems, and because, simply, there is ample material in British and American literature. Any beginning student has a long way to go in his own tongue before he need adventure abroad; and there is no reason why important foreign influences cannot be brought into class discussion by the instructor. Types and subtypes such as history, the letter, the treatise, and so on are omitted because they are relatively unimportant initially. There is no novel in this anthology, but the long stories by Henry James, Joseph Conrad, and Willa

Cather approach the novelette in length. Furthermore, in every anthology the instructor must be allowed to choose in two ways: from the material included and from the material excluded. The novel more than any other type belongs in the latter category, if only for the reason that there is ample freedom of choice in every other field properly representable.

Readers will note that the proportion of British to American authors (not necessarily in every section) is roughly fifty-fifty, and of old to new, about the same; that is, this collection presents relatively more American and more modern selections than any other comparable text. The introductory missionary work of proving that literature, good literature, can be understood and enjoyed should carry on after the course is completed; the non-major, after graduation, is likely to go on reading modern material (if he reads at all), and should therefore have some grounding in it. And surely no one need apologize for including a great deal of American material, especially modern—not merely from a patriotic point of view, but on sheer merit alone.

Generally speaking, the editors have attempted to reprint whole samples or completely independent parts of long works. Selections are intended to be "typical" of their authors and of their genres at the same time. Traditionalists may object to cutting Milton and Spenser to a few hundred lines each; the editors feel, frankly, that the purpose of the "types" and kindred courses is to place first emphasis on form and comprehension without slavish regard for the issue of major over minor writers. Special courses can do justice to the giants, whose work is difficult to anthologize at best. In some instances, especially modern choices, selections have been regulated by publishers' refusals to release material for reprint; some authors refuse reprint permission on any grounds.

Finally, there should be a word on notation principles and headnotes. Footnotes have been kept to a minimum, although the editors have not been unmindful of the fact that a reasonable amount of notation is welcomed by the teacher. Too much encyclopedic information tends, however, to obscure the personality of the selection itself and turn a course into a study *about* literature rather than *of* literature.

PREFACE

Terms so obscure as not to be found in the *American College Dictionary* have been explained; other terms ordinarily have been left to the student, part of whose regular chores should include looking up words. The headnotes, though brief, provide a running account of the development of each type and sufficient biographical or psychological details to explain the inclusion of each entry.

In addition to acknowledging permission for the use of copyrighted material (see text footnotes), the editors wish to thank the following publishers for their courtesy in making available certain texts or versions of material in print under their respective banners: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Ginn and Company; Harper & Brothers, Houghton Mifflin Company; Little, Brown & Company, Longmans, Green & Company, The Macmillan Company, W. W. Norton and Company; Random House;

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W.H.D.
L.C.W.
H.S.

V O L U M E I

PART I

NARRATIVE AND LYRIC POETRY

AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE FOR THE STUDENT OF POETRY

It is strange indeed that poetry should need any apology or explanation in a land as great as ours; it has been accepted and sought after in many other lands for centuries. It may be that as a nation we are just now leaving the pioneer stage, just beginning to develop a true culture and real interest in the arts.

Whatever the reason, poetry is not widely read; poetry magazines have small circulation, and in the schools, particularly, poetry encounters stubborn resistance almost everywhere. To be sure, in the past the poet was not always universally appreciated. From Plato to A. E. Housman, men have felt the need from time to time to redefine and defend the poet's position. But the poet has always survived, and the greatest works have stood the test of time. Writing styles have come and gone, some leaving their imprint on the present. Literary convention and revolt have swung in cycles with some fixed principles surviving and with some fringe changes as in morals, fashions, and means of making war—for always man has looked to his most inspired voices for emotional stimulation, teaching, or simple delight during the lulls in the storms of his development. In virtually all civilizations poetry has come first, before literary prose. Its roots are in the oldest and most obvious phenomena of existence—in the crash of surf, the rhythms of running streams, the hammer of the human pulse beat—and from simple cadences of religion and war the steady technical development has slowly come, like anything in evolution, with painful episodes, blank walls here, death there, mutation everywhere, but with

something elemental and universal preserved to the present day.

Poetry, then, is established; it has a long and honorable tradition in many languages, styles, and schools of thought. In America we are just beginning to take our rightful place in that tradition in terms of producing first-rate poets and first-rate audiences.

WHAT POETRY IS, AND DOES

"All right," you reply in student language, "but what is poetry, this term you bandy about so glibly, and what is its purpose? Seems as if everybody has a different slant on it." Well, in a way everybody almost must have a "different slant" on it. The poetic experience is something that exists in a shared way between writer and reader. Even if communication were perfect from a semantic point of view—which it rarely seems to be—the quality of the poetic experience would vary according to such factors as the relative age, training, and intelligence of both people concerned. But if the poet has something to say and if the reader or listener has something to work with in intelligence or interest, enough ought to come through to provide emotional release, teaching, or thought—or some combination. The experience, as Robinson has said, is indefinable but unmistakable.

To be sure, people have tried and still try to pin down the word "poetry." One man may concentrate on the music of verse; another on its moral force (not too long ago poetry was universally "taught" in secondary schools as a vehicle for moral principles); a third on sheer

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emotional impact, and so on. Or some critic will "bring out" poetry by contrasting it with prose: impression of fact *vs.* fact, intensity *vs.* low pitch, quality of experience *vs.* quantity, spiritual appeal *vs.* informative. To the ignorant, poetry is the product of the garret or the boudoir, or at best "high-falutin." Perhaps the truth is that poetry is indefinable in spite of Webster's stress on appropriate language, high thought, imagination, emotion, and rhythm. Certainly, while both Wordsworth and Sandburg are poets, the former's definition of poetry as the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" is a different way of saying it from the latter's "synthesis of hyacinths and biscuits." And there are those who believe that poetry is a matter of inspiration as against those who feel that the major ingredient is perspiration. Even a casual reader can make out that one author's excitement leads to elevation and another's to sheer sensuality. And anyone who bothers to compare the set jingle of sentimental platitudes to be found in daily syndicated columns of "poetry" with the real simplicity, breathless simplicity, of Emily Dickinson's work may realize with a start that a poem is not merely a matter of stanza, type arrangement, or "what looks like a poem"—the poetic can be found in prose or in the motion involved in a well-executed end run, for that matter.

The definition of poetry varies with the age, with custom, with moral codes, with poets themselves. We have cults of aesthetes and cults of truth-seekers, for example. But the over-all traditional impression shows enough agreement on basic matters among writers and critics so that a qualified reader, with practice, can begin to work out his own definition, if he must define every worth-while experience. For one, hearing poetry read, like hearing a rich passage from Brahms, produces buzzing along the spine, kinesthetic sensations, wetness in the eyes, and eventually a sense of inward release. For some moderns the prime appeal is intellectual, and the poetic experience becomes a blending of mental recognitions of symbols (with or without the help of rhyme). For some, a poem's first value lies in its lofty presentation of a moral, religious, or philosophical theme. Note, then, that while we define by what it does, rather than saying what it is,

poetry is not trivial; it lives on a respectable level, it enriches one's life in some way or ways.

Forget about technicalities for the moment. Poetry somehow should entertain you in the best sense of that word. The more you grow, the more poetry will offer you. (Fortunately there is enough available so that you need never be bored, once you become a convert.) Thus, whether you think of poetry as frozen experience, sculpture on paper, a lofty expression of the best things in life, pure magic, or none of these, it really matters little. Poetry is rich enough to share something with almost any honest seeker. In Milton's day the reader might have sought an impassioned interpretation of the Scriptures; in Shakespeare's day he might have turned for escape to the Forest of Arden; in 1918 he might have felt that a picture of a steel mill best fitted his mood of the moment. No definition, then, can suffice here.

Poetry remains unmistakable and definable only in terms of reactions, a relative process. Relatively speaking, the trained student who catches an allusion by T. S. Eliot, the worldly-wise student who recognizes the emotional quality of a Millay sonnet, and the uninitiated freshman tackle who, parked on a sea cliff with his lady, becomes articulate enough to exclaim, "Gee, ain't that moonlight swell?"—all three belong somewhere in Poetry's train. There is no room for snobbery. The athlete may be ignorant and ungrammatical and slightly profane, but he is in the mood of poetry—he needs no definition for what he feels. With work, interest, guidance, he—and you—can find poetry actually, historically, sociologically a thrilling record of intense moments in the lives of human beings, dead and alive. For there is poetry in almost all of us, except for a few people who will live inevitably in a vegetable state. To repeat, then, it is strange that with poetry in and around us any defense should be necessary.

With the best intentions you will soon find that poetry can be hard work. If you are lucky, your first selections should not be too profound or dull, however "correct." And you must practice, just as you must sweat away on your tennis backhand or remember to keep your head down in golf—and perhaps without immediate signs of improvement. If you do not want to work to

achieve eventual dividends, if you have no faith in your helpers, you may as well quit—and consider whether or not you are qualified to pursue higher education for legitimate reasons. Begin if you can with light verse or with the ballads, those charming tales of homicide and mayhem, and work up through longer narrative verse to the simplest lyrics. Sooner or later you will reach a limit. So do all of us. And whether you stop at simple lyrics or fight through to the metaphysicals or the modern obscurantists is again only a relative matter. Your life will be a bit richer for the effort.

• COMPLICATIONS AND TABOOS

Somewhere in the early process you will recognize that poetry comes in many forms. Complications again! And what with human fads and fancies, forms change from time to time. More complications! Even "authorities" disagree on the labels for the basic types of poetry, let alone the subtypes. (This text is arranged around the two broad types, narrative and lyric, to simplify matters for the student. The subtypes—sonnet, ode, etc.—can be pointed out by the instructor.) At any rate, you will soon learn to distinguish one poem from another, to compare and contrast; this is the beginning of critical reading and of real enjoyment. And whether you learn to think of poetry as divisible into types according to purpose, mood, or meter-and-rhyme schemes, according to subject matter, or according to subtypes is largely a matter of splitting hairs—you can come back to such questions later on. (Actually, editors show a wide variance in approach to this question: one modern text divides poetry into narrative-lyric-didactic; another, narrative-lyric-reflective; a third, narrative-lyric-epic-ballad; a fourth into seven types, mixing technical forms and moods indiscriminately; and a fifth into no fewer than seventeen types!) You will have to learn other things some day: rhyme schemes, French forms, scansion, meters, technical terms; you will have to get historical perspective more clearly than you can from the chronological arrangement of poets in this volume or from the headnotes which are necessarily limited in scope.

But these matters need not be crammed together all at once, or discouragement and defeat might well result. Basic courses in poetry

must first face the problem of wooing students to a point at which they can forget prejudices and honestly confess to an understanding and enjoyment of the assigned reading; any other approach may lead to memorizing of facts and dates, to learning "about" poets, even to assuming an air of culture for social effect—but for those trapped in the morass of mere facts the whole legacy of poetry in English will be only a hollow thing, never made real, never truly shared. "Types" courses with a variety of poetic subforms easily arrangeable according to relative difficulty offer materials for the wooing process, a process made necessary by the all-too-common experience among instructors of finding a large segment of their English classes, excluding gifted students and poseurs, made up of students who come to lectures with a "show-me" attitude. What basis is there for such an attitude?

All too often the novice in poetry (you may be he, or know someone like him) has a head stuffed with false concepts resembling tribal taboos—that is, if he has bothered to investigate the subject at all. He may be a good potential reader, even a writer, but he can hardly avoid reflecting his early background. Suppose the only poetry he knows is the over-sentimental, wooden doggerel ground out in the daily papers—he is hardly ready for Shakespeare. Suppose he has been forced to recite an ode to a daffodil or lines to keep a young man from a tavern—what can Keats mean to him? How can we expect a young undergraduate to understand Milton or Shelley or any Browning except "Pippa Passes" if he has been taught to look for a moral, and little else? Among the many false approaches he has met is very likely an embarrassed attempt to memorize Hamlet's fine soliloquy before he was ready to appreciate it, let alone ready to face a teen-age audience. It is a familiar psychological pattern to find a person unable to understand a work of art which he apparently should; it is easy for him to run away from the work, then become afraid because he is running; and because fear induces shame, the easiest way out via rationalizing is to convince himself loudly that the original work was not worth knowing in the first place.

Growing up in some social group, students meet modern taboos regarding poetry, and in

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several forms: poetry is "long-hair" stuff; poets are effeminate; poetry is meaningless; poets live brief, immoral lives; it is impossible to like poetry (except for the works of Guest and Service) and be a normal, red-blooded American, and so on. It requires a careful presentation of statistics to show that poets don't have to wear berets, that many of them were respectable graybeards, and, contrariwise, that some businessmen (the American ideal of the normal) die in disgrace. Here again work is necessary from both instructor and student—a good sporting "try" on the part of the latter particularly. And if in your private case the good try fails, there is no reason to feel depressed. Some of us are not destined to enjoy poetry any more than some of us will ever understand calculus.

TAKING INVENTORY

Let us assume at this point that you have temporarily, at least, suspended any prejudices you may have matriculated with, and that you are now facing a daily assignment in poetry. It may help your understanding to think a moment about certain barriers strewn on that meeting-ground; while bewilderment may ensue at first, ultimate clarification of the relationship between writer and reader will be worth a moment's thought. Certainly little is accomplished by an instructor's placing an epic before a student with the expressed or implied attitude that the poem is great and that any intelligent person should almost automatically appreciate the fact—after a bit of thought, of course.

First consider yourself in your capacity as reader, only one in a class made up of others like yourself in some respects and vastly different in others. Answer in your own heart for yourself and in silent comparison with your classmates the following questions, remembering that the poet and the instructor are facing an audience with various opinions, qualifications, and prejudices; it is at once an individual and a crowd problem.

(In facing this assignment, then:)

1. How intelligent am I, in terms of tests, I.Q., actions in the past, what people think of me?

2. How much thought have I given to the

subject of taste—in dress, music, art, for example?

3. How much time and thought do I put on my assignments?

4. What are my basic prejudices? How did I get them? Can I jettison any?

5. What is my relationship with God and religion? Will my religious training condition my response to, say, passionate love poetry? Am I ready to face shock?

6. How many of what Richards calls "doctrinal adhesions" will my instructor and today's author have to compete with? If a poet's ideas and my family doctrine clash, can I keep an open mind?

7. What is my age in relation to others? How experienced am I—in sport, travel, reading, earning a living, love, arts and crafts, tragedy, war? (The poet can't be blamed for being "dry" if you aren't ready to meet him.)

8. How well do I read *anything*? How fast? How do I rate on vocabulary tests? Do I bother to use exact adjectives in conversation, or is everything either "swell" or "lousy"?

9. How much technical training in poetry do I already have?

10. Have I already decided what I like and don't like in poetry? Am I like the musician who "loves" Tchaikowsky but can't "get" Bach?

11. Do I have an ear for music? Do people say I have imagination?

12. Am I emotionally mature? Can I separate literary and moral judgments? Can I distinguish between honest sentiment and sentimentality? (Remember that the Puritans, as Hillyer points out, fought emotion or possession by a mood—and produced very little poetry of first rank.)

13. Am I willing to work on poetry in return for future dividends?

Obviously all the foregoing questions cannot be answered in one sitting, and they should not be. Even a quick glance over the items that seem to fit you will give a reaction total good enough to go on for the moment.

COACHING AIDS

Now turn to the other side of the meeting-ground where stand the poet and the poem. Although it is possible to *enjoy* Shakespeare,

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say, without editorial help, it is not possible to *understand* him completely without some coaching; you have to be told that words like "wit" and "humour" meant something quite different to the Elizabethan from what you think they mean today. This need for coaching, discussion, breaking down of passages applies to all poetry in varying degrees; it should be apparent even to the student who objects that the classroom kills beauty. (This objection generally comes from poseurs and lazy people.) Occasionally a poem *is* mangled in class—so that dozens more may be correctly enjoyed. By and large, however, true beauty is much tougher than some young aesthetes pretend to think—it will rise again. And so now you begin to "study" the poet and his poem, using whatever equipment you possess in terms of the question list above. It becomes apparent almost at once that there is more to verse than symmetrical lines on a page, gushing about a heap o' living, or "dry" philosophy—or whatever was your private idea about the subject when you sat down. Some aspects immediately apparent include the following.

1. Poetry comes in various shapes and forms, types and subtypes. Although the matter is generally more important than the form, it is obvious that some day you will have to pick up information on ballads, epics, odes, sonnets, and so on.

2. Poetry has pronounced rhythms, generally resolvable into metrical patterns. It often has rhyme, and rhymes come in various patterns too. It often is musical and it relies heavily for effect on figurative language and allusion. Again, you may encounter "free verse," which upsets most of the foregoing. More to learn about!

3. Poetry has organization, purpose, style. Ideas and presentation vary from period to period. The Romantic of 1820 eschewed the neo-classic diction of Collins's day, for example. You will note eventually that both the romantic and the classic have something to offer, although you may develop a preference.

4. Poetry is a language phenomenon—a way of saying things. Whether to teach, preach, or simply thrill, to paint, inform, or spellbind, this is not the language of over-the-counter existence, although many of the words are the same.

A new blend of sound and sense is here, rich in connotation, imagery, impression, music—and offering new problems in semantics.

5. Poetry runs a wide gamut of subject matter and experience, familiar and unfamiliar. One age may sing of sea battle, another of a lady's eyes. Or in the same age one man may ponder the skylark while another weaves nightmarish dream-fantasies. Your modern poet may use conventional topics, new topics, or no topics at all, remaining content with patterns of sound and rhythm. In any period the gamut may be marked at one end by bright nonsense or folk song and at the other by metaphysics.

6. Poetry, like music and other arts, has an evocative factor which varies with the experience and personality of the audience. A passage may jog your memory suddenly and help you re-enjoy a lost moment. It may startle you into action or a new belief. Poetry may help you escape reality for a moment's peace. It may offer you new illusions to replace the old. But it will not sledge-hammer a skeptic into belief. The character in *Point Counter Point* who criticized Shelley for saying to the skylark, "Bird thou never wert" was incapable of, or scornful of, appreciating symbolism. For him most lyric poetry would always be alien territory. You must meet the poet halfway, then suspend disbelief for a time, "play along" sportingly. This is not to say that you should prostrate yourself as an ignoramus before genius; there is too much idolatry, devoid of thoughtful analysis, to be found in surprising surroundings—among self-styled "literary" clubs particularly. If after reading and thinking you honestly feel that your original poor impression of a poet, a poem, or poetry itself remains, maintain it stoutly; you will at least know by then why you feel the way you do—that knowledge itself is a step ahead.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

At this stage you should be aware that poetry has an honorable tradition, changing styles, various definitions, strange meanings in the public mind, barriers across communication lines—and that a poem itself is several things in one. Ahead of you is a parade of assignments, discussions, papers. In a short time you should find this introduction superficial. But

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what until then? In the first few days of confusion, how can the task be met? There is no easy road to the understanding of poetry; whole volumes (see the bibliography, I, 394) have been written on the subject. If, however, you have little idea of how to get started, the following check list may make reading have some significance:

1. Read the poem(s) through once quickly to get the general idea; reread several times carefully, slowly. Try reading key passages aloud.

2. Answer three questions clearly: what does the poem say; how is it said; was it worth saying or reading?

3. Does the poem have any physical effect on you? (Emily Dickinson said that if reading a book made her feel as if the top of her head were taken off, she was in the presence of poetry.)

4. How much idea content does the poem have? Is it "philosophical"? Does it preach? Is the thought commendable as thought but too heavy to allow the poem to move or soar?

5. What is the tone or mood of the poem as a whole?

6. Has the poem a claim to originality? How? Where? Does it present old notions in a fresh manner?

7. Study the vocabulary of the poem. How much "poetic" diction ('tis, lo!) is employed? How much language of ordinary men in extraordinary patterns? Point out what seem to you good or bad images. If you wrote the poem out in a prose statement, what would be gained, what lost—and what changes would occur?

8. Within the limits of your previous training, what technical features are recognizable for comment (rhyme, stanza form, figures of speech, etc.)?

9. What passages, if any, are obscure? Whose fault is it?

10. Check the poem for any evidence of sentimentalizing, use of stock phrases, "folksiness"—anything that will make it cheap or hackneyed material.

11. Check key allusions in a desk reference book. Does the poet seem to "show off" his knowledge, or are you not quite ready to meet him on even terms?

12. Does the poem appear labored or seemingly turned out with deftness and ease?

In your quest to add meaning to reading (and hence increase knowledge and pleasure), discuss specific assignments with good, average, and poor students alike—you can learn something from all of them. To sharpen your wits, argue points like these:

1. Must a poem have meaning?
2. Should a poem be criticized from the point of view of its day, our day, or both?

3. What effect, if any, has the machine age had on the poet's approach to life?

4. What effect did the Puritans have on early American poetry—and today's?

5. Why don't we have one or two "great" poets today? Is modern life too complex for poetry? Are readers to blame? (Remember Whitman's remark that great poets require great audiences.)

6. Is poetry succumbing before advances in the novel, short story, biography?

A FINAL WORD

Recall that your instructor has experience in reading, teaching, and absorbing student ideas; in other words, while pursuing the muse, you have some things to avoid, as well as cleave to or wrestle with. Some pointers:

1. When asked for a paraphrase of a poem, be sure you have it read through and thought about; don't make the common—and fatal—error of beginning your statement with what the poet says, then branching out into what *you* would have written on the assumption that you two are of one mind. Avoid composing, "reading-in."

2. When asked for an opinion, you will be better off to plead ignorance than to blurt out something you half-overheard or something you have memorized from notes without understanding them. Avoid parroting.

3. Watch out for insincerity, half-baked moralizing, making "impressions," sudden conversions, and the like. Although most of us are subject to flattery, the student who suddenly says, "Oh, professor, I never liked poetry, but you make Keats so alive!" *may* be simply naïve but is more likely to be angling for an A grade—and your instructor will be definitely not impressed. Avoid saying what you disbelieve.

4. Don't expect miracles, daily entertainment, or easy rewards. Some of the material which follows is dull but historically or soci-

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ologically significant. Some of it you will like a few years from now. It is to be hoped that you will like enough to wish to investigate further on your own. Some of the selections are "good" for you. Some will puzzle you. Some will prove again that growth is sometimes painful. Some you will learn to repeat. But the

wisdom and beauty of the ages will not come to you in a rush, as so many things do in youth. You are being asked to indulge in an act of faith based on experience, to believe that a life without poetry in it somewhere is a waste land indeed. But avoid expecting a short, swift trip to the promised land of plenty.

NARRATIVE POETRY

ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD

BEOWULF *

TRANSLATED BY J. DUNCAN
SPAETH

Beowulf, the oldest epic in English, is about Scandinavians, not Englishmen. Probably written in the eighth century, it has come down to us in a manuscript dating about A.D. 1000. A mixture of pagan and Christian details and colorings, a hybrid of a little fact and a great deal of fiction, the poem has interested scholars and lay readers for a long time. Comparisons with other old tales will immediately suggest themselves. The story has a familiar three-part construction. (Following our selection, which is Part One of the original given here in modern English, there is a fight between Beowulf and the mother of Grendel, and a final episode fifty years later in which Beowulf, as King of the Geats, subdues a fire-dragon but loses his life.) Beowulf is rich in local color, contrast between pagan and Christian values, and old-fashioned blood-and-thunder. Note the use of "kennings" ("whale-road" for ocean, etc.), alliteration, and the four-foot line with pause after the second foot.

THE MYTH OF THE SHEAF-CHILD

List to an old-time lay of the Spear-Danes,
Full of the prowess of famous kings,
Deeds of renown that were done by the heroes;
Scyld the Sheaf-Child¹ from scourging foemen,

* The modern version by J. Duncan Spaeth is here reprinted by permission of the Princeton University Press.

¹ mythical ancestor of Danish house.

From raiders a-many their mead-halls wrested.
He lived to be feared, though first as a waif,
Puny and frail he was found on the shore.
He grew to be great, and was girt with power
5 Till the border-tribes all obeyed his rule,
And sea-folk hardy that sit by the whale-path
Gave him tribute, a good king was he.
Many years after, an heir was born to him,
A goodly youth, whom God had sent
10 To stay and support his people in need.
(Long time leaderless living in woe,
The sorrow they suffered He saw full well.)
The Lord of Glory did lend him honor,
Beowulf's² fame afar was borne,
15 Son of old Scyld in the Scandian lands.
A youthful heir must be open-handed,
Furnish the friends of his father with plenty,
That thus in his age, in the hour of battle,
Willing comrades may crowd around him
20 Eager and true. In every tribe
Honorable deeds shall adorn an earl.
The aged Scyld, when his hour had come,
Famous and praised, departed to God.
His faithful comrades carried him down
25 To the brink of the sea, as himself had bidden,
The Scyldings' friend, before he fell silent,
Their lord beloved who long had ruled them.
Out in the bay a boat was waiting
Coated with ice, 'twas the king's own barge.
30 They lifted aboard their bracelet-bestower,
And down on the deck their dear lord laid,
Hard by the mast. Heaped-up treasure
Gathered from far they gave him along.
Never was ship more nobly laden

² another Beowulf, not our hero.

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With wondrous weapons and warlike gear.
Swords and corselets covered his breast,
Floating riches to ride afar with him
Out o'er the waves at the will of the sea.
No less they dowered their lord with treasure, 5
Things of price, than those who at first
Had launched him forth as a little child
Alone on the deep to drift o'er the billows.
They gave him to boot a gilded banner,
High o'er his head they hung it aloft.
Then set him adrift, let the surges bear him.
Sad were their hearts, their spirits mournful;
Man hath not heard, no mortal can say
Who found that barge's floating burden.

1. THE LINE OF THE DANISH KINGS AND THE BUILDING OF HEOROT

Now Beowulf was king in the burghs of the
Scyldings,
Famed among folk. (His father had left
The land of the living.) From his loins was
sprung
Healfdene the royal, who ruled to old age,
Gray and battlegrim, the bold-hearted Scyld-
ings.
Children four to this chief of the people
Woke unto life, one after another;
Heorogar and Hrothgar, and Halga the brave,
And winsome Sigeneow, a Scyfling she
wedded;
Saewela's queen they say she became.
To Hrothgar was given such glory in battle,
Such fame he won, that his faithful band
Of youthful warriors waxed amain.
So great had grown his guard of kinsmen,
That it came in his mind to call on his people
To build a mead-hall, mightier far
Than any e'er seen by the sons of men,
Wherein to bestow upon old and young,
Gifts and rewards, as God vouchsafed them, 40
Save folk-share lands and freemen's lives.
Far and wide the work was published;
Many a tribe, the mid-earth round,
Helped to fashion the folk-stead fair.
With speed they built it, and soon 'twas 45
finished,
Greatest of halls. Heorot³ he named it,
Whose word was law o'er lands afar;
Nor failed in his promise, but freely dealt
Gifts at the feast. The fair hall towered

Wide-gabled and high, awaiting its doom,
The sweep of fire; not far was the time
That ancient feuds should open afresh,
And sword-hate sunder sons from fathers.

In the darkness dwelt a demon-sprite
Whose heart was filled with fury and hate,
When he heard each night the noise of revel
Loud in the hall, laughter and song.
10 To the sound of the harp the singer chanted
Lays he had learned, of long ago;
How the Almighty had made the earth,
Wonder-bright lands, washed by the ocean;
How he set, triumphant, sun and moon
15 To lighten all men that live on the earth.
He brightened the land with leaves and
branches;
Life he created for every being,
Each in its kind, that moves upon earth.
20 So, happy in hall, the heroes lived,
Wanting naught, till one began
To work them woe, a wicked fiend.
The demon grim was Grendel called,
March-stalker huge, the moors he roamed.
25 The joyless creature had kept long time
The lonely fen, the lairs of monsters,
Cast out from men, an exile accurst.
On offspring of Cain, the killing of Abel
Was justly avenged by the Judge Eternal.
30 Nought gained by the feud the faithless mur-
derer;
He was banished unblest from abode of men.
And hence arose the host of miscreants,
Monsters and elves and eldritch sprites,
35 Warlocks and giants, that warred against God;
Jotuns and goblins; He gave them their due.

2. THE RAVAGING OF HEOROT HALL BY THE MONSTER GRENDEL

When night had fallen, the fiend crept near
To the lofty hall, to learn how the Danes
In Heorot fared, when the feasting was done.
The athelings⁴ all within he saw
Asleep after revel, not recking of danger,
And free from care. The fiend accurst,
Grim and greedy, his grip made ready;
Snatched in their sleep, with savage fury,
Thirty warriors; away he sprang
Proud of his prey, to repair to his home,
50 His blood-dripping booty to bring to his lair

³ hart, stag.

⁴ princes.

At early dawn, when day-break came,
 The vengeance of Grendel was revealed to all;
 Their wails after wassail were widely heard,
 Their morning-woe. The mighty ruler,
 The ætheling brave, sat bowed with grief.
 The fate of his followers filled him with sorrow,
 When they traced the tracks of the treacherous
 foe,
 Fiend accurst. Too fierce was that onset,
 Too loathsome and long, nor left them respite. 10
 The very next night, anew he began
 To maim and to murder, nor was minded to
 slacken
 His fury of hate, too hardened in crime.
 'Twas easy to find then earls who preferred 15
 A room elsewhere, for rest at night,
 A bed in the bower, when they brought this
 news
 Of the hall-foe's hate; and henceforth all
 Who escaped the demon, kept distance safe. 20
 So Grendel wrongfully ruled the hall,
 One against all till empty stood
 That lordly mansion, and long remained so.
 For the space of twelve winters the Scyldings' 25
 Friend⁶.
 Bore in his breast the brunt of this sorrow,
 Measureless woe. In mournful lays
 The tale became known; 'twas told abroad
 In gleemen's songs, how Grendel had warred 30
 Long against Hrothgar, and wreaked his hate
 With murderous fury through many a year,
 Refusing to end the feud perpetual,
 Or decently deal with the Danes in parley,
 Take their tribute for treaty of peace;
 Nor could their leaders look to receive 35
 Pay from his hands for the harm that he
 wrought.
 The fell destroyer kept feeding his rage
 On young and old. So all night long
 He prowled o'er the fen and surprised his
 victims,
 Death-shadow dark. (The dusky realms
 Where the hell-runes haunt are hidden from
 men.)
 So the exiled roamer his raids continued;
 Wrong upon wrong in his wrath he heaped.
 In midnights dark he dwelt alone
 'Mongst Heorot's trophies and treasures rich.
 Great was the grief of the gold-friend of Scyld- 40
 ings,

⁶ Hrothgar.

Vexed was his mood that he might not visit
 His goodly throne, his gift-seat proud,
 Deprived of joy by the judgment of God.
 Many the wise men that met to discover
 5 Ways of escape from the scourge of affliction.
 Often they came for counsel together;
 Often at heathen altars they made
 Sacrifice-offerings, beseeching their idols
 To send them deliverance from assault of the
 foe.
 Such was their practice, they prayed to the
 Devil;
 The hope of the heathen on hell was fixed,
 The mood of their mind. Their Maker they
 knew not,
 The righteous Judge and Ruler on high.
 The Wielder of Glory they worshipped not,
 The Warden of Heaven. Woe be to him
 Whose soul is doomed through spite and envy,
 In utter despair and agony hopeless
 Forever to burn. But blessed is he
 Who, after this life, the Lord shall seek,
 Eager for peace in the arms of the Father.

3. THE VOYAGE OF BEOWULF TO THE HALL
 OF HROTHGAR

Thus boiled with care the breast of Hrothgar;
 Ceaselessly sorrowed the son of Healfdene,
 None of his chieftans might change his lot.
 Too fell was the foe that afflicted the people
 With wrongs unnumbered, and nightly horrors.
 Then heard in his home king Hygelac's thane,⁶
 The dauntless Jute,⁷ of the doings of Grendel.
 In strength he outstripped the strongest of men
 35 That dwell in the earth in the days of this life.
 Gallant and bold, he gave command
 To get him a boat, a good wave-skimmer.
 O'er the swan-road, he said, he would seek the
 king
 40 Noble and famous, who needed men.
 Though dear to his kin, they discouraged him
 not;
 The prudent in counsel praised the adventure,
 Whetted his valor, awaiting good omens.

45 So Beowulf chose from the band of the Jutes
 Heroes brave, the best he could find;
 He with fourteen followers hardy,
 Went to embark; he was wise in seamanship,

⁶ Beowulf.

⁷ here translated from original *Geat*; some think
 the Geats were Swedes.

Showed them the landmarks, leading the way.
Soon they descried their craft in the water,
At the foot of the cliff. Then climbed aboard
The chosen troop; the tide was churning
Sea against sand; they stowed away
In the hold of the ship their shining armor,
War-gear and weapons; the warriors launched
Their well-braced boat on her welcome voyage.

Swift o'er the waves with a wind that favored, 10
Foam on her breast, like a bird she flew;
A day and a night they drove to seaward,
Cut the waves with the curving prow,
Till the seamen that sailed her sighted the land,
Shining cliffs and coast-wise hills,
Headlands bold. The harbor opened,
Their cruise was ended. Then quickly the
sailors,
The crew of Weder-folk, clambered ashore,
Moored their craft with clank of chainmail, 20
And goodly war-gear. God they thanked
That their way was smooth o'er the surging
waves.

High on the shore, the Scylding coast-guard 25
Saw from the cliff where he kept his watch,
Glittering shields o'er the gang-plank carried,
Polished weapons: it puzzled him sore,
He wondered in mind who the men might be.
Down to the strand on his steed came riding 30
Hrothgar's thane, with threatening arm
Shook his war-spear and shouted this chal-
lenge:

"Who are ye, men, all mailed and harnessed,
That brought yon ship o'er the broad seaways, 35
And hither have come across the water,
To land on our shores. Long have I stood
As coast-guard here, and kept my sea-watch,
Lest harrying foe with hostile fleet
Should dare to damage our Danish land.
Armed men never from overseas came
More openly hither. But how do ye know
That law of the land doth give ye leave
To come thus near. I never have seen
Statelier earl upon earth than him,—
Yon hero in harness. No house-carl he,
In lordly array, if looks speak true,
And noble bearing. But now I must learn
Your names and country, ere nearer ye come,
Underhand spies, for aught I know,
In Danish land. Now listen ye strangers,
In from the sea, to my open challenge:

Heed ye my words and haste me to know
What your errand and whence ye have come."

4. BEOWULF'S WORDS WITH THE COAST-
GUARD

5 Him the hero hailed with an answer,
The war-troop's leader, his word-hoard un-
locked:

"In truth we belong to the tribe of the Jutes;
10 We are Hygelac's own hearth-companions.
Far among folk my father was known,
A noble chieftain, his name was Ecgtheow.
Honored by all, he ended his days
Full of winters and famed in the land.

15 Wise men everywhere well remember him.
Hither we fare with friendly purpose
To seek thy lord, the son of Healfdene,
The land-protector. Instruct us kindly.
Bound on adventure we visit thy lord,
20 The prince of the Danes. Our purpose is open;
Nought keep we secret; thou surely wilt know
If the tale we were told is true or not:
That among the Scyldings a monster strange.
A nameless demon, when nights are dark,

25 With cruel cunning, for cause unknown,
Works havoc and slaughter. I have in mind
A way to help your wise king Hrothgar,
Your ruler to rid of the ravening foe,
If ever his tide of troubles shall turn,
30 The billows of care that boil in his breast
Shall cool and subside, and his sorrow be cured;
Else, failing my purpose, forever hereafter
He shall suffer distress, while stands on its hill,
Mounting on high, his matchless hall."

35 Straight answered the coast-guard, astride his
horse,

The warrior brave: "Twixt words and deeds
A keen-witted thane, if he thinks aright,
Must well distinguish and weigh the difference.

40 Your words I believe, that you wish no evil
To the Scylding lord. I will let you bring
Your shields ashore and show you the way.
My comrades here shall keep the watch,
From meddling foe defend your craft,

45 Your fresh-tarred boat, fast by the beach,
And faithfully guard her till again she bear
With curving bow, o'er the bounding main,
Her master well-loved to the Wedermark.

Fortune oft favors the fighter who yields not;
50 Hero unflinching comes unhurt from the fray."
Landward they hastened, leaving behind them
Fast at her moorings the full-bosomed boat,

The ship at anchor. Shone the boar-heads,
Gleaming with gold, o'er the guards of their
helmets;

Bright and fire-forged the beast kept watch.
Forward they pressed, proud and adventurous,
Fit for the fight, till afar they descried
The high-peaked radiant roof of the hall.
Of houses far-praised, 'neath heaven by the
people

That inhabit the earth, this house was most
famous,

The seat of King Hrothgar; its splendor
gleamed bright

O'er many a land. Their leader well-armed
Showed them the shining shield-bug of heroes, 15
And set them right on the road to their goal.
Then, wheeling his steed, he wished them fare-
well:

"Tis time that I leave you; the Lord of
Heaven,

The Father Almighty in mercy keep you
Safe on your journey; seaward I turn
Watch to keep and ward against foe."

5. BEOWULF'S ARRIVAL AT THE HALL AND
THE MANNER OF HIS RECEPTION

The street was stone-paved; straight it led
To the goal of their journey. Glistened their
byrnies⁸

Stout and strong-linked; sang the rings
Of their iron mail as they marched along,
In armor and helmet right up to the hall.
Sea-voyage-sated, they set their shields,
Their linden-woods broad, along the wall.

As they bent to the bench, their byrnies clat- 35
tered.

They stacked their spears that stood in a row,
Ashwood tipped with iron above;
Well-equipped was the warlike band.
A stately Dane the strangers addressed,
Asked who they were and whence they had
come:

"Whence do ye bear your burnished shields,
Your visored helmets and harness gray
Your heap of spear-shafts? A servant of Hroth- 45
gar's,

His herald, am I. Hardier strangers,
Nobler in mien, have I never seen.
'Tis clear you come to the court of Hrothgar,
Not outlaws and beggars, but bent on adven- 50
ture."

⁸ coats of mail.

To him gave answer the hero brave,
The lord of the Weders these words returned,
Bold 'neath his helmet: "We are Hygelac's
men,

5 His board-companions. I am Beowulf called.
Ready am I the ruler to answer,
To say to thy lord, the son of Healfdene,
Why we have come his court to seek,
If he will graciously grant us a hearing."

10 Wulfgar replied: (he was prince of the Wen-
dles,

His noble renown was known to many,
His courage in war, and wisdom in counsel)
"I will carry thy quest to the king of the Danes,
And ask him whether he wishes to grant
15 The boon thou dost ask of the breaker-of-rings,
To speak to himself concerning thy journey;
And straight will I bring thee the answer he
sends."

20 Swiftly he hied him where Hrothgar sat,
White-haired and old, his ears around him.
Stately he strode, till he stood in the presence
Of the king of the Danes,—in courtly ways
Was Wulfgar skilled; he spoke to his lord:

25 "Hither have fared from a far country,
A band of Jutes o'er the bounding sea.
Their leader and chief by his chosen comrades
Is Beowulf called; this boon they ask:
That they may find with thee, my lord,
30 Favor of speech; refuse them not,
But grant them, Hrothgar, gracious hearing
In armor clad, they claim respect
Of choicest ears; but chiefly their lord
Who lately hither hath led his comrades."

6. HROTHGAR'S WELCOME TO BEOWULF

Hrothgar spoke, the Scyldings' protector:
"Beowulf I knew in his boyhood days;
His aged father was Ecgtheow named.
40 To him, to take home, did Hrethel give
His only daughter. Their dauntless son
Now comes to my court in quest of a friend.
My sea-faring men whom I sent afar
To the land of the Jutes, with generous gifts,
In token of friendship, have told me this,
That the power of his grip was so great it
equalled

The strength of thirty stout-armed thanes.
Him bold in battle, the blessed God
Hath sent in his mercy, to save our people
50 —So I hope in my heart—from the horror of
Grendel.

NARRATIVE POETRY · BEOWULF

I shall offer him gold for his gallant spirit.
Go now in haste, and greet the strangers;
Bid to the hall the whole of the company;
Welcome with words the warrior band,
To the home of the Danes." To the hall door
went

Wulfgar the courtly, and called them in:
"My master commands me this message to give
you,
The lord of the Danes your lineage knows;
Bids me to welcome you, brave-hearted war-
riors,
Bound on adventure o'er the billowy main.
Ye may rise now and enter, arrayed in your
armor,

Covered with helmets, the king to greet.
But leave your shields, and your shafts of
slaughter,

Here by the wall to await the issue."
Then rose the leader, around him his com-
rades,

Sturdy war-band; some waited without,
Bid by the bold one their battle-gear to guard.
Together they hastened where the herald led
them,

Under Heorot's roof. The hero went first,
Strode under helmet, till he stood by the hearth.
Beowulf spoke, his byrnie glistened,
His corslet chain-linked by cunning of smith-
craft:

"Hail, king Hrothgar! Hygelac's thane
And kinsman am I. Known is the record
Of deeds of renown I have done in my youth.
Far in my home, I heard of this Grendel;
Sea-farers tell the tale of the hall:

How bare of warriors, this best of buildings
Deserted stands, when the sun goes down
And twilight deepens to dark in the sky.
By comrades encouraged, I come on this jour-
ney.

The best of them bade me, the bravest and
wisest,

To go to thy succor, O good king Hrothgar;
For well they approved my prowess in battle,
They saw me themselves come safe from the
conflict

When five of my foes I defeated and bound,
Beating in battle the brood of the monsters.
At night on the sea with nicors I wrestled,
Avenging the Weders, survived the sea-peril,
And crushed in my grip the grim sea-monsters

That harried my neighbors. Now I am come
To cope with Grendel in combat single,
And match my might against the monster,
alone.

5 I pray thee therefore, prince of the Scyldings,
Not to refuse the favor I ask,
Having come so far, O friend of the Shield-
Danes,

That I alone with my loyal comrades,
10 My hardy companions, may Heorot purge.

Moreover they say that the slaughterous fiend
In wanton mood all weapons despises.
Hence,—as I hope that Hygelac may,
My lord and king, be kind to me,—

15 Sword and buckler I scorn to bear,
Gold-adorned shield, as I go to the conflict.
With my grip will I grapple the gruesome
fiend,

Foe against foe, to fight for our life.
20 And he that shall fall his faith must put
In the judgment of God. If Grendel wins,
He is minded to make his meal in the hall
Untroubled by fear, on the folk of the Jutes,
As often before he fed on the Danes.

25 No need for thee then to think of my burial.
If I lose my life, the lonely prowler
My blood-stained body will bear to his den,
Swallow me greedily, and splash with my gore
His lair in the marsh; no longer wilt then

30 Have need to find me food and sustenance.
To Hygelac send, if I sink in the battle,
This best of corslets that covers my breast,
Heirloom of Hrethel, rarest of byrnies,
The work of Weland.⁹ So Wyrd¹⁰ will be

35 done."

7. THE FEASTING IN HEOROT AND THE CUSTOMS OF THE HALL

Hrothgar spoke, the Scyldings' defender:
40 "Thou has come, dear Beowulf, to bring us
help,

For the sake of friendship to fight our bat-
tles. . . .

(Hrothgar recounts the exploits of Beowulf's
father.)

Sad is my spirit and sore it grieves me
To tell to any the trouble and shame
That Grendel hath brought me with bitter
hate,

50 ⁹ legendary smith (Norse and Germanic).
¹⁰ fate, destiny.

The havoc he wrought in my ranks in the hall.
My war-band dwindles, driven by Wyrð
Into Grendel's grasp; but God may easily
End this monster's mad career.

Full often they boasted, my beer-bold warriors,
Brave o'er their ale-cups, the best of my fighters,

They'd meet in the mead-hall the mighty
Grendel,

End his orgies with edge of the sword.
But always the mead-hall, the morning after,
The splendid building, was blood-bespattered;
Daylight dawned on the drippings of swords;
Soiled with slaughter were sills and benches,
My liege-men perished, and left me poor.

Sit down to the board; unbend thy thoughts;
Speak to my men as thy mood shall prompt."
For the band of the Jutes a bench was cleared;
Room in the mead-hall was made for them all.
Then strode to their seats the strong-hearted
heroes.

The warriors' wants a waiting-thane served;
Held in his hand the highly-wrought ale-cup,
Poured sparkling mead, while the minstrel
sang

Gaily in Heorot. There was gladness of heroes,
A joyous company of Jutes and of Danes.

8. UNFERTH TAUNTS BEOWULF

Then up spoke Unferth, Ecglað's son,
Who sat at the feet of the Scylding ruler;
He vented his jealousy. The journey of Beowulf,

His sea-adventure, sorely displeased him.
It filled him with envy that any other
Should win among men more war-like glory,
More fame under heaven than he himself:

"Art thou the Beowulf that battled with Brecca,
Far out at sea, when ye swam together,
What time you two made trial of the billows,
Risking your lives in reckless folly,
On the open sea? None might dissuade you,
Friend nor foe, from the fool-hardy venture,
When straight from the shore you struck for
the open,

Breasted the waves and beat with your arms
The mounting billows, measured the seapaths
With lusty strokes. Stirred was the ocean
By wintry storms. Seven days and nights
Your sea-strife lasted; at length he beat you,
His strength was the better; at break of day

He made the beach where the Battle-Beamas
Dwell by the shore; and straightway returned
To his people beloved in the land of the Brond-
ings,

5 Where liegemen and towns and treasure were
his.

In sooth I say, the son of Beanstan
His boast against thee made good to the full.
But now I ween a worse fate awaits thee,

10 Though thy mettle be proved in many a battle
And grim encounter, if the coming of Grendel
Thou darrest abide, in the dead of the night."

Beowulf spoke, the son of Ecgtheow:
"What a deal of stuff thou hast talked about

15 Brecca,
Garrulous with drink, my good friend Unferth.
Thou has lauded his deeds. Now listen to me!
More sea-strength had I, more ocean-endur-
ance,

20 Than any man else, the wide earth round.
'Tis true we planned in the pride of our youth
This ocean-adventure, and vowed we would
risk

Our lives in the deep, each daring the other.
25 We were both of us boys, but our boast we
fulfilled.

Our naked swords as we swam from the land,
We held in our grasp, to guard against whales.
Not a stroke could he gain on me, strive as
he would,

30 Make swifter speed through the swelling
waves,

Nor could I in swimming o'ercome him at sea.
Side by side in the surge we labored

35 Five nights long. At last we were parted
By furious seas and a freezing gale.

Night fell black; the norther wild
Rushed on us ruthless and roughened the sea.
Now was aroused the wrath of the monsters,

40 But my war-proof ring-mail, woven and hand-
locked,

Served me well 'gainst the sea-beasts' fury;
The close-linked battle-net covered my breast.
I was dragged to the bottom by a blood-thirsty

45 monster,

Firm in his clutch the furious sea-beast
Helpless held me. But my hand came free,
And my foe I pierced with point of my sword.
With my battle-blade good 'twas given me to

50 kill
The dragon of the deep, by dint of my blow."

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9. BEOWULF COMPLETES THE STORY OF HIS SWIMMING ADVENTURE WITH BRECCA; HROTH- GAR'S DEPARTURE FROM THE HALL

"Thus sore beset me sea-beasts thronging,
Murderous man-eaters. I met their charges,
Gave them their due with my goodly blade.
They failed of their fill, the feast they expected
In circle sitting on the sea-floor together
With me for their meal. I marred their pleas-
ure.

When morning came, they were cast ashore
By the wash of the waves; their wounds proved
fatal,

Bloated and dead on the beach they lay.
No more would they cross the course of the
ships,

In the chop of the channel charge the sailors.
Day broke in the east, bright beacon of God;
The sea fell smooth. I saw old headlands,
Windy walls; for Wyrd oft saveth
A man not doomed, if he dauntless prove.
My luck did not fail me, my long sword fin-
ished

Nine of the nicors.¹¹ Ne'er have I heard
Of fiercer battle fought in the night,
Of hero more harried by horrors at sea.
Yet I saved my life from the sea-beasts' clutch.
Worn with the struggle, I was washed ashore
In the realm of the Finns by the run of the
tide,

The heave of the flood. I have failed to hear
Of like adventure laid to thee,
Battle so bitter. Brecca did never,—
Neither of you was known to achieve
Deed so valiant, adventure so daring,
Sword-play so nimble; not that I boast of it,
But mark me Unferth, you murdered your
brothers,

Your closest of kin. The curse of hell
For this you will suffer, though sharp be your
wit.

In sooth I say to you, son of Ecglaf,
Never had Grendel such grim deeds wrought,
Such havoc in Heorot, so harried your king
With bestial fury, if your boasted courage
In deeds as well as in words you had proved.
But now he has found he need not fear
Vengeance fierce from the Victory-Scyldings,
Ruthless attack in return for his raids.

¹¹ monsters of the deep.

He takes his toll of your tribe as he pleases,
Sparing none of your spearmen proud.
He ravens and rages and recks not the Dane
folk,

5 Safe from their sword-play. But soon I will
teach him

How the Jute-folk fight. Then freely may go
To the mead-hall who likes, when the light of
morning,

10 The next day's dawn, the dark shall dispel,
And the heaven-bright sun from the south
shall shine."

Glad in his heart was the giver of rings,

15 Hoped to have help, the hoar-headed king;
The Shield-Danes' shepherd was sure of relief,
When he found in Beowulf so firm a resolve.
There was laughter of heroes. Loud was their
revelry,

20 Words were winsome, as Wealhtheow rose,
Queen of Hrothgar, heedful of courtesy,
Gold-adorned greeted the guests in the hall.
First to her lord, the land-defender,
The high-born lady handed the cup;

25 Bade him be gleeful and gay at the board,
And good to his people. Gladly he took it,
Quaffed from the beaker, the battle-famed
king.

Then leaving her lord, the lady of the Helm-
ings

30 Passed among her people in each part of the
hall,

Offered the ale-cup to old and young,
Till she came to the bench where Beowulf sat.

35 The jewel-laden queen in courteous manner
Beowulf greeted; to God gave thanks,
Wise in her words, that her wish was granted,
That at last in her trouble a trusted hero
Had come for comfort. The cup received

40 From Wealhtheow's hand the hardy warrior,
And made this reply, his mind on the battle;
Beowulf spoke, the son of Ecgtheow:

"I made up my mind when my mates and I
Embarked in our boat, outbound on the sea,
45 That fully I'd work the will of thy people,
Or fall in the fight, in the clutch of the fiend.

I surely shall do a deed of glory,
Worthy an earl, or end my days,
My morning of life, in the mead-hall here."

50 His words pleased well the wife of Hrothgar,
The Jutish lord's boast. The jewelled queen
Went to sit by the side of her lord.

Renewed was the sound of noisy revel,
Wassail of warriors. Brave words were spoken.
Mirth in the mead-hall mounted high,
Till Healfdene's son the sign did give
That he wished to retire. Full well he knew
The fiend would find a fight awaiting him,
When the light of the sun had left the hall,
And creeping night should close upon them,
And shadowy shapes come striding on
Dim through the dark. The Danes arose.
Hrothgar again gave greeting to Beowulf,
Wished him farewell; the wine-hall lofty
He left in his charge. These last words spoke
he:

"Never before have I fully entrusted
To mortal man this mighty hall,
Since arm and shield I was able to lift.
To thee alone I leave it now,
To have and to hold it. Thy hardihood prove!
Be mindful of glory; keep watch for the foe!
No reward shalt thou lack if thou live through
this fight."

10. BEOWULF'S WATCH IN HEOROT

Then Hrothgar went with his warrior-band,
The Arm-of-the-Scyldings, out of the hall.
Would the war-lord Wealhtheow seek,
The queen for his bed-mate. The best of kings
Had placed in the hall, so heroes report,
A watch against Grendel, to guard his house,
Deliverance bring to the land of the Danes.
But the lord of the Jutes joyfully trusted
In the might of his arm and the mercy of
God.

Off he stripped his iron byrnie,
Helmet from head, and handed his sword,
Choicest of blades, to his body-thane,
And bade him keep the battle armor.
Then made his boast once more the warrior,
Beowulf the bold, ere his bed he sought,
Summoned his spirit; "Not second to Grendel
In combat I count me and courage of war.
But not with the sword will I slay this foeman,
Though light were the task to take his life.
Nothing at all does he know of such fighting,
Of hewing of shields, though shrewd be his
malice

Ill deeds to contrive. We two in the night
Shall do without swords, if he dare to meet me
In hand to hand battle. May the holy Lord
To one or the other award the victory,
As it seems to Him right, Ruler all-wise."

Then he sought his bed. The bolster received
The head of the hero. In the hall about him,
Stretched in sleep, his sailormen lay.
Not one of them thought he would ever re-
turn

5 Home to his country, nor hoped to see
His people again, and the place of his birth.
They had heard of too many men of the Danes
O'ertaken suddenly, slain without warning,
10 In the royal hall. But the Ruler on High
Through the woof of fate to the Wederfolk
gave
Friendship and help, their foes to o'ercome,
By a single man's strength to slay the destroyer.
15 Thus all may learn that the Lord Almighty
Wields for aye the Wyrd of men.

11. BEOWULF'S FIGHT WITH GRENDDEL

20 Now Grendel came, from his crags of mist
Across the moor; he was curst of God.
The murderous prowler meant to surprise
In the high-built hall his human prey.
He stalked neath the clouds, till steep before
him

25 The house of revelry rose in his path,
The gold-hall of heroes, the gaily adorned.
Hrothgar's home he had hunted full often,
But never before had he found to receive him
30 So hardy a hero, such hall-guards there.
Close to the building crept the slayer,
Doomed to misery. The door gave way,
Though fastened with bolts, when his fist fell
on it.

35 Maddened he broke through the breach he
had made;

Sworn with anger and eager to slay,
The ravening fiend o'er the bright-paved floor
Furious ran, while flashed from his eyes

40 An ugly glare like embers aglow.
He saw in the hall, all huddled together,
The heroes asleep. Then laughed in his heart
The hideous fiend; he hoped ere dawn
To sunder body from soul of each;

45 He looked to appease his lust of blood,
Glut his maw with the men he would slay.
But Wyrd had otherwise willed his doom;

Never again should he get a victim
After that night. Narrowly watched

50 Hygelac's thane how the horrible slayer
Forward should charge in fierce attack.
Nor was the monster minded to wait:

Sudden he sprang on a sleeping thane,
 Ere he could stir, he slit him open;
 Bit through the bone-joints, gulped the blood,
 Greedily bolted the body piecemeal.
 Soon he had swallowed the slain man wholly,
 Hands and feet. Then forward he hastened,
 Sprang at the hero, and seized him at rest;
 Fiercely clutched him with fiendish claw.
 But quickly Beowulf caught his forearm,
 And threw himself on it with all his weight.
 Straight discovered that crafty plotter,
 That never in all mid-earth had he met
 In any man a mightier grip.
 Gone was his courage, and craven fear
 Sat in his heart, yet helped him no sooner.
 Fain would he hide in his hole in the fenland,
 His devil's den. A different welcome
 From former days he found that night!
 Now Hygelac's thane, the hardy, remembered
 His evening's boast, and bounding up,
 Grendel he clenched, and cracked his fingers;
 The monster tried flight, but the man pursued;
 The ravager hoped to wrench himself free,
 And gain the fen, for he felt his fingers
 Helpless and limp in the hold of his foe.
 'Twas a sorry visit the man-devourer
 Made to the Hall of the Hart that night.
 Dread was the din, the Danes were frightened
 By the uproar wild of the ale-spilling fray.
 The hardest blanched as the hall-foes wrestled
 In terrible rage. The rafters groaned;
 'Twas wonder great that the wine-hall stood,
 Firm 'gainst the fighters' furious onslaught,
 Nor fell to the ground, that glorious building.
 With bands of iron 'twas braced and stiffened
 Within and without. But off from the sill
 Many a mead-bench mounted with gold
 Was wrung where they wrestled in wrath together.
 The Scylding nobles never imagined
 That open attack, or treacherous cunning,
 Could wreck or ruin their royal hall,
 The lofty and antlered, unless the flames
 Should some day swallow it up in smoke.
 The din was renewed, the noise redoubled;
 Each man of the Danes was mute with dread,
 That heard from the wall the horrible wail,
 The gruesome song of the godless foe,
 His howl of defeat, as the fiend of hell
 Bemoaned his hurt. The man held fast;
 Greatest he was in grip of strength,
 Of all that dwelt upon earth that day.

12. THE DEFEAT OF GRENDEL

Loath in his heart was the hero-deliverer
 To let escape his slaughterous guest.
 Of little use that life he deemed
 To human kind. The comrades of Beowulf
 Unsheathed their weapons to ward their leader,
 Eagerly brandished their ancient blades,
 The life of their peerless lord to defend.
 Little they deemed, those dauntless warriors,
 As they leaped to the fray, those lusty fighters,
 Laying on boldly to left and to right,
 Eager to slay, that no sword upon earth,
 No keenest weapon, could wound that monster:
 Point would not pierce, he was proof against iron;
 'Gainst victory-blades the devourer was charmed.
 But a woful end awaited the wretch,
 That very day he was doomed to depart,
 And fare afar to the fiends' domain.
 Now Grendel found, who in former days
 So many a warrior had wantonly slain,
 In brutish lust, abandoned of God,
 That the frame of his body was breaking at last.
 Keen of courage, the kinsman of Hygelac
 Held him grimly gripped in his hands.
 Loath was each to the other alive.
 The grisly monster got his death-wound:
 A huge split opened under his shoulder;
 Crunched the socket, cracked the sinews,
 Glory great was given to Beowulf.
 But Grendel escaped with his gaping wound,
 O'er the dreary moor his dark den sought,
 Crawled to his lair. 'Twas clear to him then,
 The count of his hours to end had come,
 Done were his days. The Danes were glad,
 The hard fight was over, they had their desire.
 Cleared was the hall, 'twas cleansed by the hero
 With keen heart and courage, who came from afar.
 The lord of the Jutes rejoiced in his work,
 The deed of renown he had done that night.
 His boast to the Danes he bravely fulfilled;
 From lingering woe delivered them all;
 From heavy sorrow they suffered in heart;
 From dire distress they endured so long;

From toil and from trouble. This token they
saw:

The hero had laid the hand of Grendel
Both arm and claws, the whole forequarter
With clutches huge, 'neath the high-peaked
roof.

13. THE CELEBRATION OF THE VICTORY AND
THE SONG OF THE GLEEMAN

When morning arrived, so runs the report,
Around the gift-hall gathered the warriors;
The folk-leaders fared from far and near,
The wide ways o'er, the wonder to view,
The wild beast's foot-prints. Not one of them
felt

Regret that the creature had come to grief,
When they traced his retreat by the tracks on
the moor;

Marked where he wearily made his way,
Harried and beaten, to the haunt of the nicors, 20
Slunk to the water, to save his life.
There they beheld the heaving surges,
Billows abrim with bloody froth,
Dyed with gore, where the gruesome fiend,
Stricken and doomed, in the struggle of death 25
Gave up his ghost in the gloom of the mere,
His heathen soul for hell to receive it.
Then from the mere the thanes turned back,
Men and youths from the merry hunt,
Home they rode on their horses gray,
Proudly sitting their prancing steeds.
Beowulf's prowess was praised by all.
They all agreed that go where you will,
'Twixt sea and sea, at the south or the north,
None better than he, no braver hero,
None worthier honor could ever be found,
(They meant no slight to their master and lord,
The good king Hrothgar their ruler kind.)

Now and again the noble chiefs
Gave rein to their steeds, and spurred them to
race,
Galloped their grays where the ground was
smooth.

Now and again a gallant thane,
Whose mind was stored with many a lay,
With songs of battle and sagas old,
Bound new words in well-knit bars,
Told in verse the valor of Beowulf,
Matched his lines and moulded his lay.

*Here is introduced an episode of the Nibelungen
Legend. The gleeman tells how Sigmund the Vol-*

*sung, with his son and nephew Fitela, ranged the
forests and slew wild beasts. Later, when Fitela was
no longer with him, Sigmund killed a dragon and
won a great treasure.*

5 When the lay was ended, they urged once
more

Their racers fleet to fly o'er the plain.
As the morning sped, and the sun climbed
higher,

10 Many went in, the marvellous sight
More closely to scan. The king himself,
With a troop of trusty retainers about him,
Strode from his bower; the bestower-of-rings
Came, and with him the queen, in state,
15 The meadow-path trod, by her maidens at-
tended.

14. HROTHGAR'S PRAISE OF BEOWULF, AND BEO-
WULF'S REPLY

20 Hrothgar spoke when he reached the hall,
Stood on the step, and stared at the roof
Adorned with gold, and Grendel's hand:
"Prompt be my heart to praise the Almighty
For the sight I behold. Much harm have I suf-
fered, 25

And grief from Grendel, but God still works
Wonder on wonder, the Warden of Glory.

But a little while since, I scarcely dared,
As long as I lived to look for escape

30 From my burden of sorrow, when blood-
stained stood,

And dripping with slaughter, this stately hall.
Wide-spread woe my warriors scattered;
They never hoped this house to rid,

35 While life should last, this land-mark of people,
Of demons and devils. 'Tis done by the hero.
By the might of the Lord this man has finished
The feat that all of us failed to achieve
By wit or by war. And well may she say,

40 —Whoever she be,—that bore this son,
That the Ancient of Days dealt with her
graciously,

And blest her in child-birth. Now Beowulf,
hear!

45 I shall henceforth hold thee, hero beloved,
As child of my own, and cherish thee fondly
In kinship new. Thou shalt never lack
Meed of reward that is mine to give.

For deeds less mighty have I many times
50 granted

Fullest reward to warriors feeblers,
In battle less brave. Thy boldness and valor

NARRATIVE POETRY · BEOWULF

Afar shall be known; thy fame shall live
To be great among men. Now God the Al-
mighty
With honor reward thee, as ever he doth."

Beowulf spoke, the son of Ecgtheow,
"Gladly we fought this good fight through,
Fearlessly faced the foe inhuman,
Crappled him gruesome; it grieves me sore
That the man-beast himself you may not see, 10
Dead in the hall, fordone in the fray.
I meant to master the monster quickly,
To his death-bed pin him by power of my grip,
Hold him hard till my hand could strangle him,
Bringing him low, but he broke away.
In vain I tried to prevent his escape.
The Lord was unwilling; I lost my hold
On the man-destroyer; too strong was the
monster,
Too swift on his feet. But to save his life
He left behind him the whole of his fore-paw,
Arm and shoulder. 'Twas a useless shift.
Profiting nothing. He ne'er will prolong
His life by the loss, the loathly slayer,
Sunk in sin; but sorrow holds him,
Caught in the grasp of its grip relentless,
In woful bonds to await in anguish,
Guilty wretch, the rest of his doom,
As the Lord Almighty shall mete it to him."

More silent seemed the son of Ecglaf,¹²
Less boastful in bragging of brave deeds done,
When all of them, looking aloft, beheld
The hand on high, where it hung 'neath the
roof,
The claw of the fiend; each finger was armed
With a steel-like spur instead of a nail,
The heathen's handspikes, the horrible paw
Of the evil fiend. They all declared
No iron blade could e'er have bit
On the monstrous bulk of the man-beast's hide,
Or hewn away that woful talon.

15. THE FEASTING AND GIVING OF TREASURE IN THE HALL

Now orders were given the guest-hall to
cleanse,
And furnish it fresh. Forth went hurrying
Men and maids. To the mead-hall they went
And busily worked. Woven tapestries,
Clinting with gold, hung gay on the walls,

¹² Unferth.

Marvellous wonders for men to look upon.
Ruin and wreck had been wrought in the
building,
Though braced within by iron bands,
5 The hinges were wrenched, the roof alone
stood
Undamaged and sound, when the sin-spotted
wretch,
The demon destroyer, in despair of his life,
10 Turned and made off,—not easy it is
To escape from death, essay it who will.
(So each of us all to his end must come,
Forced by fate to his final abode
Where his body, stretched on the bier of death,
15 Shall rest after revel.) Now right was the hour
For Healfdene's heir to enter the hall;
The king himself would come to the feast.
I never have heard of nobler bearing
'Mongst ranks of liegemen surrounding their
20 lord
As they took their seats, the trusty comrades,
And fell to feasting. Freely quaffed
Many a mead-cup the mighty kinsmen,
Hrothgar and Hrothulf, the high wall within.
25 Heorot was filled with a friendly host.
(Far was the day when the Scylding host
Should treachery plot, betraying each other.)
Then Healfdene's son bestowed on Beowulf
A gold-adorned banner for battle-reward,
30 A rich-brodered standard, breast-plate and
helmet.
The swordsmen assembled saw the treasures
Borne before the hero. Beowulf drank
The health of Hrothgar, nor had reason to feel
35 Ashamed before shieldmen to show his reward.
Never were offered by earls that I heard of,
In token of friendship four such treasures,
Never was equalled such ale-bench bounty.
Round the ridge of the helmet a rim of iron,
40 Wound with wire, warded the head,
That the offspring of files, with fearful stroke,
The hard-tempered sword-blade, might harm
it not,
When fierce in the battle the foemen should
45 join.
At a sign from the king, eight stallions proud,
Bitted and bridled, were brought into hall.
On the back of one was a wondrous saddle,
Bravely wrought and bordered with jewels,
50 The battle-seat bold of the best of kings,
When Hrothgar himself would ride to the
sword-play.

(Nor flinched from the foe the famous warrior

In the front of the fight where fell the slain.)
To the hero delivered the lord of the Scyldings,
The heir of Ing, both armor and horses,
Cave them to Beowulf, and bade him enjoy them.

Thus royally, the ruler famous,
The heroes' hoard-guard, heaped his bounty;
Repaid the struggle with steeds and trophies,
Praised by all singers who speak the truth.

16. THE KING'S GIFTS TO BEOWULF'S MEN, AND
THE GLEEMAN'S LAY OF FINN

The Lord of the earls then added gifts,
At the mead-bench remembered the men, each one,

That Beowulf brought o'er the briny deep,
With ancient heirlooms and offered to pay
In gold for the man that Grendel had slain,
As more of them surely the monster had killed

Had not holy God and the hero's courage
Averted their doom. (So daily o'errules
The Father Almighty the fortunes of men.
Therefore is insight ever the best,
And prudence of mind; for much shall suffer
Of lief and of loath who long endures
The days of his life in labor and toil.)

Now music and song were mingled together,
In the presence of Hrothgar, ruler in war.
Harp was struck and hero-lays told.
Along the mead-bench the minstrel spread
Cheer in hall, when he chanted the lay
Of the sudden assault on the sons of Finn.

The episode which follows alludes obscurely to details of a feud between Frisians and Danes. The Finnsburg fragment contains a portion of the same story; and one of the heroes, Hnaef, is also mentioned in Widsith.

17. THE LAY OF FINN ENDED. THE SPEECH OF
THE QUEEN

The lay was ended,
The gleeman's song. Sound of revelry
Rose again. Gladness brightened
Along bench and board. Beer-thanes poured
From flagons old the flowing wine.
Wealththeow the queen walked in state,
Under her crown, where uncle and nephew
Together sat,—they still were friends.
There too sat Unferth, trusted counsellor,

At Hrothgar's feet; though faith he had broken
With his kinsmen in battle, his courage was proved.

Then the queen of the Scyldings spoke these words:

"Quaff of this cup my king and my lord,
Gold-friend of men. To thy guests be kind,
To the men of the Jutes be generous with gifts.
Far and near thou now hast peace.

I have heard thou dost wish the hero for son,
To hold as thy own, now Heorot is cleansed,
The jewel-bright hall. Enjoy while thou mayest,

Allotment of wealth, and leave to thy heirs
Kingdom and rule when arrives the hour
That hence thou shalt pass to thy place appointed.

Well I know that my nephew Hrothulf
Will cherish in honor our children dear,
If thou leavest before him this life upon earth;
He will surely requite the kindness we showed him,

Faithfully tend our two young sons,
When to mind he recalls our care and affection,
How we helped him and housed him when he was a child."

She turned to the bench where her two boys sat,

Hrethric and Hrothmund, and the rest of the youth,

A riotous band, and right in their midst,
Between the two brothers, Beowulf sat.

18. THE QUEEN'S GIFTS TO BEOWULF

With courteous bow the cup she offered,
Greeted him graciously and gave him to boot
Two armlets rare of twisted gold,
A robe and rings, and the rarest collar;
A better was never known among men,
Since Hama brought to his bright-built hall
The jewelled necklace, the gem of the Brisings.¹³

Lines 1200–1214 interrupt the narrative to tell of the subsequent history of Wealththeow's gift; how Beowulf gave it to Hygelac, who wore it on his famous raid against the Frisians, in which he was slain by the Franks.

Before the warriors Wealththeow spoke:
"Accept, dear Beowulf, this bright-gemmed collar;

¹³ originally owned by the goddess Freya.

NARRATIVE POETRY · THE BATTLE OF MALDON

Make happy use of this heirloom jewelled,
This ring and robe and royal treasure;
Be brave and bold. My boys instruct
In gentle manners; mine be the praise.
Thou hast done such a deed that in days to
come

Men will proclaim thy might and valor
To the ends of the earth, where the ocean-
wave

Washes the windy walls of the land.
I wish thee joy of thy jewelled treasure,
Long be thy life; enlarge thy prosperity,
Show thee a friend to my sons in deed.
Here each earl to the other is faithful,
True to his liege-lord, loyal and kind.
My warriors obey me, willing and prompt.
The Danes, carousing, do as I bid."

She went to her seat, the wine flowed free;
'Twas a glorious feast. The fate that impended,
None of them knew, though near to them all.

When darkness came, the king of the Danes
Went to his rest in the royal bower;
But a throng of his kinsmen kept the hall
As they used to do in the days of old.

They cleared the boards and covered the floor
With beds and bolsters. One beer-thane there
Lay down to sleep with his doom upon him.
They placed by their heads their polished
shields,

Their battle-boards bright, on the bench
nearby.

Above each earl, within easy reach,
Was his helmet high and his harness of mail
And the spear-shaft keen. 'Twas their custom
so,

That always at rest they were ready for war
At home or abroad, where'er they might be,
At what hour soever for aid might call
Their lord and king; they were comrades true.

END OF THE FIRST ADVENTURE

THE BATTLE OF MALDON *

TRANSLATED BY
J. DUNCAN SPAETH

The Battle of Maldon, *along with* The Battle
of Brunanburh, is a good example of Old Eng-

* The modern version by J. Duncan Spaeth is
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versity Press.

lish battle poetry. Although the unknown au-
thor gives vent to lyrical emotion, the bulk of
the poem is a dramatic narrative. It sounds like
an eyewitness report. And, of course, it has the
concreteness of truth, for in 991 this battle took
place between Byrhtnoth, alderman of Essex,
and the invading Vikings. The account tells of
heroic and sporting defeat. Note the scorn for
the faint-hearted, the praise of loyalty. Note
also that literature sadly records, a thousand
years ago as it does today, the fundamental
stupidities and gallantries of human combat.

The beginning of the poem is lost. The first
sixteen lines of the remaining portion describe
how Byrhtnoth's men, arrived at the battle
field, dismount and turn their horses loose, how
one of them sends his hawk flying to the wood,
and how the East-Saxon alderman proceeds to
marshal his band on the banks of the stream.
The poem continues as follows:

Byrhtnoth encouraged his comrades heartily;
Rode through the ranks and roused their
spirits;

Marshalled his men to meet the onset;
Showed them how they should hold their
shields

Firm in their grip, and fearless stand.

When he had briskly whetted their courage,
He leaped from his steed and stood with his
people,

His hearth-band beloved and household thanes.

Then strode to the strand a stalwart North-
man,

The viking herald. They heard him shout,
Send o'er the tide the taunt of the pirates;
Hailing the earl, he hurled this challenge:

"Bold sea-rovers bade me tell thee
Straightway thou must send them tribute,
Rings for ransom, royal treasure;
Better with gifts ye buy us off,
Ere we deal hard blows and death in battle.

Why spill we blood when the bargain is easy?
Give us the pay and we grant ye peace.

If thou dost agree, who are greatest here,
To ransom thy folk with the fee we demand,
And give to the seamen the gold they ask,

Pay with tribute for treaty of peace,
We load the booty aboard our ships,
Haul to sea and hold the truce."

THE BATTLE OF MALDON · NARRATIVE POETRY

Byrhtnoth spake, he brandished his spear,
Lifted his shield and shouted aloud,
Grim was his wrath as he gave them his answer:

"Hearest thou, pirate, my people's reply?
Ancient swords they will send for ransom;
Poison-tipped points they will pay for tribute;
Treasure that scarce will serve you in battle.
Go back, pirate, give them my answer;
Bring them this word of bitter defiance;
Tell them here standeth, stern and intrepid,
The earl with his folk, to defend his country,
Æthelred's realm, the rights of my lord,
His house and his home; the heathen shall fall,
Pirates and robbers. My people were shamed, 15
If ye loaded our booty aboard your ships,
And floated them off unfought for, to sea,
Having sailed so far, to set foot on our soil.
Not all so easily earn ye our gold!
Sword-blades and spear-points we sell you 20
first;

Battle-play grim, ere ye get our tribute!"
Forward he told his troop to come,
To step under shield and stand by the shore.
The breadth of the stream kept the bands 25
asunder;

Strong came flowing the flood after ebb,
Filled the channel, and foamed between them.
Impatient stood by Panta stream,
East-Saxon host and horde of the pirates,
Longing to lock their lances in battle.
Neither could harass or harm the other,
Save that some fell by the flight of arrows.

Down went the tide, the Danes were ready; 35
Burned for battle the band of the Vikings;
On the bridge stood Wulfstan, and barred their way.

Byrhtnoth sent him, a seasoned warrior,
Ceola's son, with his kinsmen to hold it.
The first of the Vikings who ventured to set
Foot on the bridge, he felled with his spear.
Two sturdy warriors stood with Wulfstan,
Maccus and Ælfhere, mighty pair,
Kept the approach where the crossing was 45
shallow;

Defended the bridge, and fought with the boldest,

As long as their hands could lift a sword.
When the strangers discovered and clearly saw 50
What bitter fighters the bridgewards proved,
They tried a trick, the treacherous robbers,

Begged they might cross, and bring their crews
Over the shallows, and up to the shore.
The earl was ready, in reckless daring,
To let them land too great a number.

5 Byrhtelm's son, while the seamen listened,
Called across, o'er the cold water:
"Come ye seamen, come and fight us!
We give you ground, but God alone knows
Who to-day shall hold the field."

10 Strode the battle-wolves bold through the water;

West over Panta waded the pirates:
Carried their shields o'er the shining waves;
Safely their lindenwoods landed the sailors.
Byrhtnoth awaited them, braced for the on-
slaught,

Haughty and bold at the head of his band.
Bade them build the bristling war-hedge,
Shield against shield, to shatter the enemy. 20
Near was the battle, now for the glory,
Now for the death of the doomed in the field.
Swelled the war-cry, circled the ravens,
Screamed the eagle, eager for prey;
Sped from the hand the hard-forged spear-
head,

Showers of darts, sharp from the grindstone.
Bows were busy, bolt stuck in buckler;
Bitter the battle-rush, brave men fell, 30
Heroes on either hand, hurt in the fray.
Wounded was Wulfmar, went to his battle-
rest;

Cruelly mangled, kinsman of Byrhtnoth,
Son of his sister, slain on the field.

35 Pay of vengeance they paid the Vikings;
I heard of the deed of the doughty Edward:
He struck with his sword a stroke that was
mighty,

40 Down fell the doomed man, dead at his feet.
For this the thane got the thanks of his leader,
Praise that was due for his prowess in fight.
Grimly they held their ground in the battle,
Strove with each other the stout-hearted he-
roes,

Strove with each other, eager to strike
First with their darts the foe that was doomed.
Warriors thronged, the wounded lay thick.
Stalwart and steady they stood about Byrht-
noth.

Bravely he heartened them, bade them to win
Glory in battle by beating the Danes.

NARRATIVE POETRY · THE BATTLE OF MALDON

Raising his shield, he rushed at the enemy;
Covered by buckler, he came at a Viking;
Charged him furious, earl against churl,
Each for the other had evil in store.

The sailorman sent from the south a javelin,
Sorely wounding the war-band's leader;
He shoved with his shield, the shaft snapped
short;

The spear was splintered and sprang against
him;

Wroth was Byrhtnoth, reached for his weapon:
Gored the Viking that gave him the wound.
Straight went the lance, strong was the leader;
Sheer through the throat of the pirate he thrust
it.

His dart meant death, so deadly his aim.
Swiftly he sent him a second javelin,
That crashed through the corslet and cleft his
bosom,

Wounded him sore through his woven mail;
The poisonous spear-head stood in his heart.
Blithe was the leader, laughed in his breast,
Thanked his Lord for that day's work.

Now one of the pirates poised his weapon;
Sped from his hand a spear that wounded
Through and through thethane of Æthelred.¹
There stood at his side a stripling youth;
Brave was the boy; he bent o'er his lord,
Drew from his body the blood-dripping dart.

'Twas Wulfmær the youthful, Wulfstan's son;
Back he hurled the hard-forged spear.
In went the point, to earth fell the pirate
Who gave his master the mortal hurt.
A crafty seaman crept toward the earl,
Eager to rob him of armor and rings,
Bracelets and gear and graven sword.
Then Byrhtnoth drew his blade from the
sheath,

Broad and blood-stained struck at the breast-
plate.

But one of the seamen stopped the warrior,
Beat down the arm of the earl with his lance.
Fell to the ground the gray-hilted sword;
No more he might grasp his goodly blade,
Wield his weapon; yet words he could utter;
The hear-headed warrior heartened his men;
Bade them forward to fare and be brave.
When the stricken leader no longer could
stand,

He looked to heaven and lifted his voice:

"I render Thee thanks, O Ruler of men,
For the joys Thou hast given, that gladdened
my life.

5 Merciful Maker, now most I need,
Thy goodness to grant me a gracious end,
That my soul may swiftly speed to Thee.
Come to Thy keeping, O King of angels,
Depart in peace. I pray Thee Lord

10 That the fiends of hell may not harm my
spirit."

The heathen pirates then hewed him to pieces,
And both the brave men that by him stood;
Ælfnoth and Wulfmær, wounded to death,

15 Gave their lives for their lord in the fight.

Then quitted the field the cowards and faint-
hearts;

The son of Odda started the flight.

20 Godric abandoned his good lord in battle,
Who many a steed had bestowed on his thane.
Leaped on the horse that belonged to his
leader,

Not *his* were the trappings, *he* had no right to
them.

25 Both of his brothers basely fled with him,
Godwin and Godwy, forgetful of honor,
Turned from the fight, and fled to the woods,
Seeking the cover, and saving their lives.

30 Those were with them, who would have re-
mained,

Had they remembered how many favors
Their lord had done them in days of old.
Offa foretold it, what time he arose

35 To speak where they met to muster their forces.
Many, he said, were mighty in words
Whose courage would fail when it came to
fighting.

There lay on the field the lord of the people,

40 Æthelred's earl; all of them saw him,
His hearth-companions beheld him dead.
Forward went fighting the fearless warriors,
Their courage was kindled, no cowards were
they;

45 Their will was fixed on one or the other:
To lose their life, or avenge their leader.
Ælfwiné spoke to them, son of Ælfric,
Youthful in years, but unyielding in battle;
Roused their courage, and called them to
50 honor:

"Remember the time when we talked in the
mead-hall,

¹ Byrhtnoth.

THE BATTLE OF MALDON · NARRATIVE POETRY

<p>When bold on our benches we boasted our valor, Deeds of daring we'd do in the battle Now we may prove whose prowess is true. My birth and my breeding I boldly proclaim: I am sprung from a mighty Mercian line. Aldhelm the alderman, honored and prosperous, He was my grandsire, great was his fame: My people who know me shall never reproach me, Say I was ready to run from the battle, Back to my home, and abandon my leader, Slain on the field. My sorrow is double, Both kinsman and lord I've lost in the fight." Forward he threw himself, thirsting for ven- geance; Sent his javelin straight at a pirate. Fell with a crash his foe to the earth, His life-days ended. Then onward he strode, Urging his comrades to keep in the thick of it. Up spake Offa, with ashen spear lifted: "Well has thou counselled us, well hast en- couraged; Noble Ælfwiné, needs must we follow thee. Now that our leader lies low on the field, Needs must we steadfastly stand by each other, Close in the conflict keeping together, As long as our hands can hold a weapon, Good blade wield. Godric the coward, Son of Odda, deceived us all. Too many believed 'twas our lord himself, When they saw him astride the war-steed proud. His run-away ride our ranks hath broken, Shattered the shield-wall. Shame on the das- tard, Who caused his comrades like cowards to fly!" Up spake Leofsunu, lifted his linden-wood, Answered his comrades from under his shield: "Here I stand, and here shall I stay! Not a foot will I flinch, but forward I'll go! Vengeance I've vowed for my valiant leader. Now that my friend is fallen in battle, My people shall never reproach me, in Stour- mere; Call me deserter, and say I returned, Leaderless, lordless, alone from the fight. Better is battle-death; boldly I welcome The edge and the iron." Full angry he charged, Daring all danger, disdaining to fly. Up spake Dunheré, old and faithful,</p>	<p>Shook his lance and shouted aloud, Bade them avenge the valiant Byrhtnoth: "Wreak on the Danes the death of our lord! Unfit is for vengeance who values his life." 5 Fell on the foe the faithful body-guard, Battle-wroth spearmen, beseeching God That they might avenge the thane of Æthel- red, Pay the heathen with havoc and slaughter. 10 The son of Ecglafr, Æseferth by name, Sprung from a hardy North-humbrian race, —He was their hostage,—helped them man- fully. Never he faltered or flinched in the war-play, 15 Lances a plenty he launched at the pirates, Shot them on shield, or sheer through the breast-plate: Rarely he missed them, many he wounded, While he could wield his weapon in battle. 20 Still Edward the long held out at the front; Brave and defiant, he boasted aloud That he would not yield a hair's breadth of ground, Nor turn his back where his better lay dead. 25 He broke through the shield-wall, breasted the foe, Worthily paid the pirate warriors For the life of his lord ere he laid him down. Near him Æthelric, noble comrade, 30 Brother of Sibryht, brave and untiring, Mightily fought, and many another; Hacked the hollow shields, holding their own. Bucklers were broken, the breast-plate sang Its gruesome song. The sword of Offa 35 Went home to the hilt in the heart of a Viking. But Offa himself soon had to pay for it, The kinsman of Gadd succumbed in the fight. Yet ere he fell, he fulfilled his pledge, The promise he gave to his gracious lord, That both should ride to their burg together, Home to their friends, or fall in the battle, Killed in conflict and covered with wounds; He lay by his lord, a loyal thane. Mid clash of shields the shipmen came on, 45 Maddened by battle. Full many a lance Home was thrust to the heart of the doomed. Then sallied forth Wistan, Wigelin's son; Three of the pirates he pierced in the throng, Ere he fell, by his friends, on the field of slaughter. 50 Bitter the battle-rush, bravely struggled Heroes in armor, while all around them</p>
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NARRATIVE POETRY · GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

The wounded dropped and the dead lay thick.
Oswold and Eadwold all the while
Their kinsmen and comrades encouraged
bravely,
Both of the brothers bade their friends
Never to weaken or weary in battle,
But keep up their sword-play, keen to the end.
Up spake Byrhtwold, brandished his ash-
spear,

—He was a tried and true old hero,—
Lifted his shield and loudly called to them:

"Heart must be keener, courage the hardier,
Bolder our mood as our band diminisheth.
Here lies in his blood our leader and comrade,
The brave on the beach. Bitter shall rue it
5 Who turns his back on the battle-field now.
Here I stay; I am stricken and old;
My life is done; I shall lay me down
Close by my lord and comrade dear."

10 *Six more lines and the MS. breaks off. There cannot have been much left. The battle is over.*

MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD

SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT*

Gawain belongs in the same manuscript with The Pearl and two other poems—perhaps all by one poet. It extols the virtues of knight-hood in presenting a Gawain rather different from his counterpart in other familiar Arthurian material. Whoever wrote this Middle English poem, which appears here in part in a modern translation, was no primitive writer; he has a sense of scene, technical knowledge of hunting, a good sense of humor, organizing ability, and facility in verse, combining in the last the old English four-stress line with French a, b, a, b, a short lines at the end of verse-paragraphs.

This romance begins with a challenge by the mysterious Green Knight, who taunts Arthur's men with the proposal that he will let one of them chop his head off if in return his opponent will appear a year later to receive a similar blow. Gawain finally accepts, delivers the stroke, and is surprised to see the Green Knight 10 pick up his head and ride away. Eventually Gawain sets out to keep his word, meets with difficulties on the way, but finally arrives near his goal. He is given knightly hospitality by Sir Bercilak, who proposes entertainment and 15

a bargain: Gawain, staying home with the lady of the castle, will exchange trophies of each day's activities (for three days) with his host, who will successively hunt the deer, boar, and fox. Gawain agrees. Our selection—roughly one-third of the whole work—takes up the story at this point and delightfully unwinds the plot.

PART III

Betimes rose the folk ere the first of the day;
The guests that were going then summoned
their grooms,
Who hastily sprang up to saddle their horses,
5 Packed their bags and prepared all their gear.
The nobles made ready, to ride all arrayed;
And quickly they leaped and caught up their
bridles,
And started, each wight on the way that well
10 pleased him,
The land's beloved lord not last was equipped
For riding, with many a man too. A morsel
He hurriedly ate when mass he had heard,
And promptly with horn to the hunting field
hastened.
And ere any daylight had dawned upon earth,
Both he and his knights were high on their
horses.

* Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, the modern version by Theodore Banks, is here reprinted by permission of F. S. Crofts & Co., publishers.

The dog-grooms, accomplished, the hounds
then coupled,

The door of the kennel unclosed, called them
out,

On the bugle mightily blew three single notes;
Whereupon bayed with a wild noise the
brachets,¹

And some they turned back that went straying,
and punished.

The hunters, I heard, were a hundred. To 10
station

They go,
The keepers of the hounds,
And off the leashes throw.
With noise the wood resounds
From the good blasts they blow.

At the first sound of questing, the wild crea-
tures quaked;
The deer fled, foolish from fright, in the dale, 20
To the high ground hastened, but quickly were
halted

By beaters, loud shouting, stationed about
In a circle. The harts were let pass with their
high heads,

And also the bucks, broad-antlered and bold;
For the generous lord by law had forbidden
All men with the male deer to meddle in close
season.

The hinds were hemmed in with hey! and ware! 30
The does to the deep valleys driven with great
din.

You might see as they loosed them the shafts
swiftly soar—

At each turn of the forest their feathers went 35
flying—

That deep into brown hides bit with their
broad heads;

Lo! they brayed on the hill-sides, bled there,
and died,

And hounds, fleet-footed, followed them head-
long.

And hunters after them hastened with horns
So loud in their sharp burst of sound as to
sunder

The cliffs. What creatures escaped from the
shooters,

Hunted and harried from heights to the waters,
Were pulled down and rent at the places there
ready;

Such skill the men showed at these low-lying
stations,

So great were the greyhounds that quickly they
got them

5 And dragged them down, fast as the folk there
might look

At the sight.
Carried with bliss away,
The lord did oft alight,
Oft gallop; so that day
He passed till the dark night.

Thus frolicked the lord on the fringe of the
forest,

15 And Gawain the good in his gay bed reposed,
Lying snugly, till sunlight shone on the walls,
'Neath a coverlet bright with curtains about it.
As softly he slumbered, a slight sound he heard
At his door, made with caution, and quickly it

opened.
The hero heaved up his head from the clothes;
By a corner he caught up the curtain a little,
And glanced out with heed to behold what had
happened.

25 The lady it was, most lovely to look at,
Who shut the door after her stealthily, slyly,
And turned toward the bed. Then the brave
man, embarrassed,

Lay down again subtly to seem as if sleeping;
30 And stilly she stepped, and stole to his bed,
There cast up the curtain, and creeping within
it,

Seated herself on the bedside right softly,
And waited a long while to watch when he
woke.

And the lord too, lurking, lay there a long while,
Wondering at heart what might come of this
happening,

Or what it might mean—a marvel he thought it.
40 Yet he said to himself, "T would be surely
more seemly

By speaking at once to see what she wishes."
Then roused he from sleep, and stretching
turned toward her,

45 His eyelids unlocked, made believe that he
wondered,

And signed himself so by his prayers to be safer
From fall.

Right sweet in chin and cheek,
Both white and red withal,
Full fairly she did speak
With laughing lips and small.

50

¹ female hounds.

NARRATIVE POETRY · GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

"Good morrow, Sir Gawain," that gay lady
 said,
 "You're a sleeper unwary, since so one may
 steal in.
 In a trice you are ta'en! If we make not a truce,
 In your bed, be you certain of this, I shall bind
 you."
 All laughing, the lady delivered those jests.
 "Good morrow, fair lady," said Gawain the
 merry,
 "You may do what you will, and well it doth
 please me,
 For quickly I yield me, crying for mercy;
 This method to me seems the best—for I must!"
 So the lord in turn jested with laughter right
 joyous.
 "But if, lovely lady, you would, give me leave,
 Your prisoner release and pray him to rise,
 And I'd come from this bed and clothe myself
 better;
 So could I converse with you then with more
 comfort."
 "Indeed no, fair sir," that sweet lady said,
 "You'll not move from your bed; I shall manage
 you better;
 For here—and on that side too—I shall hold
 you,
 And next I shall talk with the knight I have
 taken.
 For well do I know that your name is Sir
 Gawain,
 By everyone honored wherever you ride;
 Most highly acclaimed is your courtly behav-
 ior
 With lords and ladies and all who are living.
 And now you're here, truly, and none but we
 two;
 My lord and his followers far off have fared;
 Other men remain in their beds, and my
 maidens;
 The door is closed, and secured with a strong
 hasp;
 Since him who delights all I have in my house,
 My time, as long as it lasts, I with talking
 Shall fill.
 My body's gladly yours;
 Upon me work your will.
 Your servant I, perforce,
 And now, and shall be still."
 "In faith," quoth Sir Gawain, "a favor I
 think it,

Although I am now not the knight you speak
 of;
 To reach to such fame as here you set forth,
 I am one, as I well know myself, most un-
 worthy.
 By God, should you think it were good, I'd be
 glad
 If I could or in word or action accomplish
 Your ladyship's pleasure—a pure joy 't would
 prove."
 "In good faith, Sir Gawain," the gay lady said,
 "Ill-bred I should be if I blamed or belittled
 The worth and prowess that please all others.
 There are ladies enough who'd be now more
 delighted
 To have you in thralldom, as here, sir, I have
 you
 To trifle gaily in talk most engaging,
 To give themselves comfort and quiet their
 cares
 Than have much of the gold and the goods they
 command.
 But to Him I give praise that ruleth the heaven
 That wholly I have in my hand what all wish."
 So she
 Gave him good cheer that day,
 She who was fair to see.
 To what she chanced to say
 With pure speech answered he.
 Quoth the merry man, "Madam, Mary re-
 ward you,
 For noble, in faith, I've found you, and gen-
 erous.
 People by others pattern their actions,
 But more than I merit to me they give praise;
 'T is your courteous self who can show naught
 but kindness."
 "By Mary," said she, "to me it seems other!
 Were I worth all the host of women now living,
 And had I the wealth of the world in my hands,
 Should I chaffer and choose to get me a
 champion,
 Sir, from the signs I've seen in you here
 Of courtesy, merry demeanor, and beauty,
 From what I have heard, and hold to be true,
 Before you no lord now alive would be chosen."
 "A better choice, madam, you truly have made;
 Yet I'm proud of the value you put now upon
 me.
 Your servant as seemly, I hold you my sover-
 eign,

Become your knight, and Christ give you quit-
tance."

Thus of much they talked till mid-morning was
past.

The lady behaved as if greatly she loved him,
But Gawain, on guard, right gracefully acted.
"Though I were the most lovely of ladies," she
thought,

"The less would he take with him love." He
was seeking

With speed,
Grief that must be: the stroke
That him should stun indeed.
She then of leaving spoke,
And promptly he agreed.

Then she gave him good-day, and glanced
at him, laughing,
And startled him, speaking sharp words as she
stood:

"He who blesses all words reward this re-
ception!

I doubt if indeed I may dub you Gawain."

"Wherefore?" he queried, quickly enquiring,
Afraid that he'd failed in his fashion of speech.
But the fair lady blesses him, speaking as fol-
lows:

"One as good as is Gawain the gracious con-
sidered,

(And courtly behavior's found wholly in him)
Not lightly so long could remain with a lady
Without, in courtesy, craving a kiss

At some slight subtle hint at the end of a story."

"Let it be as you like, lovely lady," said Gawain;

"As a knight is so bound, I'll kiss at your bid-
ding,

And lest he displease you, so plead no longer."

Then closer she comes, and catches the knight
In her arms, and salutes him, leaning down
affably.

Kindly each other to Christ they commend.

She goes forth at the door without further ado,
And he quickly makes ready to rise, and
hastens,

Calls to his chamberlain, chooses his clothes,

And merrily marches, when ready, to mass.

Then he fared to his meat, and fitly he feasted,
Made merry all day with amusements till moon-
rise.

None knew
A knight to better fare
With dames so worthy, two:

One old, one younger. There
Much mirth did then ensue.

Still was absent the lord of that land on his
pleasure,

To hunt barren hinds in wood and in heath.

By the set of the sun he had slain such a num-
ber

Of does and different deer that 't was wondrous.

10 Eagerly flocked in the folk at the finish,

And quickly made of the killed deer a quarry;

To this went the nobles with numerous men;

The game whose flesh was the fattest they
gathered;

15 With care, as the case required, cut them open.

And some the deer searched at the spot of as-
say,

And two fingers of fat they found in the poorest.

20 They slit at the base of the throat, seized the
stomach,

Scraped it away with a sharp knife and sewed
it;

Next slit the four limbs and stripped off the
hide;

25 Then opened the belly and took out the bowels
And flesh of the knot, quickly flinging them
out.

They laid hold of the throat, made haste to
divide, then,

30 The windpipe and gullet, and tossed out the
guts;

With their sharp knives carved out the shoul-
ders and carried them

Held through a small hole to have the sides
perfect.

35 The breast they sliced, and split it in two;

And then they began once again at the throat,

And quickly as far as its fork they cut it;

Pulled out the pluck, and promptly thereafter

40 Beside the ribs swiftly severed the fillets,

Cleared them off readily right by the backbone,

Straight down to the haunch, all hanging to-
gether.

They heaved it up whole, and hewed it off
there,

And the rest by the name of the numbles—and
rightly—

They knew.

Then where divide the thighs,

The folds behind they hew,

Hasten to cut the prize

Along the spine in two.

NARRATIVE POETRY · GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

And next both the head and the neck off
they hewed;
The sides from the backbone swiftly they sun-
dered;
The fee of the ravens they flung in the 5
branches.
They ran through each thick side a hole by the
ribs,
And hung up both by the hocks of the
haunches, 10
Each fellow to have the fee that was fitting.
On the fair beast's hide, they fed their hounds
With the liver and lights² and the paunch's
lining,
Among which bread steeped in blood was 15
mingled.
They blew boldly the blast for the prize; the
hounds barked.
Then the venison took they and turned toward
home, 20
And stoutly many a shrill note they sounded.
Ere close of the daylight, the company came
To the comely castle where Gawain in comfort
Sojourned.
And when he met the knight 25
As thither he returned,
Joy had they and delight,
Where the fire brightly burned.
In the hall the lord bade all his household to 30
gather,
And both the dames to come down with their
damsels.
In the room there before all the folk he ordered
His followers, truly, to fetch him his venison. 35
Gawain he called with courteous gaiety,
Asked him to notice the number of nimble
beasts,
Showed him the fairness of flesh on the ribs.
"Are you pleased with this play? Have I won 40
your praise?
Have I thoroughly earned your thanks through
my cunning?"
"In faith," said Sir Gawain, "this game is the
fairest 45
I've seen in the season of winter these seven
years."
"The whole of it, Gawain, I give you," the host
said;
"Because of our compact, as yours you may 50
claim it."
² lungs.

"That is true," the knight said, "and I tell you
the same:
That this I have worthily won within doors,
And surely to you with as good will I yield it."
5 With both of his arms his fair neck he em-
braced,
And the hero as courteously kissed as he could.
"I give you my gains. I got nothing further;
I freely would grant it, although it were
10 greater."
"It is good," said the good man; "I give you
my thanks.
Yet things so may be that you'd think it better
To tell where you won this same wealth by
15 your wit."
"T was no part of our pact," said he; "press
me no more;
For trust entirely in this, that you've taken
Your due."
20 With laughing merriment
And knightly speech and true
To supper soon they went
With store of dainties new.
25 In a chamber they sat, by the side of the
chimney,
Where men right frequently fetched them
mulled wine.
In their jesting, again they agreed on the mor-
row
To keep the same compact they came to be-
fore:
That whatever should chance, they'd exchange
at evening,
35 When greeting again, the new things they had
gotten.
Before all the court they agreed to the cove-
nant;
Then was the beverage brought forth in jest.
At last they politely took leave of each other,
And quickly each hero made haste to his couch.
When the cock but three times had crowed
and cackled,
45 The lord and his men had leaped from their
beds.
So that duly their meal was dealt with, and
mass,
And ere daylight they'd fared toward the forest,
on hunting
Intent.
The huntsmen with loud horns
Through level fields soon went,

GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT · NARRATIVE POETRY

<p>Uncoupling 'mid the thorns The hounds swift on the scent.</p> <p>Soon they cry for a search by the side of a swamp.</p> <p>The huntsmen encourage the hounds that first catch there</p> <p>The scent, and sharp words they shout at them loudly;</p> <p>And thither the hounds that heard them has- tened,</p> <p>And fast to the trail fell, forty at once.</p> <p>Then such clamor and din from the dogs that had come there</p> <p>Arose that the rocks all around them rang.</p> <p>With horn and with mouth the hunters heart- ened them;</p> <p>They gathered together then, all in a group, 'Twixt a pool in that copse and a crag most forbidding.</p> <p>At a stone-heap, beside the swamp, by a cliff, Where the rough rock had fallen in rugged confusion,</p> <p>They fared to the finding, the folk coming after.</p> <p>Around both the crag and the rubble-heap searched</p> <p>The hunters, sure that within them was hidden The beast whose presence was bayed by the bloodhounds.</p> <p>Then they beat on the bushes, and bade him rise up,</p> <p>And wildly he made for the men in his way, Rushing suddenly forth, of swine the most splendid.</p> <p>Apart from the herd he'd grown hoary with age,</p> <p>For fierce was the beast, the biggest of boars. Then many men grieved, full grim when he grunted,</p> <p>For three at his first thrust he threw to the earth,</p> <p>And then hurtled forth swiftly no harm doing further.</p> <p>They shrilly cried hil and shouted hey! hey! Put bugles to mouth, loudly blew the recall.</p> <p>The men and dogs merry in voice were and many;</p> <p>With outcry they all hurry after this boar To slay.</p> <p>He maims the pack when, fell, He oftens stands at bay.</p>	<p>Loudly they howl and yell, Sore wounded in the fray.</p> <p>Then to shoot at him came up the company quickly.</p> <p>Arrows that hit him right often they aimed, But their sharp points failed that fell on his shoulders'</p> <p>Tough skin, and the barbs would not bite in his flesh;</p> <p>But the smooth-shaven shafts were shivered in pieces,</p> <p>The heads wherever they hit him rebounding. But when hurt by the strength of the strokes they struck,</p> <p>Then mad for the fray he falls on the men, And deeply he wounds them as forward he dashes.</p> <p>Then many were frightened, and drew back in fear;</p> <p>But the lord galloped off on a light horse after him,</p> <p>Blew like a huntsman right bold the recall On his bugle, and rode through the thick of the bushes,</p> <p>Pursuing this swine till the sun shone clearly. Thus the day they passed in doing these deeds, While bides our gracious knight Gawain in bed, With bed-clothes in color right rich, at the castle</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Behind.</p> <p>The dame did not forget To give him greetings kind. She soon upon him set, To make him change his mind.</p> <p>Approaching the curtain, she peeps at the prince, And at once Sir Gawain welcomes her worthily.</p> <p>Promptly the lady makes her reply.</p> <p>By his side she seats herself softly, heartily Laughs, and with lovely look these words de- livers:</p> <p>"If you, sir, are Gawain, greatly I wonder That one so given at all times to goodness Should be not well versed in social conven- tions,</p> <p>Or, made once to know, should dismiss them from mind.</p> <p>You have promptly forgotten what I in the plainest Of talk that I knew of yesterday taught you."</p>
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NARRATIVE POETRY · GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

"What is that?" said the knight. "For truly I know not;

If it be as you say, I am surely to blame."

"Yet I taught you," quoth the fair lady, "of kissing;

When clearly he's favored, quickly to claim one Becomes each knight who practices courtesy."

"Cease, dear lady, such speech," said the strong man;

"I dare not for fear of refusal do that.

'T would be wrong to proffer and then be repulsed."

"In faith, you may not be refused," said the fair one;

"Sir, if you pleased, you have strength to compel it,

Should one be so rude as to wish to deny you."

"By God, yes," said Gawain, "good is your speech;

But unlucky is force in the land I live in,

And every gift that with good will's not given.

Your word I await to embrace when you wish;

You may start when you please, and stop at your pleasure."

With grace,

The lady, bending low,

Most sweetly kissed his face.

Of joy in love and woe

They talked for a long space.

"I should like," said the lady, "from you, sir, to learn,

If I roused not your anger by asking, the reason

Why you, who are now so young and valiant,

So known far and wide as knightly and courteous

(And principally, picked from all knighthood, is praised

The sport of true love and the science of arms;

For to tell of these true knights' toil, it is surely

The title inscribed and the text of their deeds,

How men their lives for their real love adventured,

Endured for their passion doleful days,

Then themselves with valor avenged, and their sorrow

Cast off, and brought bliss into bowers by their virtues),

Why you, thought the noblest knight of your time,

Whose renown and honor are everywhere noted,

Have so let me sit on two separate occasions Beside you, and hear proceed from your head

Not one word relating to love, less or more.

You so goodly in vowing your service and

5 gracious

Ought gladly to give to a young thing your guidance,

And show me some sign of the sleights of true love.

10 What! know you nothing, and have all renown?

Or else do you deem me too dull, for your talking

Unfit?

For shame! Alone I come;

To learn some sport I sit;

My lord is far from home;

Now, teach me by your wit."

"In good faith," said Gawain, "God you reward;

For great is the happiness, huge the gladness

That one so worthy should want to come hither,

And pains for so poor a man take, as in play

With your knight with looks of regard; it delights me.

25

But to take up the task of telling of true love,

To touch on those themes, and on tales of arms

To you who've more skill in that art, I am certain,

30

By half than a hundred men have such as I,

Or ever shall have while here upon earth,

By my faith, 't would be, madam, a manifold folly.

Your bidding I'll do, as in duty bound,

35

To the height of my power, and will hold myself ever

Your ladyship's servant, so save me the Lord."

Thus the fair lady tempted and tested him often

40

To make the man sin—what'er more she'd in mind;

But so fair his defense was, no fault was apparent,

Nor evil on either side; each knew but joy

On that day.

At last she kissed him lightly,

After long mirth and play,

And took her leave politely,

And went upon her way.

50

The man bestirs himself, springs up for mass.

GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT · NARRATIVE POETRY

Then made ready and splendidly served was
their dinner;

In sport with the ladies he spent all the day.
But the lord through fields oft dashed as he
followed

The savage swine, that sped o'er the slopes,
And in two bit the backs of the best of his
hounds

Where he stood at bay; till 't was broken by
bowmen,

Who made him, despite himself, move to the
open,

The shafts flew so thick when the throng had
assembled.

Yet sometimes he forced the stoutest to flinch, 15

Till at last too weary he was to run longer,
But came with such haste as he could to a hole
In a mound, by a rock whence the rivulet runs
out.

He started to scrape the soil, backed by the 20
slope,

While froth from his mouth's ugly corners came
foaming.

White were the tushes³ he whetted. The bold
men

Who stood round grew tired of trying from far
To annoy him, but dared not for danger draw
nearer.

Before,

So many he did pierce
That all were loth a boar
So frenzied and so fierce
Should tear with tusks once more,

Till the hero himself came, spurring his 35
horse,

Saw him standing at bay, the hunters beside
him.

He leaped down right lordly, leaving his
courser,

Unsheathed a bright sword and strode forth
stoutly,

Made haste through the ford where that fierce
one was waiting.

Aware of the hero with weapon in hand, 45

So savagely, bristling his back up, he snorted
All feared for the wight lest the worst befall
him.

Then rushed out the boar directly upon him,
And man was mingled with beast in the midst 50

Of the wildest water. The boar had the worse,
For the man aimed a blow at the beast as he
met him,

And surely with sharp blade struck o'er his
5 breast bone,

That smote to the hilt, and his heart cleft
asunder.

He squealing gave way, and swift through the
water

Went back.

By a hundred hounds he's caught,

Who fiercely him attack;

To open ground he's brought,

And killed there by the pack.

The blast for the beast's death was blown on
sharp horns,

And the lords there loudly and clearly hallooed.
At the beast bayed the brachets, as bid by their

masters,

The chief, in that hard, long chase, of the
hunters.

Then one who was wise in woodcraft began
To slice up this swine in the seemliest manner.

25 First he hews off his head, and sets it on high;

Then along the back roughly rends him apart.

He hales out the bowels, and broils them on hot
coals,

With these mixed with bread, rewarding his
30 brachets.

Then slices the flesh in fine, broad slabs,

And pulls out the edible entrails properly.

Whole, though, he gathers the halves together,

And proudly upon a stout pole he places them.

Homeward they now with this very swine
hasten,

Bearing in front of the hero the boar's head,
Since him at the ford by the force of his strong

hand

He slew.

It seemed long till he met

In hall Sir Gawain, who

Hastened, when called, to get

The payment that was due.

The lord called out loudly, merrily laughed
When Gawain he saw, and gladsomely spoke.

The good ladies were sent for, the household
assembled;

He shows them the slices of flesh, and the story

He tells of his largeness and length, and how
fierce

³ tusks.

NARRATIVE POETRY · GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

Was the war in the woods where the wild swine
had fled.

Sir Gawain commended his deeds right gra-
ciously,

Praised them as giving proof of great prowess. 5
Such brawn on a beast, the bold man declared,
And such sides on a swine he had ne'er before
seen.

Then they handled the huge head; the cour-
teous hero 10

Praised it, horror-struck, honoring his host.
Quoth the Goodman, "Now, Gawain, yours is
this game

By our covenant, fast and firm, you know truly." 15
"It is so," said the knight; "and as certain and
sure

All I get I'll give you again as I pledged you."
He about the neck caught, with courtesy kissed
him,

And soon a second time served him the same 20
way.

Said Gawain, "We've fairly fulfilled the agree-
ment

This evening we entered on, each to the other
Most true."

"I, by Saint Giles, have met
None," said the lord, "like you.
Riches you soon will get,
If you such business do."

And then the tables they raised upon trestles,
And laid on them cloths; the light leaped up
clearly

Along by the walls, where the waxen torches
Were set by the henchmen who served in the 35
hall.

A great sound of sport and merriment sprang
up

Close by the fire, and on frequent occasions
At supper and afterward, many a splendid 40
song,

Conduits⁴ of Christmas, new carols, all kinds
Of mannerly mirth that a man may tell of.

Our seemly knight ever sat at the side
Of the lady, who made so agreeable her man- 45
ner,

With sly, secret glances to glad him, so stalwart,
That greatly astonished was Gawain, and wroth
With himself; he in courtesy could not refuse
her,

But acted becomingly, courtly, whatever
The end, good or bad, of his action might be.

When quite
Done was their play at last,
The host called to the knight,
And to his room they passed
To where the fire burned bright.

The men there make merry and drink, and
once more

The same pact for New Year's Eve is proposed;
But the knight craved permission to mount on
the morrow:

The appointment approached where he had to
appear.

But the lord him persuaded to stay and linger,
And said, "On my word as a knight I assure
you

You'll get to the Green Chapel, Gawain, on
New Year's,

And far before prime,⁵ to finish your business.
Remain in your room then, and take your rest.
I shall hunt in the wood and exchange with
you winnings,

25 As bound by our bargain, when back I return,
For twice I've found you were faithful when
tried:

In the morning 'best be the third time,' re-
member.

30 Let's be mindful of mirth while we may, and
make merry,

For care when one wants it is quickly en-
countered."

At once this was granted, and Gawain is
stayed;

Drink blithely was brought him; to bed they
were lighted.

The guest
In quiet and comfort spent
The night, and took his rest.
On his affairs intent,
The host was early dressed.

After mass a morsel he took with his men.

The morning was merry; his mount he de-
manded.

The knights who'd ride in his train were in
readiness,

Dressed and horsed at the door of the hall.

50

⁵ the first of the canonical hours, or the first hour
of the day.

⁴ songs, tunes.

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Wondrous fair were the fields, for the frost was
clinging;

Bright red in the cloud-rack rises the sun,
And full clear sails close past the clouds in the
sky.

The hunters unleashed all the hounds by a
woodside:

The rocks with the blast of their bugles were
ringing.

Some dogs there fall on the scent where the
fox is,

And trail oft a traitoress using her tricks.

A hound gives tongue at it; huntsmen call to
him;

Hastens the pack to the hound sniffing hard,

And right on his track run off in a rabble,

He scampering before them. They started the
fox soon;

When finally they saw him, they followed fast,
Denouncing him clearly with clamorous an-
ger.

Through many a dense grove he dodges and
twists,

Doubling back and harkening at hedges right
often;

At last by a little ditch leaps o'er a thorn-hedge,
Steals out stealthily, skirting a thicket

In thought from the wood to escape by his
wiles

From the hounds; then, unknowing, drew near
to a hunting-stand.

There hurled themselves, three at once, on him
strong hounds,

All gray.

With quick swerve he doth start

Afresh without dismay.

With great grief in his heart

To the wood he goes away.

Huge was the joy then to hark to the hounds.

When the pack all met him, mingled together,
Such curses they heaped on his head at the
sight

That the clustering cliffs seemed to clatter down
round them

In heaps. The men, when they met him, hailed
him,

And loudly with chiding speeches hallooed him;
Threats were oft thrown at him, thief he was
called;

At his tail were the greyhounds, that tarry he
might not.

They rushed at him oft when he raced for the
open,

And ran to the wood again, reynard the wily.
Thus he led them, all muddled, the lord and
his men,

In this manner along through the hills until
midday.

At home, the noble knight wholesomely slept
In the cold of the morn within comely curtains.

But the lady, for love, did not let herself sleep,
Or fail in the purpose fixed in her heart;

But quickly she roused herself, came there
quickly,

Arrayed in a gay robe that reached to the
ground,

The skins of the splendid fur skillfully trimmed
close.

On her head no colors save jewels, well-cut,
That were twined in her hair-fret in clusters of
twenty.

Her fair face was completely exposed, and her
throat;

In front her breast too was bare, and her back.
She comes through the chamber-door, closes it
after her,

Swings wide a window, speaks to the wight,
And rallies him soon in speech full of sport

And good cheer.

"Ah! man, how can you sleep?"

The morning is so clear."

He was in sorrow deep,

Yet her he then did hear.

In a dream muttered Gawain, deep in its
gloom,

Like a man by a throng of sad thoughts sorely
moved

Of how fate was to deal out his destiny to him
That morn, when he met the man at the Green
Chapel,

Bound to abide his blow, unresisting,

But as soon as that comely one came to his
senses,

Started from slumber and speedily answered,

The lovely lady came near, sweetly laughing,
Bent down o'er his fair face and daintily kissed
him.

And well, in a worthy manner, he welcomed
her.

Seeing her glorious, gayly attired,

Without fault in her features, most fine in her
color,

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Deep joy came welling up, warming his heart.
 With sweet, gentle smiling they straightway
 grew merry;
 So passed naught between them but pleasure,
 joy,

And delight.
 Goodly was their debate,
 Nor was their gladness slight.
 Their peril had been great
 Had Mary quit her knight.

For that noble princess pressed him so
 closely,
 Brought him so near the last bound, that her
 love
 He was forced to accept, or, offending, refuse
 her:

Concerned for his courtesy not to prove cai-
 tiff,
 And more for his ruin if wrong he committed,
 Betraying the hero, the head of that house.
 "God forbid," said the knight; "that never shall
 be";

And lovingly laughing a little, he parried
 The words of fondness that fell from her mouth.
 She said to him, "Sir, you are surely to blame
 If you love not the lady beside whom you're
 lying,

Of all the world's women most wounded in
 heart,

Unless you've one dearer, a lover you like more,
 Your faith to her plighted, so firmly made fast
 You desire not to loosen it—so I believe.
 Now tell me truly I pray you; the truth.

By all of the loves that in life are, conceal not
 Through guile."

The knight said, "By Saint John,"
 And pleasantly to smile
 Began, "In faith I've none,
 Nor will have for a while."

"Such words," said the lady, "the worst are
 of all;

But in sooth I am answered, and sad it seems
 to me.

Kiss me now kindly, and quickly I'll go;
 I on earth may but mourn, as a much loving
 mortal."

Sighing she stoops down, and kisses him
 seemly;

Then starting away from him, says as she
 stands,

"Now, my dear, at parting, do me this pleasure:
 Give me some gift, thy glove if it might be,
 To bring you to mind, sir, my mourning to
 lessen."

5 "On my word," quoth the hero, "I would that
 I had here,

For thy sake, the thing that I think the dearest
 I own, for in sooth you've deserved very often
 A greater reward than one I could give.

10 But a pledge of love would profit but little;
 'T would help not your honor to have at this
 time

For a keepsake a glove, as a gift of Gawain.
 I've come on a mission to countries most
 strange;

15 I've no servants with splendid things filling
 their sacks:

That displeases me, lady, for love's sake, at
 present;

20 Yet each man without murmur must do what
 he may

Nor repine."

"Nay, lord of honors high,
 Though I have naught of thine,"
 Quoth the lovely lady, "I
 Shall give you gift of mine."

She offered a rich ring, wrought in red gold,
 With a blazing stone that stood out above it,
 30 And shot forth brilliant rays bright as the sun;
 Wit you well that wealth right huge it was
 worth.

But promptly the hero replied, refusing it,
 "Madam, I care not for gifts now to keep;
 I have none to tender and naught will I take."
 Thus he ever declined her offer right earnest,
 And swore on his word that he would not ac-
 cept it;

And, sad he declined, she thereupon said,
 40 "If my ring you refuse, since it seems too rich,
 If you would not so highly to me be beholden,
 My girdle, that profits you less, I'll give you."
 She swiftly removed the belt circling her sides,
 Round her tunic knotted, beneath her bright
 mantle;

45 'T was fashioned of green silk, and fair made
 with gold,
 With gold, too, the borders embellished and
 beautiful.

50 To Gawain she gave it, and gaily besought him
 To take it, although he thought it but trifling.
 He swore by no manner of means he'd accept

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Either gold or treasure ere God gave him grace
To attain the adventure he'd there undertaken.
"And, therefore, I pray, let it prove not dis-
pleasing,

But give up your suit, for to grant it I'll never

Agree.
I'm deeply in your debt
For your kind ways to me,
In hot and cold I yet
Will your true servant be."

"Refuse ye this silk," the lady then said,
"As slight in itself? Truly it seems so.
Lo! it is little, and less is its worth;
But one knowing the nature knit up within it,
Would give it a value more great, peradventure;
For no man girt with this girdle of green,
And bearing it fairly made fast about him,
Might ever be cut down by any on earth,
For his life in no way in the world could be
taken."

Then mused the man, and it came to his mind
In the peril appointed him precious 't would
prove

When he'd found the chapel, to face there his
fortune.

The device, might he slaying evade, would be
splendid.

Her suit then he suffered, and let her speak;

And the belt she offered him, earnestly urging
it

(And Gawain consented), and gave it with
good will,

And prayed him for her sake ne'er to display it,
But, true, from her husband to hide it. The
hero

Agreed that no one should know of it ever.

Then he
Thanked her with all his might
Of heart and thought; and she
By then to this stout knight
Had given kisses three.

Then the lady departs, there leaving the
lord,

For more pleasure she could not procure from
that prince.

When she's gone, then quickly Sir Gawain
clothes himself,

Rises and dresses in noble array,

Lays by the love-lace the lady had left him,
Faithfully hides it where later he'd find it.

At once then went on his way to the chapel,
Approached in private a priest, and prayed him
To make his life purer, more plainly him teach
How his soul, when he had to go hence, should
be saved.

He declared his faults, confessing them fully,
The more and the less, and mercy besought,
And then of the priest implored absolution.

He surely absolved him, and made him as spot-
less,

Indeed, as if doomsday were due on the mor-
row.

Then among the fair ladies he made more
merry

With lovely caroles, all kinds of delights,
That day than before, until darkness fell.

All there

Were treated courteously,

"And never," they declare,

"Has Gawain shown such glee

Since hither he did fare."

In that nook where his lot may be love let
him linger!

The lord's in the meadow still, leading his
men.

He has slain this fox that he followed so long;
As he vaulted a hedge to get view of the
villain,

Hearing the hounds that hastened hard after
him,

Reynard from out a rough thicket came run-
ning,

And right at his heels in a rush all the rabble.

He, seeing that wild thing, wary, awaits him,
Unsheaths his bright brand and strikes at the
beast.

And he swerved from its sharpness and back
would have started;

A hound, ere he could, came hurrying up to
him;

All of them fell on him fast by the horse's feet,
Worried that sly one with wrathful sound.

And quickly the lord alights, and catches him,
Takes him in haste from the teeth of the

hounds,

And over his head holds him high, loudly
shouting,

Where brachets, many and fierce, at him
barked.

Thither huntsmen made haste with many a
horn,

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The recall, till they saw him, sounding right
clearly.
As soon as his splendid troop had assembled,
All bearing a bugle blew them together,
The others having no horns all hallooed. 5
'T was the merriest baying that man ever
heard
That was raised for the soul of reynard with
sounding

Din.

They fondle each dog's head
Who his reward did win.
Then take they reynard dead
And strip him of his skin.

And now, since near was the night, they
turned homeward,
Strongly and sturdily sounding their horns.
At last at his loved home the lord alighted,
A fire on the hearth found, the hero beside it, 20
Sir Gawain the good, who glad was withal,
For he had 'mong the ladies in love much de-
light.
A blue robe that fell to the floor he was wear-
ing;
His surcoat, that softly was furred, well be-
seemed him;
A hood of the same hue hung on his shoulders,
And both were bordered with white all about.
He, mid-most, met the good man in the hall, 30
And greeted him gladly, graciously saying:
"Now shall I first fulfill our agreement
We struck to good purpose, when drink was
not spared."
Then Gawain embraced him, gave him three 35
kisses,
The sweetest and soundest a man could bestow.
"By Christ, you'd great happiness," quoth then
the host,
"I'm getting these wares, if good were your 40
bargains."
"Take no care for the cost," the other said
quickly,
"Since plainly the debt that is due I have
paid." 45
Said the other, "By Mary, mine's of less worth.
The whole of the day I have hunted, and got-
ten
The skin of this fox—the fiend take its foul-
ness!—
Right poor to pay for things of such price 50

As you've pressed on me here so heartily,
kisses
So good."
"Say no more," Gawain saith;
"I thank you, by the rood!"⁶
How the fox met his death
He told him as they stood.

With mirth and minstrelsy, meat at their
pleasure 10
They made as merry as any men might
(With ladies' laughter, and launching of jests
Right glad were they both, the good man and
Gawain)
15 Unless they had doted or else had been
drunken.
Both the man and the company make many
jokes,
Till the time is come when the two must be
parted, 20
When finally the knights are forced to go bed-
ward.
And first of the lord his respectful leave
This goodly man took, and graciously thanked
him: 25
"May God you reward for the welcome you
gave me
This high feast, the splendid sojourn I've had
here.
30 I give you myself, if you'd like it, to serve you.
I must, as you know, on the morrow move on;
Give me someone to show me the path, as you
said,
To the Green Chapel, there, as God will allow
me,
On New Year the fate that is fixed to perform."
"With a good will, indeed," said the good man;
"whatever
I promised to do I deem myself ready." 40
He a servant assigns on his way to set him,
To take him by hills that no trouble he'd have,
And through grove and wood by the way most
direct
Might repair.
The lord he thanked again
For the honor done him there.
The knight his farewell then
Took of those ladies fair.

To them with sorrow and kissing he spoke,
⁶ the Cross.

And besought them his thanks most sincere to accept;

And they, replying, promptly returned them,
With sighings full sore to the Savior com-
mended him.

Then he with courtesy quitted the company,
Giving each man that he met his thanks
For kindness, for trouble he'd taken, for care
Whereby each had sought to serve him right
eagerly.

Pained was each person to part with him then,
As if long they in honor had lived with that
noble.

With people and lights he was led to his
chamber,

To bed gaily brought there to be at his rest;
Yet I dare not say whether soundly he slept,
For much, if he would, on the morn to remem-
ber

Had he.

Let him lie stilly there
Near what he sought to see.
What happened I'll declare,
If you will silent be.

PART IV

The New Year draws near, and the night-
time now passes;

The day, as the Lord bids, drives on to dark-
ness.

Outside, there sprang up wild storms in the
world;

The clouds cast keenly the cold to the earth
With enough of the north sting to trouble the
naked;

Down shivered the snow, nipping sharply the
wild beasts;

The wind from the heights, shrilly howling,
came rushing,

And heaped up each dale full of drifts right
huge.

Full well the man listened who lay in his bed.
Though he shut tight his lids, he slept but a
little;

He knew by each cock that crowed 't was the
tryst time,

And swiftly ere dawn of the day he arose,
For there shone then the light of a lamp in his
room;

To his chamberlain called, who answered him
quickly,

And bade him his saddle to bring and his mail-
shirt.

The other man roused up and fetched him his
raiment,

5 Arrayed then that knight in a fashion right
noble.

First he clad him in clothes to ward off the
cold,

Then his other equipment, carefully kept:

10 His pieces of plate armor, polished right
cleanly,

The rings of his rich mail burnished from rust.
All was fresh as at first; he was fain to give
thanks

To the men.

He had on every piece

Full brightly burnished then.

He, gayest from here to Greece,

Ordered his steed again.

20 He garbed himself there in the loveliest gar-
ments

(His coat had its blazon of beautiful needle-
work

25 Stitched upon velvet for show, its rich stones
Set about it and studded, its seams all em-
broidered,

Its lovely fur in the fairest of linings),

Yet he left not the lace, the gift of the lady:

30 That, Gawain did not, for his own sake, forget.
When the brand on his rounded thighs he had
belted,

He twisted the love-token two times about him.

That lord round his waist with delight quickly
35 wound

The girdle of green silk, that seemed very gay
Upon royal red cloth that was rich to behold.

But Gawain the girdle wore not for its great
price,

40 Or pride in its pendants although they were
polished,

Though glittering gold there gleamed on the
ends,

But himself to save when he needs must suffer

45 The death, nor could stroke then of sword or of
knife

Him defend.

Then was the bold man dressed;

Quickly his way did wend;

To all the court expressed

His great thanks without end.

Then was Gringolet ready, that great was
and huge,
Who had safely, as seemed to him pleasant,
been stabled;

That proud horse pranced, in the pink of con-
dition.

The lord then comes to him, looks at his coat,
And soberly says, and swears on his word,
"In this castle's a company mindful of courtesy,
Led by this hero. Delight may they have;
And may love the dear lady betide all her
lifetime.

If they for charity cherish a guest,
And give so great welcome, may God reward
them,
Who rules the heaven on high, and the rest of
you.

Might I for long live my life on the earth,
Some repayment with pleasure I'd make, if
't were possible."

He steps in the stirrup, strides into the saddle,
Receives on his shoulder the shield his man
brings him,
And spurs into Gringolet strikes with his gilt
heels;

Who leaps on the stones and lingers no longer
To prance.

The knight on his horse sits,
Who bears his spear and lance,
The house to Christ commits,
And wishes it good chance.

Then down the drawbridge they dropped,
the broad gates
Unbarred, and on both sides bore them wide
open.

He blessed them quickly, and crossed o'er the
planks there
(He praises the porter, who knelt by the
prince

Begging God to save Gawain, and gave him
good-day),
And went on his way with but one man at-
tended

To show him the turns to that sorrowful spot
Where he must to that onerous onset submit.
By hillsides where branches were bare they
both journeyed;

They climbed over cliffs where the cold was
clinging.

The clouds hung aloft, but 't was lowering be-
neath them.

On the moor dripped the mist, on the moun-
tains melted;

Each hill had a hat, a mist-cloak right huge.
The brooks foamed and bubbled on hillsides
about them,

And brightly broke on their banks as they
rushed down.

Full wandering the way was they went
through the wood,

10 Until soon it was time for the sun to be spring-
ing.

Then they
Were on a hill full high;
White snow beside them lay.
The servant who rode nigh
Then bade his master stay.

"I have led you hither, my lord, at this time,
And not far are you now from that famous
place

You have sought for, and asked so especially
after.

Yet, sir, to you surely I'll say, since I know you,
A man in this world whom I love right well,
25 If you'd follow my judgment, the better you'd
fare.

You make haste to a place that is held full of
peril;

One dwells, the worst in the world, in that
waste,

30 For he's strong and stern, and takes pleasure
in striking.

No man on the earth can equal his might;
He is bigger in body than four of the best men

35 In Arthur's own household, Hector or others.
And thus he brings it about at the chapel:

That place no one passes so proud in his arms
That he smites him not dead with a stroke of
his hand.

40 He's a man most immoderate, showing no
mercy;

Be it chaplain or churl that rides by the chapel,
Monk or priest, any manner of man,

Him to slay seems as sweet as to still live him-
self.

So I say, as sure as you sit in your saddle
You're killed, should the knight so choose, if
you come here;

That take as the truth, though you twenty
lives had

50 To spend.
He's lived in this place long

<p>In battles without end. Against his strokes right strong You cannot you defend.</p> <p>"So let him alone, good Sir Gawain, and leave by a different road, for God's sake, and ride to some other country where Christ may re- ward you. and homeward again I will hie me, and prom- 10 ise to swear by the Lord and all his good saints So help me the oaths on God's halidom[†] sworn)</p> <p>That I'll guard well your secret, and give out 15 no story You hastened to flee any hero I've heard of." "Thank you," said Gawain, and grudgingly added,</p> <p>'Good fortune go with you for wishing me well. 20 And truly I think you'd not tell; yet though never So surely you hid it, if hence I should hasten, Fearful, to fly in the fashion you tell of, A coward I'd prove, and could not be par- 25 doned. The chapel I'll find whatsoever befalls, And talk with that wight the way that I want to, Let weal or woe follow as fate may wish. 30 Though the knave, Hard to subdue and fell, Should stand there with a stave, Yet still the Lord knows well His servants how to save."</p> <p>Quoth the man, "By Mary, you've said now this much: That you wish to bring down your own doom on your head. Since you'd lose your life, I will stay you no longer. Put your helm on your head, take your spear in your hand, And ride down this road by the side of that 45 rock Till it brings you down to the dale's rugged bottom; Then look at the glade on the left hand a little: You'll see in the valley that self-same chapel, 50</p>	<p>And near it the great-limbed knight who is guarding it. Gawain the noble, farewell now, in God's name!</p> <p>5 I would not go with thee for all the world's wealth, Nor in fellowship ride one more foot through the forest."</p> <p>The man in the trees there then turns his bridle, As hard as he can hits his horse with his heels, And across the fields gallops, there leaving Sir Gawain</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Alone.</p> <p>"By God," the knight said, "now I'll neither weep nor groan. Unto God's will I bow, And make myself his own."</p> <p>He strikes spurs into Gringolet, starts on the path; By a bank at the side of a small wood he pushes in, Rides down the rugged slope right to the dale. Then about him he looks, and the land seems wild, And nowhere he sees any sign of a shelter, But slopes on each side of him, high and steep, And rocks, gnarled and rough, and stones right rugged. 30 The clouds there seemed to him scraped by the crags. Then he halted and held back his horse at that time, 35 And spied on all sides in search of the chapel; Such nowhere he saw, but soon, what seemed strange, In the midst of a glade a mound, as it might be, 40 A smooth, swelling knoll by the side of the water, The falls of a rivulet running close by; In its banks the brook bubbled as though it were boiling. The knight urged on Gringolet, came to the glade, There leaped down lightly and tied to the limb Of a tree, right rugged, the reins of his noble steed, Went to the mound, and walked all about it, Debating what manner of thing it might be:</p>
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[†] holiness.

NARRATIVE POETRY · GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

On the end and on each side an opening;
 everywhere
 Over it grass was growing in patches,
 All hollow inside, it seemed an old cave
 Or a crag's old cleft: which, he could not decide.
 Said the knight,
 "Is this the chapel here?
 Alas, dear Lord! here might
 The fiend, when midnight's near,
 His matin prayers recite.
 "Of a truth," said Gawain, "the glade here
 is gloomy;
 The Green Chapel's ugly, with herbs over-
 grown.
 It greatly becomes here that hero, green-clad,
 To perform in the devil's own fashion his wor-
 ship.
 I feel in my five senses this is the fiend
 Who has made me come to this meeting to
 kill me.
 Destruction fall on this church of ill-fortune!
 The cursedest chapel that ever I came to!"
 With helm on his head and lance in his hand
 He went right to the rock of that rugged
 abode.
 From the high hill he heard, from a hard rock
 over
 The stream, on the hillside, a sound wondrous
 loud.
 Lo! it clattered on cliffs fit to cleave them, as
 though
 A scythe on a grindstone someone were grind-
 ing.
 It whirled, lo! and whizzed like a water-mill's
 wheel;
 Lo! it ground and it grated, grievous to hear.
 "By God, this thing, as I think," then said
 Gawain,
 "Is done now for me, since my due turn to
 meet it
 Is near.
 God's will be done! 'Ah woel'
 No whit doth aid me here.
 Though I my life forego
 No sound shall make me fear."
 And then the man there commenced to call
 loudly,
 "Who here is the master, with me to hold
 tryst?"
 For Gawain the good now is going right near.
 He who craves aught of me let him come hither
 quickly;
 'T is now or never; he needs to make haste."
 Said somebody, "Stop," from the slope up
 above him,
 "And promptly you'll get what I promised to
 give you."
 Yet he kept up the whirring noise quickly a
 while,
 Turned to finish his sharpening before he'd
 descend.
 Then he came by a crag, from a cavern emerg-
 ing,
 Whirled out of a den with a dreadful weapon,
 A new Danish ax to answer the blow with;
 Its blade right heavy, curved back to the
 handle,
 Sharp filed with the filing tool, four feet in
 length,
 'T was no less, by the reach of that lace gleam-
 ing brightly.
 The fellow in green was garbed as at first,
 Both his face and his legs, his locks and his
 beard,
 Save that fast o'er the earth on his feet he went
 fairly,
 The shaft on the stone set, and stalked on be-
 side it.
 On reaching the water, he would not wade
 it;
 On his ax he hopped over, and hastily strode,
 Very fierce, through the broad field filled all
 about him
 With snow.
 Sir Gawain met the man,
 And bowed by no means low,
 Who said, "Good sir, men can
 Trust you to tryst to go."
 Said the green man, "Gawain, may God you
 guard!
 You are welcome indeed, sir knight, at my
 dwelling.
 Your travel you've timed as a true man should,
 And you know the compact we came to be-
 tween us;
 A twelvemonth ago you took what chance
 gave,
 And I promptly at New Year was pledged to
 repay you.
 In truth, we are down in this dale all alone;

Though we fight as we please, here there's no
one to part us.

Put your helm from your head, and have here
your payment;

Debate no further than I did before,
When you slashed off my head with a single
stroke."

"Nay," quoth Gawain, "by God who gave me
my spirit,

I'll harbor no grudge whatever harm happens. 10
Exceed not one stroke and still I shall stand;
You may do as you please, I'll in no way op-
pose

The blow."

He left the flesh all bare,
Bending his neck down low
As if he feared naught there,
For fear he would not show.

Then the man in green raiment quickly 20
made ready,

Uplifted his grim tool Sir Gawain to smite;
With the whole of his strength he heaved it on
high,

As threateningly swung it as though he would 25
slay him.

Had it fallen again with the force he intended
That lord, ever-brave, from the blow had been
lifeless.

But Gawain a side glance gave at the weapon 30
As down it came gliding to do him to death;
With his shoulders shrank from the sharp iron
a little.

The other with sudden jerk stayed the bright
ax,

And reproved then that prince with proud
words in plenty:

"Not Gawain thou art who so good is con-
sidered,

Ne'er daunted by host in hill or in dale; 40
Now in fear, ere thou feelest a hurt, thou art
flinching;

Such cowardice never I knew of that knight.
When you swung at me, sir, I fled not nor
started;

No cavil I offered in King Arthur's castle.

My head at my feet fell, yet never I flinched,
And thy heart is afraid ere a hurt thou feelest,
And therefore thy better I'm bound to be
thought

On that score."

"I shrank once," Gawain said,

"And I will shrink no more;
Yet cannot I my head,
If it fall down, restore.

5 "But make ready, sir, quickly, and come to
the point;

My destiny deal me, and do it forthwith;
For a stroke I will suffer, and start no further
Till hit with thy weapon; have here my pledged
word."

Quoth the other, heaving it high, "Have at
theel!"

As fierce in his manner as if he were mad,
He mightily swung but struck not the man.

15 Withheld on a sudden his hand ere it hurt him.
And firmly he waited and flinched in no mem-
ber,

But stood there as still as a stone or a stump
In rocky ground held by a hundred roots.

Then the Green Knight again began to speak
gaily:

"It behooves me to hit, now that whole is thy
heart.

Thy high hood that Arthur once gave you now
hold back,

Take care that your neck at this cut may re-
cover."

And Gawain full fiercely said in a fury,

"Come! lay on, thou dread man; too long thou
art threatening.

I think that afraid of your own self you feel."

"In sooth," said the other, "thy speech is so
savage

No more will I hinder thy mission nor have it
Delayed."

With puckered lips and brow

He stands with ready blade,

Not strange 't is hateful now

To him past hope of aid.

He lifts his ax lightly, and lets it down deftly,
The blade's edge next to the naked neck.

Though he mightily hammered he hurt him no
more

45 Than to give him a slight nick that severed the
skin there.

Through fair skin the keen ax so cut to the flesh
That shining blood shot to the earth o'er his
shoulders.

50 As soon as he saw his blood gleam on the snow
He sprang forth in one leap, for more than a
spear length;

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His helm fiercely caught up and clapped on his
 head;
 With his shoulders his fair shield shot round in
 front of him,
 Pulled out his bright sword, and said in a 5
 passion
 (And since he was mortal man born of his
 mother
 The hero was never so happy by half),
 "Cease thy violence, man; no more to me offer, 10
 For here I've received, unresisting, a stroke.
 If a second thou strikest I soon will requite
 thee,
 And swiftly and fiercely, be certain of that,
 Will repay.
 One stroke on me might fall
 By bargain struck that way,
 Arranged in Arthur's hall;
 Therefore, sir knight, now stay!"

The man turned away, on his weapon
 rested,
 The shaft on the ground set, leaned on the
 sharp edge,
 And gazed at Sir Gawain there in the glade; 25
 Saw that bold man, unblenching, standing right
 bravely,
 Full-harnessed and gallant; at heart he was
 glad.
 Then gaily the Green Knight spoke in a great 30
 voice,
 And said to the man in speech that resounded,
 "Now be not so savage, bold sir, for towards
 you
 None here has acted unhandsomely, save 35
 In accord with the compact arranged in the
 King's court.
 I promised the stroke you've received, so hold
 you
 Well paid. I free you from all duties further. 40
 If brisk I had been, peradventure a buffet
 I'd harshly have dealt that harm would have
 done you.
 In mirth, with a feint I menaced you first,
 With no direful wound rent you; right was 45
 my deed,
 By the bargain that bound us both on the first
 night,
 When, faithful and true, you fulfilled our agree-
 ment,
 And gave me your gain as a good man ought 50
 to.

The second I struck at you, sir, for the morning
 You kissed my fair wife and the kisses accorded
 me.
 Two mere feints for both times I made at you,
 man, Without woe.
 True men restore by right,
 One fears no danger so;
 You failed the third time, knight,
 And therefore took that blow.
 'Tis my garment you're wearing, that
 woven girdle,
 Bestowed by my wife, as in truth I know well.
 I know also your kisses and all of your acts
 15 And my wife's advances; myself, I devised
 them.
 I sent her to try you, and truly you seem
 The most faultless of men that e'er fared on
 his feet.
 20 As a pearl compared to white peas is more
 precious,
 So next to the other gay knights is Sir Gawain
 But a little you lacked and loyalty wanted,
 Yet truly 't was not for intrigue or for wooing,
 25 But love of your life; the less do I blame you."
 Sir Gawain stood in a study a great while,
 So sunk in disgrace that in spirit he groaned;
 To his face all the blood in his body was flow-
 ing;
 30 For shame, as the other was talking, he shrank.
 And these were the first words that fell from
 his lips:
 "Be cowardice cursed, and coveting! In you
 Are vice and villainy, virtue destroying."
 35 The lace he then seized, and loosened the
 strands,
 And fiercely the girdle flung at the Green
 Knight.
 "Lo! there is faith-breaking! evil befell it.
 To coveting came I, for cowardice caused me
 From fear of your stroke to forsake in myself
 What belongs to a knight: munificence, loyalty.
 I'm faulty and false, who've been ever afraid
 Of untruth and treachery; sorrow betide both
 And care!
 Here I confess my sin;
 All faulty did I fare.
 Your good will let me win,
 And then I will beware."

Then the Green Knight laughed, and right
 graciously said,

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"I am sure that the harm is healed that I suffered.

So clean you're confessed, so cleared of your faults,

Having had the point of my weapon's plain penance,

I hold you now purged of offense, and as perfectly

Spotless as though you'd ne'er sinned in your life.

And I give to you, sir, the golden-hemmed girdle,

As green as my gown. Sir Gawain, when going

Forth on your way among famous princes, Think still of our strife and this token right splendid,

'Mid chivalrous knights, of the chapel's adventure.

This New Year you'll come to my castle again, And the rest of this feast in revel most pleasant

Will go."

Then pressed him hard the lord:

"My wife and you, I know

We surely will accord,

Who was your bitter foe."

"No indeed," quoth the hero, his helm seized and doffed it

Graciously, thanking the Green Knight; "I've stayed

Long enough. May good fortune befall you; may He

Who all fame doth confer give it fully to you, sir.

To your lady, gracious and lovely, commend me,

To her and that other, my honored ladies,

That so with their sleights deceived their knight subtly.

But no marvel it is for a fool to act madly,

Through woman's wiles to be brought to woe.

So for certain was Adam deceived by some woman,

By several Solomon, Samson besides;

Delilah dealt him his doom; and David

Was duped by Bath-sheba, enduring much sorrow.

Since these were grieved by their guile, 't would be great gain

To love them yet never believe them, if knights could.

For formerly these were most noble and fortunate,

More than all others who lived on the earth;

And these few

By women's wiles were caught

With whom they had to do.

Though I'm beguiled, I ought

To be excused now too.

10 "But your girdle," said Gawain, "may God you reward!

With a good will I'll use it, yet not for the gold,

The sash or the silk, or the sweeping pendants,

15 Or fame, or its workmanship wondrous, or cost, But in sign of my sin I shall see it oft.

When in glory I move, with remorse I'll remember

The frailty and fault of the stubborn flesh,

20 How soon 't is infected with stains of defilement;

And thus when I'm proud of my prowess in arms,

The sight of this sash shall humble my spirit.

25 But one thing I pray, if it prove not displeasing; Because you are lord of the land where I stayed

In your house with great worship (may He now reward you

30 Who sitteth on high and upholdeth the heavens),

What name do you bear? No more would I know."

And then "That truly I'll tell," said the other;

35 "Bercilak de Hautdesert here am I called.

Through her might who lives with me, Morgan le Fay,

Well-versed in the crafts and cunning of magic (Many of Merlin's arts she has mastered,

40 For long since she dealt in the dalliance of love With him whom your heroes at home know,

that sage

Without blame.

'Morgan the goddess,' so

She's rightly known by name.

No one so proud doth go

That him she cannot tame).

"I was set in this way to your splendid hall

50 To make trial of your pride, and to see if the people's

Tales were true of the Table's great glory.

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This wonder she sent to unsettle your wits,
And to daunt so the Queen as to cause her to
die

From fear at the sight of that phantom speaker
Holding his head in his hand at the high table. 5
Lives she at home there, that ancient lady;
She's even thine aunt, King Arthur's half-
sister,

Tyntagel's duchess's daughter, whom Uther 10
Made later the mother of mighty Lord Arthur.
I beg thee, sir, therefore, come back to thine
aunt;

In my castle make merry. My company love
thee,

And I, sir, wish thee as well, on my word, 15
As any on earth for thy high sense of honor."
He said to him, nay, this he'd never consent
to.

The men kiss, embrace, and each other com-
mend

To the Prince of Paradise; there they part
In the cold.

Cawain on his fair horse
To Arthur hastens bold;
The bright Green Knight his course
Doth at his pleasure hold.

Through the wood now goes Sir Gawain by
wild ways

On Cringolet, given by God's grace his life. 30
Oft in houses, and oft in the open he lodged,
Met many adventures, won many a victory:
These I intend not to tell in this tale.

Now whole was the hurt he had in his neck,
And about it the glimmering belt he was bear-
ing,

Bound to his side like a baldric obliquely,
Tied under his left arm, that lace, with a knot
As a sign that with stain of sin he'd been found.
And thus to the court he comes all securely. 40
Delight in that dwelling arose when its lord
knew

That Gawain had come; a good thing he
thought it.

The King kissed the lord, and the Queen did 45
likewise,

And next many knights drew near him to greet
him

And ask how he'd fared; and he wondrously
answered,

Confessed all the hardships that him had be-
fallen,

The happenings at chapel, the hero's behavior,
The lady's love, and lastly the lace.

He showed them the nick in his neck all naked
The blow that the Green Knight gave for de-
ceit

Him to blame.

In torment this he owned;
Blood in his face did flame;
With wrath and grief he groaned,
When showing it with shame.

Laying hold of the lace, quoth the hero,
"Lol lord!

The band of this fault I bear on my neck;

15 And this is the scathe and damage I've suf-
fered,

For cowardice caught there, and coveting also,
The badge of untruth in which I was taken.

20 And this for as long as I live I must wear,
For his fault none may hide without meeting
misfortune,

For once it is fixed, it can ne'er be unfastened."
To the knight then the King gave comfort; the
court too

25 Laughed greatly, and made this gracious agree-
ment:

That ladies and lords to the Table belonging,
All of the brotherhood, baldrics should bear
Obliquely about them, bands of bright green, 30
Thus following suit for the sake of the hero.

For the Round Table's glory was granted that
lace,

And he held himself honored who had it there-
after,

35 As told in the book, the best of romances.
In the days of King Arthur this deed was done
Whereof witness is borne by Brutus's book.

Since Brutus, that bold man, first came here to
Britain,

40 When ceased, indeed, had the siege and as-
sault

At Troy's wall,

Full many feats ere now
Like this one did befall.
May He with thorn-crowned brow
To His bliss bring us all. Amen.

HONY SOYT QUI MAL PENCE^{*}

50 -----

^{*} the motto of the Order of the Carter (Evil to
him who evil thinks).

GEOFFREY CHAUCER*

Chaucer (1340?-1400) is the first great individual name on record in English literature; in spite of language difficulty (and surprisingly little labor here will be quickly rewarded) this versatile voice can reach across the centuries to amuse and edify modern readers of catholic taste. Chaucer was curiously a page, a military man, a diplomat, an M.P., a scholar, a man of the world. In various periods of French, Italian, and English influence he wrote dream visions, a psychological novel in verse (Troilus and Criseyde), frame-tales, allegories, complaints, etc. He exhibits a reading background, a knowledge of human nature, a delightful sense of humor. Whether he writes a traveling salesman's story, a fable, a sermon, or a fantasy, Chaucer always has the right touch. He has that rare quality, universality.

THE PROLOGUE

*Here bygynneth the Book of the Tales of
Caunterbury*

Whan that Aprille with his shoures soote¹
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote,
And bathed every veyne in swich² licour
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
Whan Zephirus eek³ with his sweete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halve cours yronne,⁴
And smale foweles maken melodye,
That slepen al the nyght with open ye
(So priketh hem nature in hir corages);⁵
Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages,
And palmeres for to seken straunge strondes,
To ferne halwes,⁶ kowthe⁷ in sondry londes;
And specially from every shires ende
Of Engelond to Caunterbury they wende,
The hooly blisful martir⁸ for to seke,
That hem hath holpen whan that they were
seeke.

Bifil that in that seson on a day,

* The Robinson text of Chaucer is here reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company, publishers.

¹ sweet.

³ also.

⁵ dispositions.

⁷ known.

² such.

⁴ run.

⁶ shrines.

⁸ Thomas à Becket.

In Southwerk at the Tabard⁹ as I lay
Redy to wenden on my pilgrymage
To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,
At nyght was come into that hostelrye
5 Wel nyne and twenty in a compaignye,
Of sondry folk, by aventure yfalle
In felaweshipe, and pilgrimes were they alle,
That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde.
The chambres and the stables weren wyde,
10 And wel we weren esed¹⁰ atte beste.
And shortly, whan the sonne was to reste,
So hadde I spoken with hem everichon
That I was of hir felaweshipe anon,
And made forward erly for to ryse.
15 To take oure wey ther as I yow devyse.
But natheles, whil I have tyme and space,
Er that I ferther in this tale pace,
Me thynketh it acordaunt to resoun
To telle yow al the condicioun
20 Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,
And whiche they weren, and of what degree,
And eek in what array that they were inne;
And at a knyght than wol I first bigynne.

A KNYGHT ther was, and that a worthy man,
25 That fro the tyme that he first bigan
To riden out, he loved chivalrie,
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisie.
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,
And therto hadde he riden, no man ferre,¹¹
30 As wel in cristendom as in hethenesse,
And evere honoured for his worthynesse.
At Alisaundre he was whan it was wonne.
Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne
Aboven alle nacions in Pruce;¹²
35 In Lettow¹³ hadde he reysed¹⁴ and in Ruce,¹⁵
No Cristen man so ofte of his degree.
In Gernade¹⁶ at the seege eek hadde he be
Of Algezir,¹⁷ and riden in Belmarye.¹⁸
At Lyeys¹⁹ was he and at Satalye,²⁰
40 Whan they were wonne; and in the Grete
See²¹

At many a noble armee hadde he be.
At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,
And foughten for oure feith at Tramyssene²²

45 ⁹ name of inn in Southwark; a tabard is a short cloak.

¹⁰ taken care of.

¹² Prussia.

¹⁴ campaigned.

¹⁶ Granada.

¹⁸ in Morocco.

²⁰ in Asia Minor.

²² in North Africa.

¹¹ farther.

¹³ Lithuania.

¹⁵ Russia.

¹⁷ Algeciras.

¹⁹ in Armenia.

²¹ Mediterranean.

In lystes thries, and ay slayn his foo.
 This ilke²³ worthy knyght hadde been also
 Somtyme with the lord of Palatye²⁴
 Agayn another hethen in Turkye.
 And everemoore he hadde a sovereyn prys;²⁵
 And though that he were worthy, he was wys,
 And of his port as meeke as is a mayde.
 He nevere yet no vileynye ne sayde
 In al his lyf unto no maner wight.
 He was a verray, parfit gentil knyght.
 But, for to tellen yow of his array,
 His hors were goode, but he was nat gay.
 Of fustian²⁶ he wered a gypon²⁷
 Al bismotered²⁸ with his habergeon,²⁹
 For he was late ycome from his viage,
 And wente for to doon his pilgrymage.
 With hym ther was his sone, a yong SQUIER,
 A lovyere and a lusty bachelor,³⁰
 With lokkes crulle³¹ as they were leyd in presse.
 Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.
 Of his stature he was of evene lengthe,
 And wonderly delyvere,³² and of greet
 strengthe.
 And he hadde been somtyme in chyvachie³³
 In Flaundres, in Artoys, and Pycardie,
 And born hym weel, as of so litel space,
 In hope to stonden in his lady grace.
 Embrouded was he, as it were a meede
 Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and reede.
 Syngynge he was, or floytynge,³⁴ al the day;
 He was as fressh as is the month of May.
 Short was his gowne, with sleeves longe and
 wyde.
 Wel koude he sitte on hors and faire ryde.
 He koude songes make and wel endite,
 Juste³⁵ and eek daunce, and weel purtreie and
 write,
 So hoot he lovede that by nyghtertale³⁶
 He sleep namoore than dooth a nyghtyngale.
 Curteis he was, lowely, and servysable,
 And carf biforn his fader at the table.
 A YEMAN hadde he and servantz namo
 At that tyme, for hym liste ride so;
 And he was clad in cote and hood of grene.
 A sheef of pecok arwes, bright and kene,

Under his belt he bar ful thriftily,
 (Wel koude he dresse his takel yemanly:
 His arwes drouped noght with fetheres lowe)
 And in his hand he baar a myghty bowe.
 5 A not heed³⁷ hadde he, with a broun visage.
 Of wodecraft wel koude he al the usage.
 Upon his arm he baar a gay bracer,
 And by his syde a swerd and a bokeler,
 And on that oother syde a gay daggere
 10 Harneised wel and sharp as point of spere;
 A Cristopher on his brest of silver sheene.
 An horn he bar, the bawdryk was of grene;
 A forster was he, soothly, as I gesse.
 Ther was also a Nonne, a PRIORESSE,
 15 That of hir smylng was ful symple and coy;
 Hire gretteste ooth was but by Seinte Loy;
 And she was cleped madame Eglentyne.
 Ful weel she soong the service dyvyne,
 Entuned in hir nose ful semely,
 20 And Frenssh she spak ful faire and fetisly,³⁸
 After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,
 For Frenssh of Parys was to hire unknowe.
 At mete wel ytaught was she with alle:
 She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,
 25 Ne wette hir fyngres in hir sauce depe;
 Wel koude she carie a morsel and wel kepe
 That no drope ne fille upon hire brest.
 In curteisie was set ful muchel hir lest.³⁹
 Hir over-lippe wyped she so clene
 30 That in hir coppe ther was no ferthyng⁴⁰ sene
 Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir
 draughte.
 Ful semely after hir mete she raughte.⁴¹
 And sikerly she was of greet desport,
 35 And ful plesaunt, and amyable of port,
 And peyned hire to countrefete cheere
 Of court, and to been estatlich of manere,
 And to ben holden digne⁴² of reverence.
 But, for to speken of hire conscience,
 40 She was so charitable and so pitous
 She wolde wepe, if that she saugh a mous
 Kaught in a trappe, if it were deed or bleede.
 Of smale houndes hadde she that she fedde
 With rosted flessch, or milk and wastel-breed.⁴³
 45 But soore wepte she if oon of hem were deed,
 Or if men smoot it with a yerde⁴⁴ smerte;
 And al was conscience and tendre herte.

²³ same.

²⁵ praise.

²⁷ tunic.

²⁹ coat of mail.

³¹ curly.

³³ expeditions.

³⁵ joust.

²⁴ in Asia Minor.

²⁶ coarse cloth.

²⁸ stained.

³⁰ aspirant to knighthood.

³² lively.

³⁴ fluting, whistling.

³⁶ night-time.

³⁷ close-cropped head.

³⁹ desire.

⁴¹ reached.

⁴³ fine white bread.

³⁸ elegantly.

⁴⁰ trace.

⁴² worthy.

⁴⁴ stick.

Ful semyly hir wimpul pynched⁴⁵ was;
 Hir nose tretys,⁴⁶ hir eyen greye as glas,
 Hir mouth ful smal, and therto softe and reed,
 But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed;
 It was almoost a spanne brood, I trowe;
 For, hardily, she was nat undergrowe.
 Ful fetys⁴⁷ was hir cloke, as I was war.
 Of smal coral aboute hire arm she bar
 A peire of bedes, gauded al with grene,
 And theron heng a brooch of gold ful sheene,
 On which ther was first write a crowned A,
 And after *Amor vincit omnia*.⁴⁸

Another NONNE with hire hadde she,
 That was hir chapeleyne, and preestes thre.

A MONK ther was, a fair for the maistrie,
 An outridere, that lovede venerie,
 A manly man, to been an abbot able,
 Ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in stable,
 And whan he rood, men myghte his bydel
 heere

Gynglen in a whistlynge wynd als cleere
 And eek as loude as dooth the chapel belle.
 Ther as this lord was kepere of the celle,
 The reule of seint Maure or of seint Bencit,
 By cause that it was old and somdel streit⁴⁹
 This ilke Monk leet olde thynges pace,
 And heeld after the newe world the space.
 He yaf nat of that text a pulled hen,
 That seith that hunters ben nat hooly men,
 Ne that a monk, whan he is rechelees,⁵⁰
 Is likned til a fish that is waterlees,—
 This is to seyn, a monk out of his cloystre.
 But thilke text heeld he nat worth an oystre;
 And I seyde his opinion was good.
 What sholde he studie and make hymselfen
 wood,⁵¹

Upon a book in cloystre alwey to poure,
 Or swynken⁵² with his handes, and laboure,
 As Austyn bit⁵³? How shal the world be served?
 Lat Austyn have his swynk to hym reserved!
 Therefore he was a prikasour⁵⁴ aright:
 Grehoundes he hadde as swift as fowel in
 flight;

Of prikyng⁵⁵ and of huntyng for the hare
 Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.
 I seigh his sleeves purfiled⁵⁶ at the hond

With grys,⁵⁷ and that the fyneste of a lond;
 And, for to festne his hood under his chyn,
 He hadde of gold ywrought a ful curious pyn;
 A love-knotte in the gretter ende ther was.
 5 His heed was balled, that shoon as any glas,
 And eek his face, as he hadde been enoynt.
 He was a lord ful fat and in good poynt;
 His eyen stepe,⁵⁸ and rollynge in his heed,
 That stemed as a forneys of a leed;⁵⁹
 10 His bootes souple, his hors in greet estaat.
 Now certainly he was a fair prelaat;
 He was nat pale as a forpynd⁶⁰ goost.
 A fat swan loved he best of any roost.
 His palfrey was as broun as is a berye.
 15 A FRERE ther was, a wantowne and a merye,
 A lymytour,⁶¹ a ful solempne man.
 In alle the ordres foure is noon that kan
 So muchel of daliaunce and fair langage.
 He hadde maad ful many a mariage
 20 Of yonge wommen at his owene cost.
 Unto his ordre he was a noble post.
 Ful wel biloved and fanulier was he
 With frankeleyns over al in his contree,
 And eek with worthy wommen of the toun;
 25 For he hadde power of confessioun,
 As seyde hymself, moore than a curat,
 For of his ordre he was licenciat.
 Ful swetely herde he confessioun,
 And plesaunt was his absolucioun;
 30 He was an esy man to yeve⁶² penaunce,
 Ther as he wiste to have a good pitaunce.
 For unto a povre ordre for to yive
 Is signe that a man is wel yshryve;
 For if he yaf, he dorste make avaunt,⁶³
 35 He wiste that a man was repentaunt;
 For many a man so hard is of his herte,
 He may nat wepe, althogh hym soore smerte.
 Therfore in stede of wepyng and preyeres
 Men moote yeve silver to the povre freres.
 40 His typet was ay farsed⁶⁴ ful of knyves
 And pynnes, for to yeven faire wyves.
 And certainly he hadde a murye note:
 Wel koude he syng and pleyen on a rote;⁶⁵
 Of yeddynges⁶⁶ he baar outrely the pris.
 45 His nekke whit was as the flour-de-lys;
 Therto he strong was as a champion.

⁴⁵ pleaded.

⁴⁷ neat.

⁴⁹ strict.

⁵¹ crazy.

⁵³ Augustine bids.

⁵⁵ riding.

⁴⁶ well-formed.

⁴⁸ Love conquers all.

⁵⁰ reckless.

⁵² work.

⁵⁴ keen rider.

⁵⁶ trimmed.

⁵⁷ gray fur.

⁵⁹ cauldron.

⁶¹ a friar licensed to beg in a certain district.

⁶² or *yive* (past, *yaf*), give.

⁶³ boast.

⁶⁵ stringed instrument.

⁵⁸ prominent.

⁶⁰ tormented.

⁶⁴ stuffed.

⁶⁶ songs.

He knew the tavernes wel in every toun
 And everich hostiler and tappestere
 Bet than a lazar or a beggestere;
 For unto swich a worthy man as he
 Acorded nat, as by his facultee,
 To have with sike lazars aqueyntaunce.
 It is nat honest, it may nat avaunce,
 For to deelen with no swich poraille,⁶⁷
 But al with riche and selleres of vitaille.
 And over al, ther as profit sholde arise,
 Curteis he was and lowely of servyse.
 Ther nas no man nowher so vertuous.
 He was the beste beggere in his hous;
 For thogh a wydwe hadde noght a sho,
 So plesaunt was his "*In principio*,"
 Yet wolde he have a ferthyng, er he wente.
 His purchas was well bettre than his rente.
 And rage he koude, as it were right a whelp.
 In love-dayes⁶⁸ ther koude he muchel help,
 For ther he was nat lyk a cloysterer
 With a thredbare cope, as is a povre scoler,
 But he was lyk a maister or a pope.
 Of double worstede was his semycope,⁶⁹
 That rounded as a belle out of the presse.
 Somwhat he lipped, for his wantownesse,
 To make his Englishsh sweete upon his tonge;
 And in his harpyng, whan that he hadde songe,
 His eyen twynkled in his heed aryght,
 As doon the sterres in the frosty nyght.
 This worthy lymytour was cleped Huberd.

A MARCHANT was ther with a forked berd,
 In mottelee,⁷⁰ and hye on horse he sat;
 Upon his heed a Flaundryssh bever hat,
 His bootes clasped faire and fetisly.
 His resons he spak ful solempnely,
 Sowynyng alwey th' encrees of his wynnyng.
 He wolde the sce were kept for any thyng
 Bitwixe Middelburgh and Orewelle.⁷¹
 Wel koude he in eschaunge sheeldes⁷² selle.
 This worthy man ful wel his wit bisette:
 Ther wiste no wight that he was in dette,
 So estatly was he of his governaunce
 With his bargaynes and with his chevys-
 saunce.⁷³

For sothe he was a worthy man with alle,
 But, sooth to seyn, I noot how men hym calle.

A CLERK ther was of Oxenford also,

⁶⁷ poor people.

⁶⁸ days set for arbitrating minor disputes.

⁶⁹ short cape.

⁷⁰ parti-colored cloth.

⁷¹ Middelburgh in Holland, Orwell in England.

⁷² French coins.

⁷³ dealings.

That unto logyk hadde longe ygo.
 As leene was his hors as is a rake,
 And he nas nat right fat, I undertake,
 But looked holwe, and therto sobrelly.
 5 Ful thredbare was his overeste courtepy;⁷⁴
 For he hadde gotten hym yet no benefice,
 Ne was so worldly for to have office.
 For hym was levere have at his beddes heed
 Twenty bookes, clad in blak or reed,
 10 Of Aristotle and his philosophie,
 Than robes riche, or fithele,⁷⁵ or gay sautrie.⁷⁶
 But al be that he was a philosophre,
 Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre;
 But al that he myghte of his freendes hente,⁷⁷
 15 On bookes and on lernynge he it spented,
 And bisily gan for the soules preye
 Of hem that yaf hym wherwith to scoleye.⁷⁸
 Of studie took he moost cure and moost heede.
 Noght o word spak he moore than was neede,
 20 And that was seyed in forme and reverence,
 And short and quyk and ful of hy sentence;
 Sowynyng in moral vertu was his speche,
 And gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche.

A SERGEANT OF THE LAWE, war and wys,
 25 That often hadde been at the Parvys,⁷⁹
 Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.
 Discreet he was and of greet reverence—
 He semed swich, his wordes weren so wise.
 Justice he was full often in assise,
 30 By patente and by pleyn commissioun.
 For his science and for his heigh renoun,
 Of fees and robes hadde he many oon.
 So greet a purchasour was nowher noon:
 Al was fee symple to hym in effect;
 35 His purchasyng myghte nat been infect.⁸⁰
 Nowher so bisy a man as he ther nas,
 And yet he semed bisier than he was.
 In termes hadde he caas and doomes⁸¹ alle
 That from the tyme of kyng William were falle.
 40 Therto he koude endite, and make a thyng,
 Ther koude no wight pynche at his writyng;
 And every statut koude he pleyn by rote.
 He rood but hoonly in a medlee cote,
 Girt with a ceint⁸² of silk, with barress male;
 45 Of his array telle I no lenger tale.

A FRANKLEYN⁸³ was in his compaignye.

⁷⁴ short coat.

⁷⁵ fiddle.

⁷⁶ psaltery.

⁷⁷ get.

⁷⁸ go to school.

⁷⁹ porch of St. Paul's, used for lawyers' consulta-
 tions.

⁸⁰ invalid.

⁸¹ decisions.

⁸² girdle.

⁸³ rich landowner.

Whit was his berd as is the dayesye;
 Of his complexioun⁸⁴ he was sangwyn.
 Wel loved he by the morwe a sop in wyn;
 To lyven in delit was evere his wone,⁸⁵
 For he was Epicurus owene sone,
 That heeld opinioun that pleyen delit
 Was verrailly felicitee parfit.
 An housholdere, and that a greet, was he;
 Seint Julian⁸⁶ he was in his contree.
 His breed, his ale, was always after oon;⁸⁷
 A bettre envyned man was nowher noon.
 Withoute bake mete was nevere his hous
 Of fish and flessch, and that so plentevous,
 It snewed in his hous of mete and drynke,
 Of alle deyntees that men koude thynke.
 After the sondry sesons of the yeer,
 So chaunged he his mete and his soper.
 Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in muwe,⁸⁸
 And many a breem and many a luce in stuwe.⁸⁹
 Wo was his cook but if his sauce were
 Poynaunt and sharp, and redy al his geere.
 His table dormant in his halle alway
 Stood redy covered al the longe day.
 At sessionouns ther was he lord and sire;
 Ful ofte tyme he was knyght of the shire.
 An anlaas⁹⁰ and a gipsy⁹¹ al of silk
 Heeng at his girdel, whit as mome milk.
 A shirreve hadde he been, and a countour.
 Was nowher swich a worthy vavasour.⁹²

AN HABERDASSIERE and a CARPENTER,
 A WEBBE,⁹³ a DYER, and a TAPYCE,⁹⁴—
 And they were clothed alle in o lyveree
 Of a solempne and a greet fraternitee.
 Ful fressh and newe hir geere apiked⁹⁵ was;
 Hir knyves were chaped⁹⁶ noght with bras
 But al with silver; wrought ful clene and weel
 Hire girdles and hir pouches everydeel.
 Wel semed ech of hem a fair burgeys
 To sitten in a yeldehalle on a deys.⁹⁷
 Everich, for the wisdom that he kan,
 Was shaply for to been an alderman.
 For catel⁹⁸ hadde they ynogh and rente,
 And cek hir wyves wolde it wel assente;

⁸⁴ temperament.⁸⁵ custom.⁸⁶ patron saint of hospitality.⁸⁷ uniformly good.⁸⁸ coop.⁸⁹ fish pond.⁹⁰ dagger.⁹¹ purse.⁹² substantial landholder, below rank of baron.⁹³ weaver.⁹⁴ upholsterer.⁹⁵ trimmed.⁹⁶ mounted.⁹⁷ in a guildhall on a dais.⁹⁸ property.

And elles certeyn were they to blame.
 It is ful fair to been ycleped "madame,"
 And goon to vigilies al bifore,
 And have a mantel roialliche ybore.

5 A Cook they hadde with hem for the nones
 To boille the chiknes with the marybones,
 And poudre-marchant⁹⁹ tart and galyngale.¹⁰⁰
 Wel koude he knowe a draughte of Londoun
 ale.

10 He koude rooste, and sethe, and broille, and
 frye,

Maken mortreux,¹⁰¹ and wel bake a pye.
 But greet harm was it, as it thoughte me,
 That on his shyne a mormal¹⁰² hadde he.

15 For blankmanger,¹⁰³ that made he with the
 beste.

A SHIPMAN was ther, wonynge fer by weste;
 For aught I woot, he was of Dertemouthe.

He rood upon a rouncey,¹⁰⁴ as he kouthed,
 20 In a gowne of faldyng¹⁰⁵ to the knece.

A daggere hangynge on a laas hadde he
 Aboute his nekke, under his arm adoun.

The hoot somer hadde maad his hewe al
 broun;

25 And certeinly he was a good felawe.

Ful many a draughte of wyn had he ydrawe
 Fro Burdeux-ward, whil that the chapman
 sleep.

Of nyce conscience took he no keep.

30 If that he faught, and hadde the hyer hond,
 By water he sente hem hoon to every lond.

But of his craft to rekene wel his tydes,

His streames, and his daungers hym bisides,

35 His herberwe,¹⁰⁶ and his moone, his lode-
 menage,¹⁰⁷

Ther nas noon swich from Hulle to Cartage.¹⁰⁸
 Hardy he was and wys to undertake;
 With many a tempest hadde his berd been
 shake.

40 He knew alle the havenes, as they were,
 Fro Gootlond to the cape of Fynystere,
 And every cryke in Britaigne and in Spayne.
 His barge ycleped was the Maudelayne.

With us ther was a DOCTOUR OF PHISIK;

45 In al this world ne was ther noon hym lik,
 To speke of phisik and of surgerye,

⁹⁹ flavoring powder.¹⁰⁰ spice.¹⁰¹ thick soup.¹⁰² sore.¹⁰³ creamed meat with eggs, etc.¹⁰⁴ nag.¹⁰⁵ coarse cloth.¹⁰⁶ harbor.¹⁰⁷ steersmanship.¹⁰⁸ Cartagena.

For he was grounded in astronomye.
He kepte his pacient a ful greet deel
In houres by his magyk natureel.
Wel koude he fortunen the ascendent
Of his ymages for his pacient.
He knew the cause of everich maladye,
Were it of hoot, or coold, or moyste, or drye,
And where they engendred, and of what
humour.

He was a verray, parfit praktisour:
The cause yknowe, and of his harm the roote,
Anon he yaf the sike man his boote.¹⁰⁹
Ful redy hadde he his apothecaries
To sende hym drogges and his letuaries,¹¹⁰
For ech of hem made oother for to wyne—
Hir frendshipe nas nat newe to bigynne.
Wel knew he the olde Esculapius,
And Deyscorides, and eek Rufus,
Olde Ypocras, Haly, and Galyen,
Serapion, Razis, and Avyccen,
Averrois, Damascien, and Constantyn,
Bernard, and Gatesden, and Gilbertyn.
Of his diete mesurable was he,
For it was of no superfluitee,
But of greet norissynge and digestible.
His studie was but litel on the Bible.
In sangwyn and in pers¹¹¹ he clad was al,
Lyned with taffata and with sendal;¹¹²
And yet he was but esy of dispence;
He kepte that he wan in pestilence.
For gold in phisik is a cordial,
Therefore he lovede gold in special.

A good WIF was ther of biside BATHE,
But she was somdel¹¹³ deaf, and that was
scathe.¹¹⁴
Of clooth-makyng she hadde swich an haunt,¹¹⁵
She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt.
In al the parisshe wif ne was ther noon
That to the offrynge bifore hire sholde goon;
And if ther dide, corteyn so wrooth was she,
That she was out of alle charitee.
Hir coverchiefs ful fyne weren of ground;¹¹⁶
I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound
That on a Sondag weren upon hir heed.
Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed,
Ful streite yteyd, and shoes ful moyste and
newe.
Boold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe.

¹⁰⁹ remedy.

¹¹¹ light blue.

¹¹³ somewhat.

¹¹⁵ skill.

¹¹⁰ syrups.

¹¹² light silk.

¹¹⁴ pity.

¹¹⁶ texture.

She was a worthy womman al hir lyve:
Housbondes at chirche dore she hadde fyve,
Withouten oother compaignye in youthe,—
But therof nedeth nat to speke as nowthe.
5 And thries hadde she been at Jerusalem;
She hadde passed many a straunge strem;
At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne,
In Calice at Seint Jame, and at Coloigne.
She koude muchel of wandrynge by the weye.
10 Gat-tothed was she, soothly for to seye.
Upon an amblere esily she sat,
Ywympled¹¹⁷ wel, and on hir heed an hat
As brood as is a bokeler or a targe;
A foot-mantel aboute hir hipcs large,
15 And on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe.
In felawshipe wel koude she laughe and
carpe.¹¹⁸
Of remedies of love she knew per chaunce,
For she koude of that art the olde daunce.
20 A good man was ther of religioun,
And was a povre PERSOUN OF A TOUN,
But riche he was of hooly thought and werk.
He was also a lerned man, a clerk,
That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche;
25 His parisshe devoutly wolde he teche.
Benygne he was, and wonder diligent,
And in adversitee ful pacient,
And swich he was ypreved ofte sithes.
Ful looth were hym to cursen¹¹⁹ for his tithes,
30 But rather wolde he yeven, out of doute,
Unto his povre parisshe aboute
Of his offryng and eek of his substaunce.
He koude in litel thyng have suffisaunce.
Wyd was his parisshe, and houses fer asonder,
35 But he ne lefte nat, for reyn ne thonder,
In siknesse nor in meschief to visite
The ferreste in his parisshe, muche and lite,
Upon his feet, and in his hand a staf.
This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf,
40 That first he wroghte, and afterward he
taughte.
Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte,
And this figure he added eek therto,
That if gold ruste, what shal iren do?
45 For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,
No wonder is a lewed¹²⁰ man to ruste;
And shame it is, if a prest take keep,
A shiten shepherde and a clene sheep.
Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yive,

¹¹⁷ with pleated head-covering.

¹¹⁸ talk.

¹²⁰ ignorant.

¹¹⁹ excommunicate.

By his clenness, how that his sheep sholde lyve.

He sette nat his benefice to hyre
And leet his sheep encombred in the myre
And ran to Londoun unto Seinte Poules
To seken hym a chaunterie for soules,
Or with a bretherhed to been withholde;
But dwelte at hoom, and kepte wel his folde,
So that the wolf ne made it nat myscarie;
He was a shepherde and noght a mercenarie. 10
And though he hooly were and vertuous,
He was to synful men nat despitous,
Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne,¹²¹
But in his techyng discreet and benygne.
To drawen folk to hevne by fairnesse,
By good ensample, this was his bisynesse.
But it were any persone obstinat,
What so he were, of heigh or lough estat,
Hym wolde he snylben sharply for the nonys.
A better preest I trowe that nowher noon ys. 20
He waited after no pompe and reverence,
Ne maked him a spiced conscience,
But Cristes loore and his apostles twelve
He taughte, but first he folwed it hymseke.

With hym ther was a PLOWMAN, was his brother,
That hadde ylad of dong ful many a fother,¹²²
A trewe swynkere¹²³ and a good was he,
Lyvyng in pees and parfit charitee.
God loved he best with al his hoolle herte
At alle tymes, thogh him gamed¹²⁴ or smerte,
And thanne his neighebor right as hymseke.
He wolde thresshe, and therto dyke and delve,
For Cristes sake, for every povre wight,
Withouten hire, if it lay in his myght. 30
His tithes payde he ful faire and wel,
Bothe of his propre swynk and his catel.
In a tabard he rood upon a mere.

Ther was also a REVE,¹²⁵ and a MILLFRE,
A SOMNOUR,¹²⁶ and a PARDONER,¹²⁷ also,
A MAUNCIPLE,¹²⁸ and myself—ther were namo.

The MILLERE was a stout carl for the nones;
Ful byg he was of brawn, and eek of bones.
That proved wel, for over al ther he cam,

At wrastlyng he wolde have alwey the ram.
He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikke knarre,¹²⁹

Ther was no dore that he nolde heve of harre,¹³⁰
Or breke it at a rennyng with his heed.
His berd as any sowe or fox was reed,
And therto brood, as though it were a spade.
Upon the cop¹³¹ right of his nose he hade
A werte, and theron stood a toft of herys,
Reed as the bristles of a sowes crys;
His nosethirles blake were and wyde.
A swerd and bokeler bar he by his syde.
His mouth as greet was as a greet forneys.
15 He was a janglere and a goliardys,¹³²
And that was moost of synne and harlotries.
Wel koude he stelen corn and tollen¹³³ thries;
And yet he hadde a thombe of gold, pardee.
A whit cote and a blew hood weired he.
20 A baggepipe wel koude he blowe and sowne,
And therewithal he broghte us out of towne.

A gentil MAUNCIPLE was ther of a temple,
Of which achatours¹³⁴ myghte take exemple
For to be wise in byynge of vitaille;
25 For wheither that he payde or took by taile,¹³⁵
Algate he wayted so in his achat
That he was ay biforn and in good staat.
Now is nat that of God a ful fair grace
That swich a lewed mannes wit shal pace
30 The wisdom of an heep of lerned men?
Of maistres hadde he mo than thries ten,
That weren of lawe expert and curious,
Of which ther were a diszeyne in that hous
Worthy to been stywardes of rente and lond
35 Of any lord that is in Engelond,
To make hym lyve by his propre good
In honour dettelees (but if he were wood),¹³⁶
Or lyve as scarsly as hym list desire;
And able for to helpen al a shire

40 In any caas that myghte falle or happe;
And yet this Manciple sette hir aller cappe.¹³⁷
The REVE was a sclendre colerik man.
His berd was shave as ny as ever he kan;
His heer was by his crys ful round yshorn;
45 His top was dokked lyk a preest biforn.
Ful longe were his legges and ful lene,
Ylyk a staf, ther was no calf ysene.

¹²¹ haughty. ¹²² load. ¹²³ worker

¹²⁴ whether it pleased him (or irritated him).

¹²⁵ steward of estate.

¹²⁶ officer responsible for appearance of offenders at ecclesiastical courts.

¹²⁷ one licensed to sell indulgences.

¹²⁸ steward of a college.

¹²⁹ knotty-muscle fellow.

¹³¹ tip.

¹³³ take toll.

¹³⁵ on account.

¹³⁷ made fools of them all.

¹³⁰ hinge.

¹³² joker.

¹³⁴ buyers.

¹³⁶ crazy.

Wel koude he kepe a gerner and a bynne;
 Ther was noon auditour koude on him wyne.
 Wel wiste he by the droghte and by the reyn
 The yeldyng of his seed and of his greyn.
 His lordes sheep, his neet, his dayerye,
 His swyn, his hors, his stoor, and his pultrye
 Was hoolly in this Reves governyng,
 And by his covenant yaf the rekenyng,
 Syn that his lord was twenty yeer of age.
 Ther koude no man bryng hym in arrerage.
 Ther nas baillif, ne hierde, nor oother hyne,
 That he ne knew his sleighte and his covyne;¹³⁸
 They were adrad of hym as of the deeth.
 His wonyng was ful faire upon an heeth;
 With grene trees yshadwed was his place.
 He koude better than his lord purchace.
 Ful riche he was astored pryvely:
 His lord wel koude he plesen subtilly,
 To yeve and lene hym of his owene good,
 And have a thank, and yet a cote and hood.
 In youthe he hadde lerned a good myster;¹³⁹
 He was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter.
 This Reve sat upon a ful good stot,
 That was al pomely¹⁴⁰ grey and highte Scot.
 A long surcote of pers upon he hade,
 And by his syde he baar a rusty blade.
 Of Northfolk was this Reve of which I telle,
 Biside a toun men clepen Baldeswelle.
 Tukked he was as is a frere aboute,
 And evere he rood the hyndreste of oure route.
 A SOMONOUR was ther with us in that place,
 That hadde a fyr-reed cherubynnes face,
 For saucefleem¹⁴¹ he was, with eyen narwe.
 As hoot he was and lecherous as a sparwe,
 With scalled¹⁴² browes blake and piled¹⁴³ berd.
 Of his visage children were aferd.
 Ther nas quyk-silver, lytarge, ne brymstoon,
 Boras, ceruce, ne oille of tartre noon;
 Ne oynement that wolde clense and byte,
 That hym myghte helpen of his whelkes¹⁴⁴
 white,
 Nor of the knobbes sittyng on his chekes.
 Wel loved he garleek, oynons, and eek lekes,
 And for to drynken strong wyn, reed as blood;
 Thanne wolde he speke and crie as he were
 wood.
 And whan that he wel dronken hadde the wyn,
 Thanne wolde he speke no word but Latyn.

¹³⁸ deceitfulness.

¹⁴⁰ dappled.

¹⁴² scabby.

¹⁴⁴ pimples.

¹³⁹ trade.

¹⁴¹ pimples.

¹⁴³ thin.

A fewe termes hadde he, two or thre,
 That he had lerned out of som decree—
 No wonder is, he herde it al the day;
 And eek ye knowen wel how that a jay
 5 Kan clepen "Watte"¹⁴⁵ as wel as kan the pope.
 But whoso koude in oother thyng hym grope,
 Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophie;
 Ay "*Questio quid iuris*"¹⁴⁶ wolde he crie.
 He was a gentil harlot¹⁴⁷ and a kynde;
 10 A better felawe sholde men nocht fynde.
 He wolde suffre for a quart of wyn
 A good felawe to have his concubyn
 A twelf month, and excuse hym atte fulle;
 Ful prively a fynch eek koude he pulle.
 15 And if he foond owher a good felawe,
 He wolde techen him to have noon awe
 In swich caas of the ercedekenes curs,
 But if a mannes soule were in his purs;
 For in his purs he sholde ypunysshed be.
 20 "Purs is the ercedekenes helle," seyde he.
 But wel I woot he lyed right in dede;
 Of cursyng oghte ech gilty man him drede,
 For curs wol slee right as assoillyng¹⁴⁸ savith.
 And also war hym of a *Significavit*.¹⁴⁹
 25 In daunger¹⁵⁰ hadde he at his owene gise
 The yonge girles¹⁵¹ of the diocise,
 And knew hir conseil, and was al hir reed.¹⁵²
 A gerland hadde he set upon his heed
 As greet as it were for an ale-stake.
 30 A bokeleer hadde he maad hym of a cake.
 With hym ther rood a gentil PARDONER
 Of Rouncivale, his freend and his compeer,
 That streight was comen fro the court of Rome.
 Ful loude he soong "Com hider, love, to me!"
 35 This Somonour bar to hym a stif burdoun;
 Was nevere trompe of half so greet a soun.
 This Pardoner hadde heer as yelow as wex,
 But smothe it heeng as dooth a strike of flex;
 By ounces henge his lokkes that he hadde,
 And therwith he his shuldres overspradde;
 40 But thynne it lay, by colpons¹⁵³ oon and oon.
 But hood, for jolitec, wered he noon,
 For it was trussed up in his walet.
 Hym thoughte he rood al of the newe jet;¹⁵⁴
 45 Dischevele, save his cappe, he rood al bare.
 Swiche glarynge eyen hadde he as an hare.

¹⁴⁵ Walt (of a jay, as Polly for a modern parrot).

¹⁴⁶ The question is, what part of the law applies.

¹⁴⁷ rogue.

¹⁴⁸ writ of excommunication.

¹⁴⁹ people of both sexes.

¹⁵⁰ shreds.

¹⁵¹ absolution.

¹⁵² control.

¹⁵³ adviser.

¹⁵⁴ fashion.

A vernycle hadde he sowed upon his cappe.
 His walet lay biforn hym in his lappe,
 Bretful of pardoun, comen from Rome al hoot.
 A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot.
 No berd hadde he, ne nevere sholde have;
 As smothe it was as it were late shave.
 I trowe he were a geldyng or a mare.
 But of his craft, fro Berwyk into Ware,
 Ne was ther swich another pardonere.
 For in his male¹⁵⁵ he hadde a pilwe-beer,¹⁵⁶
 Which that he seyde was Our Lady veyl:
 He seyde he hadde a gobet of the seyl
 That Seint Peter hadde, whan that he wente
 Upon the see, til Jhesu Crist hym hente.
 He hadde a croys of latoun¹⁵⁷ ful of stones,
 And in a glas he hadde pigges bones.
 But with thise relikes, whan that he fond
 A povre person dwellynge upon lond,
 Upon a day he gat hym moore moneye
 Than that the person gat in monthes tweye;
 And thus, with feyned flaterye and japes,
 He made the person and the peple his apes.
 But trewely to tellen atte laste,
 He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste.
 Wel koude he rede a lessoun or a storie,
 But alderbest he song an offertorie;
 For wel he wiste, whan that song was songe,
 He moste preche and wel affile his tonge
 To wyne silver, as he ful wel koude;
 Therefore he song the murierly and loude.

Now have I toold you shortly, in a clause,
 Th' estaat, th' array, the nombre, and eek the
 cause

Why that assembled was this compaignye
 In Southwerk at this gentil hostelrye
 That highte the Tabard, faste by the Belle.
 But now is tyme to yow for to telle
 How that we baren us that ilke nyght,
 Whan we were in that hostelrie alyght,
 And after wol I telle of our viage
 And al the remenaunt of oure pilgrimage.
 But first I pray yow, of youre curteisye,
 That ye n'arete it nat my vileynye,
 Thogh that I pleynly speke in this mateere,
 To telle yow hir wordes and hir cheere,
 Ne thogh I speke hir wordes proprely.
 For this ye knowen al so wel as I,
 Whoso shal telle a tale after a man,
 He moot reherce as ny as evere he kan
 Everich a word, if it be in his charge,

Al speke he never so rudeliche and large,
 Or ellis he moot telle his tale untrewe,
 Or feyne thyng, or fynde wordes newe.
 He may nat spare, althogh he were his
 brother;

5 He moot as wel seye o word as another.
 Crist spak hymself ful brode in hooly writ,
 And wel ye woot no vileynye is it.
 Eek Plato seith, whoso that kan hym rede,
 10 The wordes moote be cosyn to the dede.
 Also I prey yow to foryeve it me,
 Al have I nat set folk in hir degre
 Heere in this tale, as that they sholde stonde.
 My wit is short, ye may wel understonde.
 15 Greet chere made oure Hoost us everichon.
 And to the soper sette he us anon.
 He served us with vitaille at the beste;
 Strong was the wyn, and wel to drynke us
 leste.

20 A semely man Oure Hooste was withalle
 For to han been a marchal in an halle.
 A large man he was with eyen stepe—
 A fairer burgeys is ther noon in Chepe¹⁵⁸—
 Boold of his speche, and wys, and wel ytaught,
 25 And of manhod hym lakkede right naught.
 Eek therto he was right a myrie man,
 And after soper pleyen he bigan,
 And spak of myrthe amonges othere thynges,
 Whan that we hadde maad our rekenynges,
 30 And seyde thus: "Now, lordynges, trewely,
 Ye been to me right welcome, hertely;
 For by my trouthe, if that I shal nat lye,
 I saugh nat this yeer so myrie a compaignye
 Atones in this herberwe as is now.

35 Fayn wolde I doon yow myrthe, wiste I how.
 And of a myrthe I am right now bythoght,
 To doon yow ese, and it shal coste noght.

Ye goon to Caunterbury—God yow speede,
 The blisful martir quite yow youre meede!¹⁵⁹

40 And wel I woot, as ye goon by the weye,
 Ye shapen yow to talen¹⁶⁰ and to pleye;
 For trewely, confort ne myrthe is noon
 To ride by the weye dounb as a stoon;
 And therfore wol I maken yow disport,

45 As I seyde erst, and doon yow som confort
 And if yow liketh alle by oon assent
 For to stonden at my juggement,
 And for to werken as I shal yow seye,
 To-morwe, whan ye riden by the weye,

50

¹⁵⁸ Cheapside (London).

¹⁵⁹ reward.

¹⁶⁰ tell tales.

¹⁵⁵ bag.

¹⁵⁶ pillow case.

¹⁵⁷ alloy.

Now, by my fader soule that is deed,
But ye be myrie, I wol yeve yow myn heed!
Hoold up youre hondes, withouten moore
speche."

Oure conseil was nat longe for to seche.
Us thoughte it was noght worth to make it
wys,¹⁰¹

And graunted hym withouten moore avys,
And bad him seye his voirdit as hym leste.
"Lordynges," quod he, "now herkneth for the
beste;

But taak it nought, I prey yow, in desdeyn.
This is the poynt, to speken short and pleyn,
That ech of yow, to shorte with oure weye,
In this viage shal telle tales tweye
To Caunterbury-ward, I mene it so,
And homward he shal tellen othere two,
Of adventures that whilom han bifalle.
And which of yow that bereth hym best of alle,
That is to seyn, that telleth in this caas
Tales of best sentence and moost solaas,
Shal have a soper at oure aller cost
Heere in this place, sittynge by this post;
Whan that we come agayn fro Caunterbury.
And for to make yow the moore mury,
I wol myselfen goodly with yow ryde,
Right at myn owene cost, and be youre gyde;
And whoso wole my juggement withseye
Shal paye al that we spenden by the weye.
And if ye vouche sauf that it be so,
Tel me anon, withouten wordes mo,
And I wol erly shape me therfore."

This thyng was graunted, and oure othes
swore

With ful glad herte, and preyden hym also
That he wolde vouche sauf for to do so,
And that he wolde been oure governour,
And of our tales juge and reportour,
And sette a soper at a certeyn pris,
And we wol reuled been at his devys
In heigh and lough; and thus by oon assent
We been accorded to his juggement.
And therupon the wyn was fet anon;
We dronken, and to reste wente echon,
Withouten any lenger tarynge.

Amorwe, whan that day bigan to sprynge,
Up roos oure Hoost, and was oure aller cok,
And gadrede us togidre alle in a flok,
And forth we riden a litel moore than paas
Unto the wateryng of Seint Thomas;

And there oure Hoost bigan his hors areste
And seyde, "Lordynges, herkneth, if yow leste.
Ye woot youre foreward,¹⁰² and I it yow re-
corde.

5 If even-song and morwe-song accorde,
Lat se now who shal telle the firste tale.
As evere mote I drynke wyn or ale,
Whoso be rebel to my juggement
Shal paye for al that by the wey is spent.
10 Now draweth cut, er that we ferrer twynne;¹⁰³
He which that hath the shorteste shal bigynne.
Sire Knyght," quod he, "my mayster and my
lord,

Now draweth cut, for that is myn accord.
15 Cometh neer," quod he, "my lady Prioress.
And ye, sire Clerk, lat be youre shamefastnesse,
Ne studieth noght; ley hond to, every man!"
Anon to drawen every wight bigan,
And shortly for to tellen as it was,
20 Were it by aventure, or sort, or cas,
The sothe is this, the cut fil to the Knyght,
Of which ful blithe and glad was every wyght,
And telle he moste his tale, as was resoun,
By foreward and by composicioun,
25 As ye han herd; what nedeth wordes mo?
And whan this goode man saugh that it was so,
As he that wys was and obedient
To kepe his foreward by his free assent,
He seyde, "Syn I shal bigynne the game,
30 What, welcome be the cut, a Goddes name!
Now lat us ryde, and herkneth what I seye."
And with that word we ryden forth oure weye,
And he bigan with right a myrie cheere
His tale anon, and seyde in this manere.

35

THE PARDONER'S TALE

The Pardoner's Prologue

40 HEERE FOLWETH THE PROLOGE OF THE
PARDONERS TALE.

Radix malorum est Cupiditas.
Ad Thimotheum, 6^o.

45 "Lordynges," quod he, "in chirches whan
I preche,
I peyne me to han an hauteyn speche,
And ryng it out as round as gooth a belle,
For I kan al by rote that I telle.
50 My theme is alwey oon, and evere was—

¹⁰¹ deliberate.

¹⁰² agreement.

¹⁰³ depart.

*Radix malorum est Cupiditas.*¹⁶⁴

First I pronounce whennes that I come,
 And thanne my bulles shewe I, alle and some.
 Oure lige lordes seel on my patente,
 That shewe I first, my body to warente,
 That no man be so boold, ne preest ne clerk,
 Me to destourbe of Cristes hooly werk.
 And after that thanne telle I forth my tales;
 Bulles of popes and of cardynales,
 Of patriarkes and bishops I shewe,
 And in Latyn I speke a wordes fewe,
 To saffron with my predicacioun,
 And for to stire hem to devocioun.

Thanne shewe I forth my longe cristal stones,
 Ycrammed ful of cloutes and of bones,—
 Relikes been they, as wenen they echoon.
 Thanne have I in latoun a sholder-boon
 Which that was of an hooly Jewes sheep.
 'Goode men,' I seye, 'taak of my wordes keep;
 If that this boon be wasshe in any welle,
 If cow, or calf, or sheep, or oxe swelle
 That any worm hath etc, or worm ystonge,
 Taak water of that welle and wasch his tonge,
 And it is hool anon; and forthermoore,
 Of pokkes and of scabbe, and every soore
 Shal every sheep be hool that of this welle
 Drynketh a draughte. Taak kep eek what I
 telle:

If that the good-man that the beestes oweth
 Wol every wyke, er that the cok hym croweth,
 Fastynge, drynken of this welle a draughte,
 As thilke hooly Jew oure eldries taughte,
 His beestes and his stoor shal multiplie.

And, sires, also it hecleth jalousie;
 For though a man be falle in jalous rage,
 Lat maken with this water his potage,
 And nevere shal he moore his wyf mystriste,
 Though he the soothe of hir defaute wiste,
 Al had she taken prestes two or thre.

Heere is a miteyn eek, that ye may se.
 He that his hand wol putte in this mitayn,
 He shal have multipliynge of his grayn,
 Whan he hath sowen, be it whete or otes,
 So that he offre pens, or elles grotes.

Goode men and wommen, o thyng warne I
 yow:

If any wight be in this chirche now
 That hath doon synne horrible, that he
 Dar nat, for shame, of it yshryven be,¹⁶⁵

Or any womman, be she yong or old,
 That hath ymaad hir housbonde cokewold,¹⁶⁶
 Swich folk shal have no power ne no grace
 To offren to my relikes in this place.

5 And whoso fyndeth hym out of swich blame,
 He wol come up and offre in Goddes name,
 And I assoille him by the auctoritee
 Which that by bulle ygraunted was to me.

By this gaude¹⁶⁷ have I wonne, yeer by yeer,
 10 An hundred mark sith I was pardoner.
 I stonde lyk a clerk in my pulpet,
 And whan the lewed peple is doun yset,
 I preche so as ye han herd bifoore,
 And telle an hundred false japes moore.

15 Thanne payne I me to streche forth the nekke,
 And est and west upon the peple I bekke,
 As dooth a dowve sittynge on a berne.
 Myne handes and my tonge goon so yerne¹⁶⁸
 That it is joye to se my bisynesse.

20 Of avarice and of swich cusednesse
 Is al my prechynge, for to make hem free
 To yeven hir pens, and namely unto me.
 For myn entente is nat but for to wyne,
 And nothyng for correccioun of synne.

25 I rekke nevere, whan that they been beryed,
 Though that hir soules goon a-blakeberyed!
 For certes, many a predicacioun
 Comth ofte tyme of yvel entencioun;
 Som for plesance of folk and flaterye,
 To been avaunced by ypocrisye,
 And som for veyne glorie, and som for hate.
 For whan I dar noon oother weyes debate,
 Thanne wol I styngye hym with my tonge
 smerte

35 In prechyng, so that he shal nat asterte¹⁶⁹
 To been defamed falsly, if that he
 Hath trespassed to my bretheren or to me.
 For though I telle noght his propre name,
 Men shal wel knowe that it is the same,

40 By signes, and by othere circumstances;
 Thus quyte I folk that doon us displeances;
 Thus spitte I out my venym under hewe
 Of hoolynesse, to semen hooly and trewe.

But shortly myn entente I wol devyse:

I preche of no thyng but for covetysse.
 Therefore my theme is yet, and evere was,
Radix malorum est Cupiditas.

Thus kan I preche agayn that same vice
 Which that I use, and that is avarice.

¹⁶⁴ The root of evils is love of money.

¹⁶⁵ confessed and absolved.

¹⁶⁶ cuckold.

¹⁶⁸ briskly.

¹⁶⁷ trick.

¹⁶⁹ escape.

But though myself be gilty in that synne,
Yet kan I maken oother folk to twynne
From avarice, and soore to repente.
But that is nat my principal entente;
I preche nothyng but for coveitise.
Of this mateere it oghte ynogh suffice.

Thanne telle I hem ensamples many oon
Of olde stories longe tyme agoon.
For lewed people loven tales olde;
Swiche thynges kan they wel reporte and 10
holde.

What, trowe ye, that whiles I may preche,
And wynne gold and silver for I teche,
That I wol lyve in poverte wilfully?
Nay, nay, I thoughte it nevere, trewely!
For I wol preche and begge in sondry landes;
I wol nat do no labour with myne handes,
Ne make baskettes, and lyve therby,
By cause I wol nat beggen ydelly.
I wol noon of the apostles countrefete;
I wol have moneie, wolles, chese, and whete,
Al were it yeven of the povereste page,
Or of the povereste wydwe in a village,
Al sholde hir children sterve for famyne.
Nay, I wol drynke licour of the vyne,
And have a joly wenche in every toun.
But herkneth, lordynges, in conclusioun:
Youre likyng is that I shal telle a tale.
Now have I dronke a draughte of comy ale,
By God, I hope I shal yow telle a thyng
That shal by reson been at youre likyng,
For though myself be a full vicious man,
A moral tale yet I yow telle kan,
Which I am wont to preche for to wynne.
Now hoold youre pees! my tale I wol bigynne."

The Pardoner's Tale

HEERE BIGYNNETH THE PARDONERS TALE.

In Flaundres whilom was a compaignye
Of yonge folk that haunteden¹⁷⁰ folye,
As riot, hasard, stywes,¹⁷¹ and tavernes,
Where as with harpes, lutes, and gyternes,
They daunce and pleyen at dees bothe day and
nyght,
And eten also and drynken over hir myght,
Thurgh which they doon the devel sacrifise
Withinne that develes temple, in cursed wise,
By superfluytee abhomynable.
Hir othes been so grete and so dampnable

¹⁷⁰ practiced.

¹⁷¹ brothels.

That it is grisly for to heere hem swere.
Oure blissed Lordes body they totere,¹⁷²
Hem thoughte that Jewes rente hym noght
ynough;

5 And ech of hem at othes synne lough.
And right anon thanne comen tombesteres¹⁷³
Fetys and smale, and yonge frutesteres,¹⁷⁴
Syngeres with harpes, baudes, wafereres,
Whiche been the verray develes officeres
10 To kyndle and blowe the fyr of lecherye,
That is annexed unto glotonye.

The hooly writ take I to my witnessse
That luxurie is in wyn and dronkenesse.

Lo, how that dronken Looth, unkyndely,¹⁷⁵
15 Lay by his doghtres two, unwityngly;
So dronke he was, he nyste what he wroughte.

Herodes, whoso wel the stories soghte,
Whan he of wyn was repleet at his feeste,
Right at his owene table he yaf his heeste¹⁷⁶

20 To sleen the Baptist John, ful giltelees.

Senec seith a good word donteles;
He seith he kan no difference fynde
Bitwix a man that is out of his mynde
And a man which that is dronkelewe,

25 But that woodnesse, yfallen in a shrewe,¹⁷⁷
Persevereth lenger than dooth dronkenesse.
O glotonye, ful of cursednesse!

O cause first of oure confusioun!
O original of oure dampnacioun,

30 Til Crist hadde boght us with his blood agayn!
Lo, how deere, shortly for to sayn,
Aboght was thilke cursed vileyny!
Corrupt was al this world for glotonye.

Adam oure fader, and his wyf also,

35 Fro Paradys to labour and to wo
Were dryven for that vice, it is no drede.
For whil that Adam fasted, as I rede,
He was in Paradys; and whan that he
Eet of the fruyt deffended¹⁷⁸ on the tree,

40 Anon he was out cast to wo and payne.
O glotonye, on thee wel oghte us pleyne!

O, wiste a man how manye maladyes
Folwen of excesse and of glotonyes,
He wolde been the moore mesurable

40 Of his diete, sittynge at his table.

Allas! the shorte throte, the tendre mouth,
Maketh that est and west and north and south,
In erthe, in eir, in water, men to swynke

¹⁷² tore in pieces.

¹⁷³ female tumblers

¹⁷⁴ female fruit-sellers.

¹⁷⁵ unnaturally.

¹⁷⁶ command.

¹⁷⁷ scoundrel.

¹⁷⁸ forbidden.

To gete a glotoun deyntee mete and drynke!
Of this matiere, o Paul, wel kanstow trete:

"Mete unto wombe, and wombe eek unto
mete,

Shal God destroyen bothe," as Paulus seith.
Allas! a foul thyng is it, by me feith,
To seye this word, and fouler is the dede,
Whan man so drynketh of the white and rede
That of his throte he maketh his pryvee,
Thurgh thilke cursed superfuittee.

The apostel wepyng seith ful pitously,
"Ther walken manye of whiche yow toold
have I—

I seye it now wepyng, with pitous voys—
That they been enemys of Cristes croys,
Of whiche the ende is deeth, wombe is hir
god!"

O womel! O bely! O styngyng cod,¹⁷⁹
Fulfilled of dong and of corrupcioun!
At either ende of thee foul is the soun.
How greet labour and cost is thee to fynde!
Thise cookes, how they stampe, and streyne,
and grynde,

And turnen substaunce into accident,
To fulfille al thy likerous talent!
Out of the harde bones knokke they
The mary, for they caste noght away
That may go thurgh the golet softe and swoote.
Of spicerie of leef, and bark, and roote
Shal been his sauce ymaked by delit,
To make hym yet a newer appetit.
But, certes, he that haunteth swiche delices
Is deed, whil that he lyveth in tho vices.

A lecherous thyng is wyn, and drunkenesse
Is ful of stryvyng and of wrecchednesse.
O dronke man, disfigured is thy face,
Sour is thy breeth, foul artow to embrace,
And thurgh thy dronke nose semeth the soun
As though thou seydest ay "Sampsoun, Samp-
soun!"

And yet, God woot, Sampsoun drank nevere no
wyn.

Thou fallest as it were a styked swyn;
Thy tonge is lost, and al thyn honeste cure;
For drunkenesse is verray sepulture
Of mannes wit and his discrecioun.
In whom that drynke hath dominacioun
He kan no conseil kepe, it is no drede.¹⁸⁰
Now kepe yow fro the white and fro the rede,
And namely fro the white wyn of Lepe,¹⁸¹

That is to selle in Fysshstrete or in Chepe.

This wyn of Spaigne crepeth subtilly
In othere wyne, growyng faste by,
Of which ther ryseth swich fumositee.

5 That whan a man hath dronken draughtes thre,
And weneth that he be at hoom in Chepe,
He is in Spaigne, right at the toune of Lepe,—
Nat at the Rochele, ne at Burdeux toun;
And thanne wol he seye "Sampsoun, Samp-
soun!"

10 But herkneth, lordynges, o word, I yow
preye,

That alle the sovereyn actes, dar I seye,
Of victories in the Olde Testament,

15 Thurgh verray God, that is omnipotent,
Were doon in abstinence and in preyere.
Looketh the Bible, and ther ye may it leere.

Looke, Attila, the grete conquerour,
Deyde in his sleep, with shame and dishonour,

20 Bledyng ay at his nose in drunkenesse.

A capitayn sholde lyve in sobrenesse.

And over al this, avyseth yow right wel

What was comaunded unto Lamuel—

Nat Samuel, but Lamuel, seye I—

25 Redeth the Bible, and fynde it expresly

Of wyn-yevyng to hem that han justise.

Namoure of this, for it may wel suffise.

And now that I have spoken of glotonye,

Now wol I yow deffenden hasardrye.¹⁸²

30 Hasard is verray mooder of lesynges,¹⁸³

And of deceite, and cursed forswerynges,

BlaspHEME of Crist, manslaughter, and wast

also

Of catel and of tyme; and forthermo,

35 It is repreeve and contrarie of honour

For to ben holde a commune hasardour.

And ever the hyer he is of estaat,

The moore is he yholden desolaat.

If that a prynce useth hasardrye,

40 In alle governaunce and polieye

He is, as by commune opinioun,

Yholde the lasse in reputacioun.

Stilboun, that was a wys embassadour,

Was sent to Corynthe, in ful greet honour,

45 Fro Lacidomye, to make hire alliaunce.

And whan he cam, hym happede, par chaunce,

That alle the gretteste that were of that lond,

Pleyynge atte hasard he hem fond.

For which, as soone as it myghte be,

50 He stal hym hoom agayn to his contree,

¹⁷⁹ bag.

¹⁸⁰ doubt.

¹⁸¹ in Spain.

¹⁸² gaming.

¹⁸³ lies.

And seyde, "Ther wol I nat lese my name,
Ne I wol nat take on me so greet defame,
Yow for to allie unto none hasardours.
Sendeth othere wise embassadours;
For, by my trouthe, me were levere dye
Than I yow sholde to hasardours allye.
For ye, that been so glorious in honours,
Shul nat allyen yow with hasardours
As by my wyl, ne as by my treetee."
This wise philosophre, thus seyde hee.

Looke eek that to the kyng Demetrius
The kyng of Parthes, as the book seith us,
Sente him a paire of dees of gold in scorn,
For he hadde used hasard ther-biforn;
For which he heeld his glorie or his renoun
At no value or reputacioun.
Lordes may fynden oother maner pley
Honest ynough to dryve the day away.

Now wol I speke of othes false and grete
A word or two, as olde bookes trete.
Gret sweryng is a thyng abhominable,
And fals sweryng is yet moore reprevable.
The heighe God forbad sweryng at al,
Witnesse on Mathew; but in special
Of sweryng seith the hooly Jeremye,
"Thou shalt swere sooth thyne othes, and nat
lye,

And swere in doom, and eek in rightwisnesse";
But ydel sweryng is a cursednesse.

Bihoold and se that in the first table
Of heighe Goddes heestes honourable,
Hou that the seconde heeste of hym is this:
"Take nat my name in ydel or amys."

Lo, rather he forbedeth swich sweryng
Than homycide or many a cursed thyng;
I seye that, as by ordre, thus it stondesth;
This knoweth, that his heestes understondeth,
How that the seconde heeste of God is that.
And forther over, I wol thee telle al plat,¹⁸⁴
That vengeance shal nat parten from his hous
That of his othes is to outrageous.

"By Goddes precious herte," and "By his
nayles,"

And "By the blood of Crist that is in Hayles,¹⁸⁵
Sevene is my chaunce, and thyn is cynk¹⁸⁶ and 45
treyl"

"By Goddes armes, if thou falsly pleye,
This daggere shal thurghout thyn herte go!"

¹⁸⁴ flat.
¹⁸⁵ abbey in Gloucestershire having as a relic a
vial of Christ's blood.

¹⁸⁶ five.

This fruyt cometh of the bicched bones two,
Forsweryng, ire, falsnesse, homycide.

Now, for the love of Crist, that for us dyde,
Lete youre othes, bothe gret and smale.

5 But, sires, now wol I telle forth my tale.

Thise riotours thre of whiche I telle,
Longe erst er prime rong of any belle,
Were set hem in a taverne for to drynke,
And as they sat, they herde a belle clynke

10 Biforn a cors, was caried to his grave.

That oon of hem gan callen to his knave:

"Go bet,"¹⁸⁷ quod he, "and axe redily

What cors is this that passeth heer forby;

And looke that thou reporte his name weel."

15 "Sire," quod this boy, "it nedeth never-a-
deel;

It was me toold er ye cam heer two houres.

He was, pardee, an old felawe of youre;

And sodeynly he was yslayn to-nyght,¹⁸⁸

20 Fordronke, as he sat on his bench upright.

Ther cam a privee theef, men clepeth Deeth,

That in this contree al the peple sleeth,

And with his spere he smoot his herte atwo,

And wente his wey withouten wordes mo.

25 He hath a thousand slayn this pestilence.

And, maister, er ye come in his presence,

Me thynketh that it were necessarie

For to be war of swich an adversarie.

Beth redy for to meete hym everemoore;

30 Thus taughte me my dame; I sey namoore."

"By seinte Marie!" seyde this taverne

"The child seith sooth, for he hath slayn this
yeer,

Henne over a mile, withinne a greet village,

35 Bothe man and womman, child, and hyne,¹⁸⁹
and page;

I trowe his habitacioun be there.

To been avysed greet wysdom it were,

Er that he dide a man a dishonour."

40 "Ye, Goddes armes!" quod this riotour,

"Is it swich peril with hym for to meete?

I shal hym seke by wey and eek by strete,

I make avow to Goddes digne bones!

Herkneth, felawes, we thre been al ones;

Lat ech of us holde up his hand til oother,

And ech of us bicomen othes brother,

And we wol sleen this false traytour Deeth.

He shal be slayn, he that so manye sleeth,

By Goddes dignitee, er it be nyght!"

50 Togidres han thise thre hir trouthes plight

¹⁸⁷ hurry.

¹⁸⁸ last night.

¹⁸⁹ laborer.

To lyve and dyen ech of hem for oother,
As though he were his owene ybore brother.
And up they stirte, al dronken in this rage,
And forth they goon towards that village
Of which the taverner hadde spoke bifore.
And many a grisly ooth thanne han they
sworn,

And Cristes blessed body al torente—
Deeth shal be deed, if that they may hym
hente!

Whan they han goon nat fully half a mile,
Right as they wolde han troden over a stile,
An oold man and a povre with hem mette.
This olde man ful mekely hem grette,
And seyde thus, "Now, lordes, God yow
see!"¹⁰⁰

The proudeste of this riotoures three
Answerde agayn, "What, carl,"¹⁰¹ with sory
grace!

Why artow al forwrapped save thy face?
Why lyvestow so longe in so greet age?"

This olde man gan looke in his visage,
And seyde thus, "For I ne kan nat fynde
A man, though that I walked into Ynde,
Neither in citee ne in no village,
That wolde chaunge his youthe for myn age;
And therefore moot I han myn age stille,
As longe tyme as it is Goddes wille.
Ne Deeth, alas! ne wol nat han my lyf.
Thus walke I, lyk a resteles kaityf,"¹⁰²
And on the ground, which is my moodres gate,
I knokke with my staf, bothe erly and late,
And seye 'Leeve mooder, leet me in!
Lo how I vanysshe, flessch, and blood, and
skyn!

Allas! whan shul my bones been at reste?
Mooder, with yow wolde I chaunge my cheste
That in my chambre longe tyme hath be,
Ye, for an heyre clowt to wrappe in me!
But yet to me she wol nat do that grace,
For which ful pale and welked is my face.

But, sires, to yow it is no curteisye
To speken to an old man vileynye,
But he trespasse in word, or elles in dede.
In Hooly Writ ye may yourself wel rede:
'Agayns'¹⁰³ an oold man, hoor upon his heed,
Ye sholde arise; wherfore I yeve yow reed,
Ne dooth unto an oold man noon harm now,
Namoore than that ye wolde men did to yow

In age, if that ye so longe abyde.
And God be with yow, where ye go or ryde!
I moot go thider as I have to go."

"Nay, olde cherl, by God, thou shalt nat so,"
5 Seyde this oother hasardour anon;
"Thou partest nat so lightly, by Seint John!
Thou spak right now of thilke traytour Deeth,
That in this contree alle oure freendes sleeth.
Have heer my trouthe, as thou art his espye,
10 Telle where he is, or thou shalt it abyde,"¹⁰⁴

By God, and by the hooly sacrament!
For soothly thou art oon of his assent
To sleen us yonge folk, thou false theeff!"

"Now, sires," quod he, "if that ye be so leef
15 To fynde Deeth, turne up this croked wey,
For in that grove I lafte hym, by my fey,
Under a tree, and there he wole abyde;
Noght for youre boost he wole him no thyng
hyde.

20 Se ye that ook? Right there ye shal hym fynde.
God save yow, that boghte agayn mankynde,
And yow amende!" Thus seyde this olde man;
And everich of this riotoures ran
Til he cam to that tree, and ther they founde

25 Of floryns fyne of gold ycoyned rounde
Wel ny an eighte busshele, as hem thoughte.
No lenger thanne after Deeth they soughte,
But ech of hem so glad was of that sighte,
For that the floryns been so faire and brighte,
30 That down they sette hem by this precious
hoord.

The worsten of hem, he spak the firste word.
"Bretheren," quod he, "taak kep what that I
seye;

35 My wit is greet, though that I bourde¹⁰⁵ and
pleye.

This tresor hath Fortune unto us given,
In myrthe and jolitee oure lyf to lyven,
And lightly as it comth, so wol we spende.

40 Ey! Goddes precious dignitee! who wende
To-day that we sholde han so fair a grace?
But myghte this gold be caried fro this place
Hoom to myn hous, or elles unto youre—
For wel ye woot that al this gold is oures—

45 Thanne were we in heigh felicittee.
But trewely, by daye it may nat bee.
Men wolde seyn that we were theves stronge,
And for oure owene tresor doon us honge.

This tresor moste ycaried be by nyghte
50 As wisely and as slyly as it myghte.

¹⁰⁰ protect.
¹⁰² wretch.

¹⁰¹ churl.
¹⁰³ Before.

¹⁰⁴ pay for.

¹⁰⁵ jest.

Wherefore I rede that cut among us alle
 Be drawe, and lat se wher the cut wol falle;
 And he that hath the cut with herte blithe
 Shal renne to the town, and that ful swithe,¹⁹⁶
 And brynge us breed and wyn ful prively.
 And two of us shul kepen subtilly
 This tresor wel; and if he wol nat tarie,
 Whan it is nyght, we wol this tresor carie,
 By oon assent, where as us thynketh best."
 That oon of hem the cut broghte in his fest,
 And bad hem drawe, and looke where it wol
 falle;
 And it fil on the yongeste of hem alle,
 And forth toward the toun he wente anon.
 And also soone as that he was gon,
 That oon of hem spak thus unto that oother:
 "Thou knowest wel thou art my sworn
 brother;
 Thy profit wol I telle thee anon.
 Thou woost wel that oure felawe is agon,
 And heere is gold, and that ful greet plentee,
 That shal departed been among us thre.
 But nathelees, if I kan shape it so
 That it departed were among us two,
 Hadde I nat doon a freendes torn to thee?"
 That oother answerde, "I noot hou that may
 be.
 He woot wel that the gold is with us tweye;
 What shal we doon? What shal we to hym
 seye?"
 "Shal it be conseil?" seyed the firste shrewe,
 "And I shal tellen in a wordes fewe
 What we shal doon, and brynge it wel aboute."
 "I graunte," quod that oother, "out of doute,
 That, by my trouthe, I wol thee nat biwreye."
 "Now," quod the firste, "thou woost wel we
 be tweye,
 And two of us shul strenger be than oon.
 Looke whan that he is set, that right anon
 Arys as though thou woldest with hym pleye,
 And I shal ryve hym thurgh the sydes tweye
 Whil that thou strogelest with hym as in game,
 And with thy daggere looke thou do the same;
 And thanne shal al this gold departed be,
 My deere freend, bitwixen me and thee.
 Thanne may wo bothe oure lustes all fulfille,
 And pleye at dees right at oure owene wille."
 And thus acorded been thise shrewes tweye
 To sleen the thridde, as ye han herd me seye.
 This yongeste, which that wente to the toun, 50

Ful ofte in herte he rolleth up and doun
 The beautee of thise floryns newe and brighte.
 "O Lord!" quod he, "if so were that I myghte
 Have al this tresor to myself allone,
 5 Ther is no man that lyveth under the trone
 Of God that sholde lyve so murye as Il"
 And atte laste the feend, oure enemy,
 Putte in his thought that he sholde poyson
 beye,
 10 With which he myghte sleen his felawes tweye;
 For-why the feend foond hym in swich lyvyng
 That he hadde leve him to sorwe brynge.
 For this was outrely his fulle entente,
 To sleen hem bothe, and nevere to repente.
 15 And forth he gooth, no lenger wolde he tarie,
 Into the toun, unto a pothecarie,
 And preyde hym that he hym wolde selle
 Som poyson, that he myghte his rattes quelle;
 And eek ther was a poleat in his hawe,¹⁹⁷
 20 That, as he seyde, his capouns hadde yslawe,
 And fayn he wolde wreke hym, if he myghte,
 On vermyn that destroyed hym by nyghte.
 The pothecarie answerde, "And thou shalt
 have
 25 A thyng that, also God my soule save,
 In al this world ther is no creature,
 That eten or dronken hath of this confiture
 Noght but the montance¹⁹⁸ of a corn of whete,
 That he ne shal his lif anon forelete;
 30 Ye, sterve¹⁹⁹ he shal, and that in lasse while
 Than thou wolt goon a paas nat but a mile,
 This poyssoun is so strong and violent."
 This cursed man hath in his hond yhent
 This poyssoun in a box, and sith he ran
 35 Into the nexte strete unto a man,
 And borwed hym large botelles thre;
 And in the two his poyson poured he;
 The thridde he kepte clene for his drynke.
 For al the nyght he shoop hym for to swynke
 40 In carynge of the gold out of that place.
 And whan this riotour, with sory grace,
 Hadde filled with wyn his grete botels thre,
 To his felawes agayn repaireth he.
 What nedeth it to sermone of it moore?
 45 For right as they hadde cast his deeth bifoore,
 Right so they han hym slayn, and that anon.
 And whan that this was doon, thus spak that
 oon:
 "Now lat us sitte and drynke, and make us
 merie,

¹⁹⁶ quickly.

¹⁹⁷ yard.

¹⁹⁸ amount.

¹⁹⁹ die.

And afterward we wol his body berie."
And with that word it happed hym, par cas,
To take the botel ther the poyson was,
And drank, and yaf his felawe drynke also,
For which anon they storven²⁰⁰ bothe two.

But certes, I suppose that Ayycen
Wroot nevere in no canon, ne in no fen,
Mo wonder signes of empoisonyng
Than hadde thise wrecches two, er hir endyng.
Thus ended been thise homycides two,
And eek the false empoysonere also.

O cursed synne of alle cursedness!
O traytours homycide, O wikkedness!
O glotonye, luxurie, and hasardrye!
Thou blasphemour of Crist with vileynye
And othes grete, of usage and of pride!
Allas! mankynde, how may it bitide
That to thy creatour, which that the wroghte,
And with his precious herte-blood thee boghte,
Thou art so fals and so unkynde, allas?

Now, goode men, God foryeve yow youre
trespas,

And ware yow fro the synne of avarice!
Myn hooly pardoun may yow alle warice,²⁰¹
So that he offre nobles or sterlynges,
Or elles silver broches, spoones, rynges.
Boweth youre heed under this hooly bulle!
Cometh up, ye wyves, offreth of youre wolle!
Your names I entre heer in my rolle anon;
Into the blisse of hevenc shul ye gon.
I yow assoille, by myn heigh power,
Yow that wol offre, as clene and eek as cleer
As ye were born.—And lo, sires, thus I preche.
And Jhesu Crist, that is oure soules leche,
So graunte yow his pardoun to receyve,
For that is best; I wol yow nat deceyve.

But, Sires, o word forgat I in my tale:
I have relikes and pardoun in my male,
As faire as any man in Engeland,
Whiche were me yeven by the popes hond.
If any of yow wole, of devocion,
Offren, and han myn absolucion,
Com forth anon, and kneleth heere adoun,
And mekely receyveth my pardoun;
Or elles taketh pardoun as ye wende,
Al newe and fressh at every miles ende,
So that ye offren, alwey newe and newe,
Nobles or pens, whiche that be goode and
trewe.

It is an honour to everich that is heer

²⁰⁰ died.

²⁰¹ cure.

That ye mowe have a suffisant pardoneer
T'assoille yow, in contree as ye ryde,
For aventures whiche that may bityde.
Paraventure ther may fallen oon or two
5 Doun of his hors, and breke his nekke atwo.
Looke which a seuretee is it to yow alle
That I am in youre felaweshipe yfalle,
That may assoille yow, bothe moore and lasse,
Whan that the soule shal fro the body passe.
10 I rede that oure Hoost heere shal bigynne,
For he is moost enveloped in synne.
Com forth, sire Hoost, and offre first anon,
And thou shalt kisse the relikes everychon,
Ye, for a grotel Unbokele anon thy purs.
15 "Nay, nay!" quod he, "thanne have I Cristes
curs!
Lat be," quod he, "it shal nat be, so theech!²⁰²
Thou woldest make me kisse thyn olde breech,
And swere it were a relyk of a seint,"

20 This Pardoner answerde nat a word;
So wrooth he was, no word ne wolde he seye.
"Now," quod oure Hoost, "I wol no longer
pleye
25 With thee, ne with noon oother angry man."
But right anon the worthy Knyght bigan,
Whan that he saugh that al the peple lough,
"Namore of this, for it is right ynough!
Sire Pardoner, be glad and myrie of cheere;
30 And ye, sire Hoost, that been to me so deere,
I prey yow that ye kisse the Pardoner.
And Pardoner, I prey thee, drawe thee neer,
And, as we diden, lat us laughe and pleye."
Anon they kiste, and ryden forth hir weye.

HEERE IS ENDED THE PARDONERS TALE.

THE POPULAR BALLADS*

40 In most anthologies the ballads are listed for
convenience under the fifteenth century; actu-
ally they go back several centuries before that,
and we still have them with us. They stem from
45 the people, who passed them down by word
of mouth (the first extensive printed collection
by Bishop Percy did not appear until 1765).
Authorship is unknown. A compromise between

50 ²⁰² so may I prosper!
* The text of the ballads printed here in general
follows that of F. J. Child, by permission of Hough-
ton Mifflin Company.

NARRATIVE POETRY · THE POPULAR BALLADS

two current theories of composition would suggest that capable individuals wrote the originals and that the people in communal songfests improvised changes and additions in the manner of modern campers about the fire.

Besides the popular ballad, which is still to be found in primitive form in mountain recesses of America, there was the broadside, a sixteenth-century song written by identified second-raters who seized the occasion of a murder, fire, or political event to scratch off verses to be sold on the street and sung to a familiar tune. The name comes from the fact that the ballad was printed on the full printer's sheet, generally with a crude woodcut illustration. Tin-Pan Alley still turns out what amounts to broadsides about the burning of the "Hindenburg" or the death of Floyd Collins in a Kentucky cave.

With the Romantic Movement a third major type of ballad—the literary—was developed. It is the work of competent artists who imitated the popular form. It has the virtues of literacy and art, but generally lacks the earliness and pungent primitiveness of the original. In addition, there are many subtypes of ballad, both popular and literary, dealing with domestic crime, outlaws, the supernatural, history, and so on. Humorous ballads are relatively rare. The common ballad stanza has four lines, of which the second and fourth rhyme. There are four stresses in the first and third lines, three in the others. However, especially in literary ballads, much variation in stanza length and rhyme occurs.

Though the ballad is relatively primitive, it has its own conventions. Some of these include the prominence of odd numbers; the use of incremental repetition; the refrain; sudden transitions; upper-class background; question-and-answer routines; brevity; stock epithets; and a number of small, but important, symbolic details—for example, a rose and a brier will grow from the graves of a couple who died for love, a sprig of birch in the hat will indicate a return from Paradise, and so on.

Since the ballads are meant to be sung, they do not always read well to a beginner's taste. The ideal remedy is to take advantage of the many recordings available in all good music libraries. Better yet, let everyone join in on the refrains, and the whole charm of the ballads

will begin to assert itself. And if the old ballads seem too far removed, there are modern versions of them, and brand-new modern ballads—of the cowboys, for example. There is no better place to begin the study of literature.

LORD RANDAL

"O where hae ye been, Lord Randal, my son?
O where hae ye been, my handsome young man?"

"I hae been to the wild wood; mother, make
my bed soon,
For I'm weary wi hunting, and fain wald lie
down."

"Where gat ye your dinner, Lord Randal, my son?"

Where gat ye your dinner, my handsome
young man?"

"I dined wi my true-love; mother, make my
bed soon,

For I'm weary wi hunting, and fain wald lie
down."

"What gat ye to your dinner, Lord Randal,
my son?"

What gat ye to your dinner, my handsome
young man?"

"I gat eels boiled in broo; mother, make my
bed soon,

For I'm weary wi hunting, and fain wald lie
down."

"What became of your bloodhounds, Lord
Randal, my son?"

What became of your bloodhounds, my hand-
some young man?"

"O they swelld and they died; mother, make
my bed soon,

For I'm weary wi hunting, and fain wald lie
down."

"O I fear ye are poisond, Lord Randal, my
son!

O I fear ye are poisond, my handsome young
man!"

"O yes! I am poisond; mother, make my bed
soon,

For I'm sick at the heart, and I fain wald lie
down."

THE POPULAR BALLADS · NARRATIVE POETRY

EDWARD

1. "Why dois your brand sae drap wi bluid,
Edward, Edward,
Why dois your brand sae drap wi bluid,
And why sae sad gang yee O?"
"O I hae killed my hauke sae guid,
Mither, mither,
O I hae killed my hauke sae guid,
And I had nae mair bot hee O."
2. "Your haukis bluid was nevir sae reid,
Edward, Edward,
Your haukis bluid was nevir sae reid,
My deir son I tell thee O."
"O I hae killed my reid-roan steid,
Mither, mither,
O I hae killed my reid-roan steid,
That erst was sae fair and frie O."
3. "Your steid was auld, and ye hae gat mair,
Edward, Edward,
Your steid was auld, and ye hae gat mair,
Sum other dule ye drie¹ O."
"O I hae killed my fadir deir,
Mither, mither,
O I hae killed my fadir deir,
Alas, and wae is mee O!"
4. "And whatten penance wul ye drie for that, 30
Edward, Edward,
And whatten penance wul ye drie for that?
My deir son, now tell me O."
"Ile set my feit in yonder boat,
Mither, mither, 35
Ile set my feit in yonder boat,
And Ile fare ovir the sea O."
5. "And what wul ye doe wi your towirs and
your ha, 40
Edward, Edward?
And what wul ye doe wi your towirs and your
ha,
That were sae fair to see O?"
"Ile let thame stand tul they doun fa, 45
Mither, mither,
Ile let thame stand tul they doun fa,
For here nevir mair maun I bee O."

your wife,

- Edward, Edward?
And what wul ye leive to your bairns and
your wife,
5 Whan ye gang ovir the sea O?"
"The warldis room, late them beg thrae life,
Mither, mither,
The warldis room, late them beg thrae life,
For thame nevir mair wul I see O."
- 10 7. "And what wul ye leive to your ain mither
deir,
Edward, Edward?
And what wul ye leive to your ain mither
deir? 15
My deir son, now tell me O."
"The curse of hell frae me sall ye beir,
Mither, mither,
The curse of hell frae me sall ye beir,
20 Sic counseils ye gave to me O."

THE TWA CORBIES

- 25 1. As I was walking all alane,
I herd twa corbies making a mane;¹
The tane unto the t' other say,
"Where sall we gang and dine to-day?"
2. "In behint yon auld fail² dyke,
I wot there lies a new slain knight;
And naebody kens that he lies there,
But his hawk, his hound, and lady fair.
- 35 3. "His hound is to the hunting gane,
His hawk to fetch the wild-fowl hame,
His lady's ta'en another mate,
So we may mak our dinner sweet.
- 40 4. "Ye'll sit on his white hause-bane,³
And I'll pike out his bonny blue een;
Wi ae lock o his gowden hair
We'll theek⁴ our nest when it grows bare.
- 45 5. "Mony a one for him makes mane,
But nane sall ken where he is gane;
Oer his white banes when they are bare,
The wind sall blaw for evermair."

6. "And what wul ye leive to your bairns and 50

¹ Some other grief ye suffer.

¹ two ravens (crows) complaining (talking).

² turf.

³ neck-bone.

⁴ thatch.

THE WIFE OF USHER'S WELL

1. There lived a wife at Usher's Well,
And a wealthy wife was she;
She had three stout and stalwart sons, 5
And sent them oer the sea.
2. They hadna been a week from her,
A week but barely ane,
Whan word came to the carline wife¹ 10
That her three sons were gane.
3. They hadna been a week from her,
A week but barely three,
Whan word came to the carlin wife 15
That her sons she'd never see.
4. "I wish the wind may never cease,
Nor fashes² in the flood,
Till my three sons come hame to me,
In earthly flesh and blood."
5. It fell about the Martinmass,³
When nights are lang and mirk,
The carlin wife's three sons came hame,
And their hats were o the birk.⁴
6. It neither grew in syke⁵ nor ditch,
Nor yet in ony sheugh;⁶
But at the gates o Paradise,
That birk grew fair enough.
.
7. "Blow up the fire, my maidens,
Bring water from the well;
For a' my house shall feast this night,
Since my three sons are well."
8. And she has made to them a bed,
She's made it large and wide,
And she's taen her mantle her about,
Sat down at the bed-side.
.
9. Up then crew the red, red cock,
And up and crew the gray,
The eldest to the youngest said,
" 'Tis time we were away."

¹ old woman.

³ November 11.

⁵ trench.

² disturbances.

⁴ birch.

⁶ furrow.

10. The cock he hadna crawd but once,
And clappd his wings at a',
When the youngest to the eldest said,
"Brother, we must awa."
11. "The cock doth craw, the day doth daw,
The channerin' worm doth chide;
Gin we be mist out o our place,
A sair pain we maun bide."
12. "Fare ye weel, my mother dear!
Fareweel to barn and byre!⁷
And fare ye weel, the bonny lass
That kindles my mother's fire!"

BONNY BARBARA ALLAN

- It was in and about the Martinmas time,
20 When the green leaves were a falling,
That Sir John Graeme, in the West Country,
Fell in love with Barbara Allan.
- He sent his men down through the town
25 To the place where she was dwelling:
"O haste and come to my master dear,
Gin' ye be Barbara Allan."
- O hooley,² hooley rose she up,
30 To the place where he was lying,
And when she drew the curtain by,
"Young man, I think you're dying."
- "O it's I'm sick, and very, very sick,
35 And it's a' for Barbara Allan";
"O the better for me ye's never be,
Tho your heart's blood were a spilling."
- "O dinna ye mind, young man," said she,
40 "When ye was in the tavern a drinking,
That ye made the healths gae round and round,
And slighted Barbara Allan?"
- He turned his face unto the wall,
45 And death was with him dealing;
"Adieu, adieu, my dear friends all,
And be kind to Barbara Allan."

- And slowly, slowly raise she up,
50 And slowly, slowly left him,

⁷ fretting.

¹ If.

⁸ cow-shed.

² slowly.

And sighing said she coud not stay,
Since death of life had reft him.

She had not gane a mile but twa,
When she heard the dead-bell ringing,
And every jow³ that the dead-bell geid,
It cry'd, Woe to Barbara Allan!

"O mother, mother, make my bed!
O make it saft and narrow!
Since my love died for me today,
I'll die for him tomorrow."

CHEVY CHASE

1. God prosper long our noble king,
our liffes and saftyes all!
A woefull hunting once there did
in Chevy Chase befall.

2. To drive the deere with hound and horne
Erle Percy took the way:
The child may rue that is unborne
the hunting of that day!

3. The stout Erle of Northumberland
a vow to God did make
His pleasure in the Scottish woods
three sommers days to take,

4. The cheefest harts in Chevy C[h]ase
to kill and beare away:
These tydings to Erle Douglas came
in Scotland, where he lay.

5. Who sent Erle Percy present word
he would prevent his sport:
The English erle, not fearing that,
did to the woods resort,

6. With fifteen hundred bowmen bold,
All chosen men of might,
Who knew ffull well in time of neede
to ayme their shafts arright.

7. The gallant greyhound swiftly ran
to chase the fallow deere;
On Munday they began to hunt,
ere daylight did appeare.

8. And long before high noone they had
a hundred fat buckes slaine;
Then having dined, the drovyers went
to rouze the deare againe.

9. The bowmen mustered on the hills,
well able to endure;
Theire backsids all with speciall care
that day were guarded sure.

10. The hounds ran swiftly through the woods
the nimble deere to take,
That with their cryes the hills and dales
an eccho shrill did make.

11. Lord Percy to the quarry went
to view the tender deere;
Quoth he, "Erle Douglas promised once
this day to meete me heere;

12. "But if I thought he wold not come,
noe longer wold I stay."
With that a brave younge gentleman
thus to the erle did say:

13. "Loe, yonder doth Erle Douglas come,
hys men in armour bright,
Full twenty hundred Scottish speres
all marching in our sight.

14. "All men of pleasant Tivydale,
fast by the river Tweede:"
"O ceaze your sportis!" Erle Percy said,
"and take your bowes with speede.

15. "And now with me, my countrymen,
your courage forth advance!
For there was never champion yett,
in Scotland nor in Ffrance,

16. "That ever did on horsbacke come,
[but], and if my hap it were,
I durst encounter man for man,
with him to break a spere."

17. Erle Douglas on his milke-white steede,
most like a baron bold,
Rode formost of his company,
whose armor shone like gold.

18. "Shew me," sayd hee, "whose men you bee
that hunt soe boldly heere,

³ stroke.

NARRATIVE POETRY · THE POPULAR BALLADS

That without my consent doe chase
and kill my fallow deere."

19. The first man that did answer make
was noble Pearcy hee,
Who sayd, "Wee list not to declare
nor shew whose men wee bee;

20. "Yett wee will spend our dearest blood
thy cheefest harts to slay."
Then Douglas swore a solempne oathe,
and thus in rage did say:

21. "Ere thus I will outbraved bee,
one of us tow shall dye;
I know thee well, an erle thou art;
Lord Pearcy, soe am I.

22. "But trust me, Pearcy, pittye it were,
and great offence, to kill
Then any of these our guiltlesse men,
for they have done none ill.

23. "Let thou and I the battell trye,
and set our men aside:"
"Accurst bee [he!]" Erle Pearcy sayd,
"by whome it is denyed."

24. Then stept a gallant squire forth—
Witherington was his name—
Who said, "I wold not have it told
To Henery our king, for shame,

25. "That ere my captaine fought on foote,
and I stand looking on.
You bee two Erles," quoth Witherington,
"and I a squier alone;

26. "I'll doe the best that doe I may,
while I have power to stand;
While I have power to weeld my sword,
I'll fight with hart and hand."

27. Our English archers bent thier bowes;
their harts were good and trew;
Att the first flight of arrowes sent,
full foure score Scotts the slew.

28. To drive the deere with hound and horne,
Douglas bade on the bent;
Two captaines moved with mickle might,
their speres to shivers went.

29. They closed full fast on everye side,
noe slacknes there was found,
But many a gallant gentleman
lay gasping on the ground.

5
30. O Christ! it was great greeve to see
how eche man chose his spere,
And how the blood out of their brests
did gush like water cleare.

10
31. At last these two stout erles did meet,
like captaines of great might;
Like lyons woode¹ they layd on lode;
the made a cruell fight.

15
32. The fought untill they both did sweat,
with swords of tempered steele,
Till blood downe their cheekes like raine
the trickling downe did feele.

20
33. "O yeeld thee, Pearcy!" Douglas sayd,
"And in faith I will thee bringe
Where thou shall high advanced bee
by James our Scottish king.

25
34. "Thy ransome I will freely give,
and this report of thee,
Thou art the most couragious knight
[that ever I did see.]"

30
35. "Noe, Douglas!" quoth Erle Percy then,
"thy profer I doe scorne;
I will not yeelde to any Scott
that ever yett was borne!"

35
36. With that there came an arrow keene,
out of an English bow,
Which stroke Erle Douglas on the brest
a deepe and deadlye blow.

40
37. Who never sayd more words than these;
"Fight on, my merry men all!
For why, my life is att [an] end,
lord Pearcy sees my fall."

45
38. Then leaving life, Erle Pearcy tooke
the dead man by the hand;
Who said, "Erle Dowglas, for thy life,
wold I had lost my land!

¹ mad, wild.

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39. "O Christ! my very hart doth bleed
for sorrow for thy sake,
For sure, a more redoubted knight
mischance cold never take."

40. A knight amongst the Scotts there was
which saw Erle Douglas dye,
Who streight in hart did vow revenge
upon the Lord Pearceye.

41. Sir Hugh Mountgomerye was he called,
who, with a spere full bright,
Well mounted on a gallant steed,
ran feirely through the fight,

42. And past the English archers all,
without all dread or feare,
And through Erle Percy's body then
he thrust his hatfull spere.

43. With such a vehement force and might
his body he did gore,
The staff ran through the other side
a large cloth-yard and more.

44. Thus did both those nobles dye,
whose courage none cold staine;
An English archer then perceived
the noble erle was slaine.

45. He had [a] good bow in his hand,
made of a trusty tree;
An arrow of a cloth-yard long
to the hard head haled hee.

46. Against Sir Hugh Mountgomerye
his shaft full right he sett,
The grey-goose-winge that was there-on
in his harts bloode was wett.

47. This fight from breake of day did last
till setting of the sun,
For when the rung the evening-bell
the battele scarce was done.

48. With stout Erle Percy there was slaine
Sir John of Egerton,
Sir Robert Hareliffe and Sir William,
Sir James, that bold barron.

49. And with Sir George and Sir James,
both knights of good account,

Good Sir Raphe Rebbye there was slaine,
whose prowess did surmount.

50. For Witherington needs must I wayle
as one in dolefull dumpes,
For when his leggs were smitten of,
he fought upon his stumpes.

51. And with Erle Dowglas there was slaine
Sir Hugh Mountgomerye,
And Sir Charles Morrell, that from feelde
one foote wold never flee;

52. Sir Roger Hever of Hareliffe tow,
his sisters sonne was hee,
Sir David Lambwell, well esteemed,
but saved he cold not bee.

53. And the Lord Maxwell, in like case,
with Douglas he did dye,
Of twenty hundred Scottish speeres,
scarce fifty-five did flye.

54. Of fifteen hundred Englishmen
went home but fifty-three,
The rest in Chevy Chase were slaine,
under the greenwoode tree.

55. Next day did many widdowes come
their husbands to bewayle;
They washt their wounds in brinish teares,
but all wold not prevayle.

56. Theyr bodies, bathed in purple blood,
the bore with them away,
They kist them dead a thousand times
ere the were cladd in clay.

57. The newes was brought to Eddenborrow,
where Scottlands king did rayne,
That brave Erle Douglas suddainlye
was with an arrow slaine.

58. "O heavy newes!" King James can say;
"Scotland may wittenesse bee
I have not any captaine more
of such account as hee."

59. Like tydings to King Henery came,
within as short a space,
That Pearcy of Northumberland
was slaine in Chevy Chase.

60. "Now God be with him!" said our king,
 "sith it will noe better bee;
 I trust I have within my realme
 five hundred as good as hee.

61. "Yett shall not Scotts nor Scotland say
 but I will vengeance take,
 And be revenged on them all
 for brave Erle Percy's sake."

62. This vow the king did well performe
 after on Humble-downe;
 In one day fifty knights were slayne,
 with lords of great renowne.

63. And of the rest, of small account,
 did many hundreds dye:
 Thus endeth the hunting in Chevy Chase,
 made by the Erle Pearcy.

64. God save our king, and blesse this land
 with plenty, joy, and peace,
 And grant henceforth that foule debate
 twixt noble men may ceaze!

TAM LIN

1. O I forbid you, maidens a',
 That wear gowd on your hair,
 To come or gae by Carterhaugh,
 For young Tam Lin is there

2. There's nane that gae by Carterhaugh
 But they leave him a wad,¹
 Either their rings, or green mantles,
 Or else their maidenhead.

3. Janet has kilted her green kirtle
 A little aboon² her knee,
 And she has broded her yellow hair
 A little aboon her bree,³
 And she's awa to Carterhaugh,
 As fast as she can hie.

4. When she came to Carterhaugh
 Tam Lin was at the well,
 And there she fand his steed standing,
 But away was himsel.

5. She had na pu'd a double rose,
 A rose but only twa,

¹ token.

² above.

³ brow.

Till up then started young Tam Lin,
 Says, "Lady, thou's pu nae mae."⁴

6. "Why pu's thou the rose, Janet,
 And why breaks thou the wand?
 Or why comes thou to Carterhaugh
 Withoutten my command?"

7. "Carterhaugh, it is my ain,
 My daddie gave it me;
 I'll come and gang by Carterhaugh,
 And ask nae leave at thee."

8. Janet has kilted her green kirtle
 A little aboon her knee,
 And she has snooded her yellow hair
 A little aboon her bree,
 And she is to her father's ha,
 As fast as she can hie.

9. Four and twenty ladies fair
 Were playing at the ba,
 And out then cam the fair Janet,
 Ane the flower amang them a'.

10. Four and twenty ladies fair
 Were playing at the chess,
 And out then cam the fair Janet,
 As green as onie glass.

11. Out then spak an auld grey knight,
 Lay oer the castle wa,
 And says, "Alas, fair Janet, for thee
 But we'll be blamed a'.

12. "Haud your tongue, ye auld fac'd knight,
 Some ill death may ye die!
 Father my bairn on whom I will,
 I'll father nane on thee."

13. Out then spak her father dear,
 And he spak meek and mild;
 "And ever alas, sweet Janet," he says,
 "I think thou gae wi child."

14. "If that I gae wi child, father,
 Mysel maun bear the blame;
 There's neer a laird about your ha
 Shall get the bairn's name.

⁴ thou shalt pull no more.

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15. "If my love were an earthly knight,
As he's an elfin grey,
I wad na gie my ain true-love
For nae lord that ye hae.

16. "The steed that my true-love rides on
Is lighter than the wind;
Wi siller⁵ he is shod before,
Wi burning gowd⁶ behind."

17. Janet has kilted her green kirtle
A little aboon her knee,
And she has snooded her yellow hair
A little aboon her bree,
And she's awa to Carterhaugh,
As fast as she can hie.

18. When she cam to Carterhaugh,
Tam Lin was at the well,
And there she fand his steed standing,
But away was himsel.

19. She had na pu'd a double rose,
A rose but only twa,
Till up then started young Tam Lin,
Says, "Lady thou pu's nae mae.

20. "Why pu's thou the rose, Janet,
Amang the groves sae green,
And a' to kill the bonie babe
That we gat us between?"

21. "O tell me, tell me, Tam Lin," she says,
"For's sake that died on tree,
If eer ye was in holy chapel,
Or christendom⁷ did see?"

22. "Roxbrugh he was my grandfather,
Took me with him to bide,
And ance it fell upon a day
That wae did me betide.

23. "And ance it fell upon a day,
A cauld day and a snell,⁸
When we were frae the hunting come,
That frae my horse I fell;
The Queen o Fairies she caught me,
In yon green hill to dwell.

24. "And pleasant is the fairy land,
But, an eerie tale to tell,

Ay at the end of seven years
We pay a tiend⁹ to hell;
I am sae fair and fu o flesh,
I'm feard it be mysel.

5
25. "But the night is Halloween, lady,
The morn is Hallowday;
Then win me, win me, an ye will,
For weel I wat ye may.

10
26. "Just at the mirk and midnight hour
The fairy folk will ride,
And they that wad their true love win,
At Miles Cross they maun bide."

15
27. "But how shall I thee ken, Tam Lin,
Or how my true-love know,
Amang sae mony unco¹⁰ knights
The like I never saw?"

20
28. "O first let pass the black, lady,
And syne let pass the brown,
But quickly run to the milk-white steed,
Pu ye his rider down.

25
29. "For I'll ride on the milk-white steed,
And ay nearest the town;
Because I was an earthly knight
They gie me that renown.

30
30. "My right hand will be glovd, lady,
My left hand will be bare,
Cockt up shall my bonnet be,
And kaimd down shall my hair,

35
And thae's the takens I gie thee,
Nae doubt I will be there.

31. "They'll turn me in your arms, lady,
Into an esk¹¹ and adder;
40 But hold me fast, and fear me not,
I am your bairn's father.

32. "They'll turn me to a bear sae grim,
And then a lion bold;
45 But hold me fast, and fear me not,
As ye shall love your child.

33. "Again they'll turn me in your arms
To a red het gaud¹² of airn;

50

⁹ tithe.
¹¹ lizard.

¹⁰ unfamiliar.
¹² bar.

⁵ silver. ⁶ gold. ⁷ christening. ⁸ bitter.

But hold me fast, and fear me not,
I'll do to you nae harm.

34. "And last they'll turn me in your arms
Into the burning gleed;¹³
Then throw me into well water,
O throw me in wi speed.

35. "And then I'll be your ain true-love,
I'll turn a naked knight;
Then cover me wi your green mantle,
And cover me out o sight."

36. Gloomy, gloomy was the night,
And eerie was the way,
As fair Jenny in her green mantle
To Miles Cross she did gae.

37. About the middle o the night
She heard the bridles ring;
This lady was as glad at that
As any earthly thing.

38. First she let the black pass by,
And syne she let the brown,
But quickly she ran to the milk-white steed,
And pu'd the rider down.

39. Sae weel she minded whae he did say,
And young Tam Lin did win;
Syne coverd him wi her green mantle,
As blythe 's a bird in spring.

40. Out then spak the Queen o Fairies,
Out of a bush o broom:
"Them that has gotten young Tam Lin
Has gotten a stately groom."

41. Out then spak the Queen o Fairies,
And an angry woman was she:
"Shame betide her ill-far'd face,
And an ill death may she die,
For she's taen awa the boniest knight
In a' my companie.

42. "But had I kend, Tam Lin," she says,
"What now this night I see,
I wad hae taen out thy twa grey een,
And put in twa een o tree."

¹³ coal.

ROBIN HOOD AND ALLIN-A-DALE

Come listen to me, you gallants so free,
All you that loves mirth for to hear,
5 And I will you tell of a bold outlaw,
That lived in Nottinghamshire.
(Twice.)

As Robin Hood in the forrest stood,
All under the green-wood tree,
10 There he was ware of a brave young man,
As fine as fine might be.

The youngster was cloathed in scarlet red,
In scarlet fine and gay,
15 And he did frisk it over the plain,
And chanted a roundelay.

As Robin Hood next morning stood,
Amongst the leaves so gay,
20 There did he espy the same young man
Come drooping along the way.

The scarlet he wore the day before,
It was clean cast away;
25 And every step he fetcht a sigh,
"Alack and a well a day!"

Then stepped forth brave Little John,
And Nick the miller's son,
30 Which made the young man bend his bow,
When as he see them come.

"Stand off, stand off," the young man said
"What is your will with me?"
35 "You must come before our master straight,
Under yon greenwood tree."

And when he came bold Robin before,
Robin asked him courteously,
40 "O hast thou any money to spare
For my merry men and me?"

"I have no money," the young man said,
"But five shillings and a ring;
45 And that I have kept this seven long years,
To have it at my wedding.

"Yesterday I should have married a maid,
But now she is from me tane,
50 And chosen to be an old knight's delight,
Whereby my poor heart is slain."

THE POPULAR BALLADS · NARRATIVE POETRY

<p>"What is thy name?" then said Robin Hood, "Come tell me, without any fail." "By the faith of my body," then said the young man, "My name it is Allin-a-Dale." 5</p> <p>"What wilt thou give me," said Robin Hood, "In ready gold or fee, To help thee to thy true-love agan, And deliver her unto thee?" 10</p> <p>"I have no money," then quoth the young man, "No ready gold nor fee. But I will swear upon a book Thy true servant for to be." 15</p> <p>"How many miles is it to thy true-love? Come tell me without any guile." "By the faith of my body," then said the young man, 20 "It is but five little mile."</p> <p>Then Robin he hasted over the plain, He did neither stint nor hin, Until he came unto the church 25 Where Allin should keep his wedding.</p> <p>"What dost thou do here?" the bishop he said, "I prethee now tell to me." "I am a bold harper," quoth Robin Hood, 30 "And the best in the north countrey."</p> <p>"O welcome, O welcome," the bishop he said, "That music best pleaseth me." "You shall have no music," quoth Robin Hood, 35 "Till the bride and the bridegroom I see"</p> <p>With that came in a wealthy knight, Which was both grave and old, And after him a finikin lass, 40 Did shine like glistering gold.</p> <p>"This is no fit match," quoth bold Robin Hood, "That you do seem to make here; For since we are come into the church, 45 The bride she shall choose her own dear."</p> <p>Then Robin Hood put his horn to his mouth, And blew blasts two or three; When four and twenty bowmen bold 50 Came leaping over the lea.</p>	<p>And when they came into the churchyard, Marching all on a row, The first man was Allin-a-Dale, To give bold Robin his bow.</p> <p>"This is thy true-love," Robin he said, "Young Allin, as I hear say, And you shall be married at this same time, Before we depart away."</p> <p>"That shall not be," the bishop he said, "For thy word shall not stand; They shall be three times askt in the church, As the law is of our Land."</p> <p>Robin Hood pulld off the bishop's coat, And put it upon Little John, "By the faith of my body," then Robin said, "This cloath doth make thee a man."</p> <p>When Little John went into the quire, The people began for to laugh; He askt them seven times in the church, Lest three times should not be enough.</p> <p>"Who gives me this maid?" then said Little John; Quoth Robin, "That do I, And he that doth take her from Allin-a-Dale Full dearly he shall her buy."</p> <p>And thus having ended this merry wedding, The bride lookt as fresh as a queen, And so they returned to the merry greenwood, Amongst the leaves so green.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>GET UP AND BAR THE DOOR</i></p> <p>It fell about the Martinmas time, And a gay time it was then, When our goodwife got puddings to make, And she's boild them in the pan.</p> <p>The wind sae cauld blew south and north, And blew into the floor; Quoth our goodman to our goodwife, "Gae out and bar the door."</p> <p>"My hand is in my hussyskap, Goodman, as ye may see;</p>
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NARRATIVE POETRY · BROADSIDE BALLADS

An it shoud nae be barrd this hundred year, It's no be barrd for me."		Then said the one unto the other, "Here, man, tak ye my knife; Do ye tak aff the auld man's beard, And I'll kiss the goodwife."
They made a paction tween them twa, They made it firm and sure,	5	
That the first word whaeer shoud speak, Shoud rise and bar the door.		"But there's nae water in the house, And what shall we do than?"
Then by there came two gentlemen, At twelve o'clock at night,	10	"What ails ye at the pudding-broo, That boils into the pan?"
And they could neither see house nor hall, Nor coal nor candlelight.		O up then started our goodman, An angry man was he:
"Now whether is this a rich man's house, Or whether is it a poor?"	15	"Will ye kiss my wife before my een, And scad me wi pudding-bree?"
But neer a word wad ane o' them speak, For barring of the door.		Then up and started our goodwife, Gied three skips on the floor:
And first they ate the white puddings, And then they ate the black;	20	"Goodman, you've spoken the foremost word; Get up and bar the door."
Tho muckle thought the goodwife to hersel, Yet neer a word she spake.		

THE RENAISSANCE

BROADSIDE BALLADS¹

THE KING'S HUNT IS UP

The hunt is up, the hunt is up, And it is well nigh day; And Harry our king is gone hunting, To bring his deer to bay.	5	The horses snort to be at the sport, The dogs are running free; The woods rejoice at the merry noise Of hey tantara tee reel!
The east is bright with morning light, And darkness it is fled; And the merry horn wakes up the morn To leave his idle bed.	10	The sun is glad to see us clad All in our lusty green, And smiles in the sky as he riseth high To see and to be seen.
Behold the skies with golden dyes Are glowing all around; The grass is green, and so are the treen, All laughing with the sound.	15	Awake all men, I say again, Be merry as you may; For Harry our king is gone hunting To bring his deer to bay.

[Gray of Reading]

¹ See introduction to the ballad, I, 65.

BROADSIDE BALLADS · NARRATIVE POETRY

THE VALOROUS ACTS PERFORMED AT GAUNT¹ BY THE BRAVE BONNY LASS, MARY AMBREE, WHO IN REVENGE OF HER LOVER'S DEATH, DID PLAY HER PART MOST GALLANTLY

<p>When Captain Courageous, whom death could not daunt, Had roundly besieged the city of Gaunt, And manly they marched by two and by three, And foremost in battle was Mary Ambree.</p> <p>Thus being enforced to fight with her foes, On each side most fiercely they seemed to close; Each one sought for honor in every degree, But none so much won it as Mary Ambree.</p> <p>When brave Sergeant Major was slain in the fight, Who was her own true love, her joy and de- light, She swore unrevenge'd his blood should not be; Was not this a brave bonny lass, Mary Ambree?</p> <p>She clothed herself from the top to the toe With buff of the bravest and seemly to show; A fair shirt of mail over that striped she; Was not this a brave bonny lass, Mary Ambree?</p> <p>A helmet of proof she put on her head, A strong armed sword she girt on her side, A fair goodly gauntlet on her hand wore she; Was not this a brave bonny lass, Mary Ambree?</p> <p>Then took she her sword and her target in hand, And called all those that would be of her band,— To wait on her person there came thousands three; Was not this a brave bonny lass, Mary Ambree?</p> <p>Before you shall perish, the worst of you all, Or come to any danger of enemy's thrall, This hand and this life of mine shall set you free; Was not this a brave bonny lass, Mary Ambree?</p>	<p>The drums and the trumpets did sound out alarm, And many a hundred did lose leg and arm, And many a thousand she brought on their knee; Was not this a brave bonny lass, Mary Ambree?</p> <p>The sky then she filled with smoke of her shot, And her enemies' bodies with bullets so hot, For one of her own men, a score killed she; Was not this a brave bonny lass, Mary Ambree?</p> <p>And then her false gunner did spoil her intent, Her powder and bullets away he had spent, And then with her weapon she slashed them in three; Was not this a brave bonny lass, Mary Ambree?</p> <p>Then took she her castle where she did abide, Her enemies besieged her on every side; To beat down her castle walls they did agree, And all for to overcome Mary Ambree.</p> <p>Then took she her sword and her target in hand, And on her castle walls stoutly did stand, So daring the captains to match any three; Oh, what a brave captain was Mary Ambree!</p> <p>At her then they smiled, not thinking in heart That she could have performed so valorous a part; The one said to the other, we shortly shall see This gallant brave captain before us to flee.</p> <p>Why, what do you think or take me to be? Unto these brave soldiers so valliant spoke she. A knight, sir, of England, and captain, quoth they, Whom shortly we mean to take prisoner away.</p> <p>No captain of England behold in your sight, Two breasts in my bosom, and therefore no knight; No knight, sir, of England, nor captain, quoth she, But even a poor bonny lass, Mary Ambree.</p>
---	---

50 But art thou a woman as thou dost declare,
That hath made us thus spend our armor in
war?

¹ Chent.

The like in our lives we never did see,
And therefore we'll honor brave Mary Ambree.

The Prince of great Parma heard of her re-
nown,
Who long had advanced for England's fair
crown;
In token he sent a glove and a ring,
And said she should be his bride at his wed-
ding.

Why, what do you think or take me to be?
Though he be a prince of great dignity,
It shall never be said in England so free
That a stranger did marry with Mary Ambree.

Then unto fair England she back did return,
Still holding the foes of brave England in
scorn;
In valor no man was ever like she;
Was not this a brave bonny lass, Mary Ambree?

In this woman's praises I'll here end my song,
Whose heart was approved in valor most
strong;
Let all sorts of people, whatever they be,
Sing forth the brave valors of Mary Ambree.

A SONNET UPON THE PITIFUL
BURNING OF THE GLOBE
PLAYHOUSE IN LONDON

Now sit thee down, Melpomene,¹
Wrapped in a sea-coal robe,
And tell the doleful tragedy
That late was played at Globe;
For no man that can sing and say
Was scared on St. Peter's Day.
Oh sorrow, pitiful sorrow, and yet all this is
true.

All you that please to understand,
Come listen to my story,
To see Death with his raking brand
'Mongst such an auditory;
Regarding neither Cardinal's might,
Nor yet the rugged face of Henry the eight.
—Oh sorrow, &c.

This fearful fire began above,
A wonder strange and true,

¹ muse of tragedy.

And to the stage-house did remove,
As round as tailor's clew;
And burnt down both beam and snag,
And did not spare the silken flag.—Oh sor-
row, &c.

Out run the knights, out run the lords,
And there was great ado;
Some lost their hats and some their swords,
10 Then out run Burbage too;
The reprobates, though drunk on Monday,
Prayed for the fool and Henry Condye.²—Oh
sorrow, &c.

15 The periwigs and drum-heads fry,
Like to a butter firkin;
A woeful burning did betide
To many a good buff jerkin.
Then with swollen eyes, like drunken Flem-
20 ings,
Distressed stood old stuttering Hemings.—Oh
sorrow, &c.

No shower his rain did there down force,
25 In all that sunshine weather,
To save that great renowned house,
Nor thou, O ale-house, neither.
Had it begun below, *sans doute*,
Their wives for fear . . . —Oh sorrow, &c.

30 Be warned, you stage strutters all,
Lest you again be caughted,
And such a burning do befall
As to them whose house was thatched;
35 Forbear your whoring, breeding biles,
And lay up that expense for tiles.—Oh sorrow,
&c.

Go draw you a petition,
40 And do you not abhor it,
And get, with low submission,
A license to beg for it
In churches, *sans* churchwardens' checks,
In Surrey and in Middlesex.
45 Oh sorrow, pitiful sorrow, and yet all this is
true.

EDMUND SPENSER

50 *Spenser (1552–1599) is the first great figure in
English poetry after Chaucer. Known as a*

² Condell.

poet's poet because of his technical versatility and originality, he is a difficult author for a beginner to follow, partly because his outstanding work, *The Faerie Queene*, is remote historically and clouded with triple allegory; nevertheless his narrative and descriptive skill can be appreciated in even a brief selection. A Cambridge man, Spenser held various secretarships, was a friend of the scholar Gabriel Harvey, lived for a time in Ireland, hoped for high position. He never quite realized his ambition although he was granted a modest pension. His important titles include *The Shepherdes (Shepherd's) Calendar* in the classic pastoral tradition—a work which gave impetus to English lyric poetry, two marriage poems, *Epithalamion* and *Prothalamion*; and the *Amoretti*, a sonnet sequence based on his love for Elizabeth Boyle, whom he married.

The Faerie Queene, originally planned to include twelve books, is made up of six and part of a seventh. Each book has a hero, who represents a virtue, and who is assigned by Gloriana, the *Faerie Queene*, to aid someone in distress. The hero and unifying force of the whole work is Prince Arthur, who plays prominent rescue roles in Books I and II. The poem contains a general moral allegory, a religious allegory (Protestantism vs. Catholicism and non-Christian elements), and a political allegory involving people and issues of the day. Thus any one character may represent virtue and Protestantism and Queen Elizabeth, another evil, Catholicism, and Mary, Queen of Scots; many intended identities are not clear today, and scholars disagree over the minor characters. As a matter of fact, a beginning student can read the poem simply as an adventure story, old style, and forget the allegory. Spenser tells us that the poem was "to fashion a gentleman . . . in vertuous and gentle discipline"; it is also an extravagant compliment to Elizabeth.

Our selection, given chiefly to show a sample of Elizabethan narrative verse, includes only one canto of Book I. The remaining cantos tell of the separation of Una and the Red Cross Knight, their independent adventures with knights, wizards, lions, forest folk, and the like; the plotting of Archimago and Duessa, with the final discomfiture of the latter; the reunion of the principals, the restoration of the Knight's

spirit after a fatal slip, and the glorious conquest of the dragon. Though purposely brief, this selection will serve to show the student Spenser's deliberately archaic language, his descriptive ability, his stanza form and organization. If he cares to go on, the bibliography (I, 394) will help him on his way.

THE FIRST BOOK OF THE FAERIE QUEENE

*Containing the Legend of the Knight
of the Red Crosse, or of Holinesse*

1

Lo! I, the man whose Muse whylome did maske,
As time her taught, in lowly Shephards weeds,¹
Am now enforst, a farre unfitter taske,
5 For trumpets sterne to chaunge mine Oaten reeds,
And sing of Knights and Ladies gentle deeds;
Whose praises having slept in silence long,
Me, all too meane, the sacred Muse areeds²
10 To blazon broade emongst her learned throng:
Fierce warres and faithful loves shall moralize my song,

2

15 Helpe then, O holy virgin! chiefe of nyne,³
Thy weaker Novice to performe thy will,
Lay forth out of thine everlasting seryne⁴
The antique rolles, which there lye hidden still,
Of Faerie knights, and fayrest Tanaquill,⁵
20 Whom that most noble Briton Prince⁶ so long
Sought through the world, and suffered so much ill,
That I must rue his undeserved wrong:
O, helpe thou my weake wit, and sharpen my
25 dull tong!

3

And thou, most dreaded impe of highest Jove,
30 Faire Venus sonne, that with thy cruell dart
At that good knight so cunningly didst rove,
That glorious fire it kindled in his hart;
Lay now thy deadly Heben⁷ bowe apart,
And with thy mother mylde come to mine
ayde;

¹ ref. to *Shepherd's Calendar*.

² Clio, one of the nine muses.

³ ref. to Elizabeth.

⁴ designates.

⁵ desk.

⁶ Arthur.

⁷ ebony.

NARRATIVE POETRY · EDMUND SPENSER

Come, both; and with you bring triumphant
Mart,⁸

In loves and gentle jollities arraid,
After his murderous spoyles and bloudie rage
allayd.

4

And with them eke, O Goddess⁹ heavenly
bright!
Mirrour of grace and Majestie divine,
Great Ladie of the greatest Isle, whose light
Like Phœbus lampe throughout the world doth
shine,
Shed thy faire beames into my feeble cyne,
And raise my thoughtes, too humble and too 15
vile,
To thinke of that true glorious type of thine,
The argument of mine afflicted stile:
The which to heare vouchsafe, O dearest
dread, a-while!

CANTO I

*The Patrone of true Holinesse
Foule Error doth defeate:
Hypocrisie, him to entrappe,
Doth to his home entreate.*

1

A gentle Knight was pricking¹⁰ on the
plaine,
Ycladd in mightie armes and silver shielde,
Wherein old dints of deepe woundes did re-
maine,
The cruell markes of many a bloody felde;
Yet armes till that time did he never wield.
His angry steede did chide his foming bitt,
As much disdayning to the curbe to yield:
Full jolly knight he seemd, and faire did sitt,
As one for knightly giusts and fierce encounters
fitt.

2

And on his brest a bloodie Crosse he bore,
The deare remembrance of his dying Lord,
For whose sweete sake that glorious badge he
wore,
And dead, as living, ever him ador'd:
Upon his shield the like was also scor'd,
For sovaine hope which in his helpe he had.
Right faithfull true he was in deede and word,
But of his cheere did seeme too solemne sad; 50

⁸ Mars.

⁹ Elizabeth.

¹⁰ spurring.

Yet nothing did he dread, but ever was ydrad.¹¹

3

Upon a great adventure he was bond,
5 That greatest Gloriana¹² to him gave,
(That greatest Glorious Queene of Faery lond)
To winne him worshippe, and her grace to
have,
Which of all earthly things he most did crave:
10 And ever as he rode his hart did earne¹³
To prove his puissance in battell brave
Upon his foe, and his new force to learne,
Upon his foe, a Dragon horrible and stearne.

4

A lovely Ladie rode him faire beside,
Upon a lowly Asse more white then snow,
Yet she much whiter; but the same did hide
Under a vele, that wimpled was full low;
20 And over all a blacke stole shee did throw:
As one that inly mournd, so was she sad,
And heavie sate upon her palfrey slow;
Seemed in heart some hidden care she had,
And by her, in a line, a milkewhite lambe she
25 lad.

5

So pure and innocent, as that same lambe,
She was in life and every vertuous lore;
30 And by descent from Royall lynage came
Of ancient Kinges and Queenes, that had of
yore
Their scepters stretcht from East to Western
shore,
35 And all the world in their subjection held;
Till that infernall feend with foule uprore
Forewasted all their land, and them expeld;
Whom to avenge she had this Knight from far
compeld.

40

6

Behind her farre away a Dwarfe did lag,
That lasie seemd, in being ever last,
Or wearied with bearing of her bag
45 Of needments at his backe. Thus as they past,
The day with cloudes was suddeine overcast,
And angry Jove an hideous storme of raine
Did poure into his Lemans lap¹⁴ so fast
That everie wight to shrowd it did constrain;

¹¹ feared.

¹² Elizabeth.

¹³ yearn.

¹⁴ lover's lap; here, the earth.

And this faire couple eke to shroud themselves
were fain.

7

Enforst to seeke some covert high at hand,
A shadie grove not farr away they spide,
That promist ayde the tempest to withstand,
Whose loftie trees, yclad with sommers pride,
Did spred so broad, that heavens light did
hide,

Not perceable with power of any starr:
And all within were pathes and alleies wide,
With footing worne, and leading inward farr.
Faire harbour that them seems, so in they
entred ar.

8

And fourth they passe, with pleasure for-
ward led,
Joying to heare the birdes sweete harmony,
Which, therein shrouded from the tempest
dred,

Seemd in their song to scorne the cruell sky.
Much can they praise the trees so straight
and hy,
The sayling Pine; the Cedar proud and tall;
The vine-propp Elme; the Poplar never dry;
The builder Oake, sole king of forrests all;
The Aspine good for staves; the Cypresse fu-
nerall;

9

The Laurell, meed of mightie Conquerours
And Poets sage; the Firre that weepeth still:
The Willow, worne of forlorne Paramours,
The Eugh, obedient to the benders will;
The Birch for shaftes; the Sallow for the mill;
The Mirrhe sweete-bleeding in the bitter
wound;

The warlike Beech; the Ash for nothing ill, 40
The fruitfull Olive; and the Platane round,
The carver Holme; the Maple seeldom in-
ward sound.

10

Led with delight, they thus beguile the way,
Untill the blustering storme is overblowne;
When, weening to returne whence they did
stray,
They cannot finde that path, which first was 50
showne,
But wander too and fro in waies unknowne,

Furthest from end then, when they neerest
weene,

That makes them doubt their wits be not their
owne:

5 So many pathes, so many turnings scene,
That which of them to take in diverse doubt
they been.

11

10 At last resolving forward still to fare,
Till that some end they finde, or in or out,
That path they take that beaten seemd most
bare,

And like to lead the labyrinth about;
15 Which when by tract they hunted had through-
out,

At length it brought them to a hollowe cave
Amid the thickest woods. The Champion stout
Eftsoones dismounted from his courser brave,
20 And to the Dwarfe a while his needlesse spere
he gave.

12

"Be well aware," quoth then that Ladie
milde,

25 "Least suddaine mischiefe ye too rash provoke:
The danger hid, the place unknowne and
wilde,

Breedes dreadfull doubts. Oft fire is without
smoke,

30 And perill without show: therefore your stroke,
Sir Knight, with-hold, till further tryall made."
"Ah Ladie," (sayd he) "shame were to re-
voke

35 The forward footing for an hidden shade:
Vertue gives her selfe light through darknesse
for to wade."

13

"Yea but" (quoth she) "the perill of this
place

I better wot then you: though nowe too late
To wish you backe returne with foule dis-
grace,

45 Yet wisdomes warnes, whilst foot is in the
gate,

To stay the steppe, ere forced to retrate.
This is the wandering wood, this *Errours* den,
A monster vile, whom God and man does hate:
Therefore I read¹⁵ beware." "Fly, fly!" (quoth
then

¹⁵ advise.

The fearfull Dwarfe) "this is no place for
living men."

14

But, full of fire and greedy hardiment,
The youthfull Knight could not for ought be
staide;

But forth unto the darksom hole he went,
And looked in: his glistring armour made
A litle glooming light, much like a shade;
By which he saw the ugly monster plaine,
Halfe like a serpent horribly displaide,
But th'other halfe did womans shape retaine,
Most lothsom, filthie, foule, and full of vile
disdaine.

15

And, as she lay upon the durtie ground,
Her huge long taile her den all overspred,
Yet was in knots and many boughtes¹⁶ up- 20
wound,

Pointed with mortall sting. Of her there bred
A thousand yong ones, which she dayly fed,
Sucking upon her poisonous dugs; each one
Of sundrie shapes, yet all ill-favored:
Soone as that uncouth light upon them shone,
Into her mouth they crept, and suddain all
were gone.

16

Their dam upstart out of her den effraide,
And rushed forth, hurling her hideous taile
About her cursed head; whose folds displaid
Were stretch now forth at length without en-
traile.¹⁷

She lookt about, and seeing one in mayle,
Armed to point, sought backe to turne againe;
For light she hated as the deadly bale,
Ay wont in desert darknes to remaine,
Where plain none might see her, nor she see 40
any plaine.

17

Which when the valiant Elfe¹⁸ perceiv'd, he
lept
As Lyon fierce upon the flying pray,
And with his trenchand blade her boldly kept
From turning backe, and forced her to stay:
Therewith enrag'd she loudly gan to bray,

And turning fierce her speckled taile advaunst,
Threatning her angrie sting, him to dismay;
Who, nought aghast, his mightie hand en-
haunst.¹⁹

5 The stroke down from her head unto her
shoulder glaunst.

18

Much daunted with that dint her sence was
10 dazd;
Yet kindling rage her selfe she gathered round,
And all attonce her beastly bodie raizd
With doubled forces high above the ground:
Tho, wrapping up her wrethed sterne arownd,
15 Lept fierce upon his shield, and her huge traine
All suddenly about his body wound,
That hand or foot to stirr he strove in vaine.
God helpe the man so wrapt in Errours end-
lesse traine!

19

His Lady, sad to see his sore constraint,
Cride out, "Now, now, Sir knight, shew what
ye bee:

25 Add faith unto your force, and be not faint;
Strangle her, els she sure will strangle thee."
That when he heard, in great perplexitie,
His gall did grate for grieve and high disdaine;
And, knitting all his force, got one hand free,
30 Wherewith he grypt her gorge with so great
paine,

That soone to loose her wicked bands did her
constraine.

20

35 Therewith she spewd out of her filthie maw
A floud of poyson horrible and blacke,
Full of great lumps of flesh and gobbets raw,
Which stunck so vildly, that it forst him slacke
His grasping hold, and from her turne him
backe.

Her vomit full of bookes and papers was,
With loathly frogs and toades, which eyes did
lacke,

45 And creeping sought way in the weedy gras.
Her filthie parbreake²⁰ all the place defiled has.

21

As when old father Nilus gins to swell
50 With timely pride above the Aegyptian vale

¹⁶ coils.

¹⁷ coiling.

¹⁸ Red Cross Knight (of elfin birth).

¹⁹ raised.

²⁰ vomit.

His fattie waves doe fertile slime outwell,
And overflow each plaine and lowly dale:
But, when his later spring gins to avale,²¹
Huge heapes of mudd he leaves, wherein there
breed
Ten thousand kindes of creatures, partly male
And partly femall, of his fruitful seed;
Such ugly monstrous shapes elswher may no
man reed.

22

The same so sore annoyed has the knight,
That, welnigh choked with the deadly stinke,
His forces faile, ne can no lenger fight
Whose corage when the feend perceivd to 15
shrinke,
She poured forth out of her hellish sinke
Her fruitfull cursed spawn of serpents small,
Deformed monsters, fowle, and blacke as inke,
Which swarming all about his legs did crall, 20
And him encombred sore, but could not hurt
at all.

23

As gentle shepheard in sweete eventide,
When ruddy Phebus gins to welke²² in west,
High on an hill, his flocke to wewen wide,
Markes which doe byte their hasty supper best;
A cloud of cumbrous gnattes doe him molest,
All striving to infixe their feeble stinges,
That from their noyance he no where can rest;
But with his clownish hands their tender wings
He brusheth oft, and oft doth mar their mun-
murings.

24

Thus ill bestedd, and fearefull more of
shame
Then of the certeine perill he stood in
Halfe furious unto his foe he came,
Resolvd in minde all suddenly to win,
Or soone to lose, before he once would lin,²³
And stroke at her with more than manly force,
That from her body, full of filthie sin,
He raft her hatefull heade without remorse: 45
A streame of cole-black blood forth gushed
from her corse.

25

Her scattered brood, soone as their Parent
deare

²¹ subside.

²² wane.

²³ cease.

They saw so rudely falling to the ground,
Croning full deadly, all with troublous feare
Gathred themselves about her body round,
Weening their wonted entrance to have found
5 At her wide mouth; but being there with-
stood,
They flocked all about her bleeding wound,
And sucked up their dying mothers bloud,
Making her death their life, and eke her hurt
10 their good.

26

That detestable sight him much amazde,
To see th' unkindly Impes, of heaven ac-
cursd,
Devoure their dam; on whom while so he gazd,
Having all satisfide their bloudy thirst,
Their bellies swolne he saw with fulnesse
burst,
20 And bowels gushing forth: well worthy end
Of such as drunke her life the which them
nurst!
Now needeth him no lenger labour spend,
His foes have slaine themselves, with whom he
should contend.

27

His Lady, seeing all that chaunst from farre,
Approcht in hast to greet his victorie;
30 And saide, "Faire knight, borne under happie
starre,
Who see your vanquisht foes before you lye,
Well worthie be you of that Armory,
Wherein ye have great glory wonne this day,
35 And proov'd your strength on a strong eninie,
Your first adventure: many such I pray,
And henceforth ever wish that like succeed it
may!"

28

Then mounted he upon his Steede againe,
And with the Lady backward sought to wend.
That path he kept which beaten was most
plaine,
45 Ne ever would to any byway bend,
But still did follow one unto the end,
The which at last out of the wood them
brought.
So forward on his way (with God to frend)
50 He passed forth, and new adventure sought:
Long way he travceled before he heard of
ought.

29

At length they chaunst to meet upon the
way
An aged Sire, in long blacke weedes yclad, 5
His feete all bare, his beard all hoarie gray,
And by his belt his booke he hanging had:
Sober he seemde, and very sagely sad,
And to the ground his eyes were lowly bent,
Simple in shew, and voide of malice bad; 10
And all the way he prayed as he went,
And often knockt his brest, as one that did
repent.

30

He faire the knight saluted, louting²⁴ low,
Who faire him quited, as that courteous was;
And after asked him, if he did know
Of straunge adventures, which abroad did pas,
"Ahl my dear sonne," (quoth he) "how should, 20
alas!
Silly old man, that lives in hidden cell,
Bidding his beades all day for his trespas,
Tydings of warre and worldly trouble tell?
With holy father sits not with such thinges to 25
mell.²⁵

31

"But if of daunger, which hereby doth
dwell,
And homebredd evil ye desire to heare,
Of a straunge man I can you tidings tell,
That wasteth all this countrie, farre and neare."
"Of such," (saide he,) "I chiefly doe inquere,
And shall thee well rewarde to shew the place, 35
In which that wicked wight his dayes doth
weare;
For to all knighthood it is foule disgrace,
That such a cursed creature lives so long a
space." 40

32

"Far hence" (quoth he) "in wastfull wilder-
nesse
His dwelling is, by which no living wight
May ever passe, but thorough great distresse."
"Now," (saide the Ladie,) "draweth toward
night,
And well I wote, that of your later fight
Ye all forwearied be; for what so strong, 45

But, wanting rest, will also want of might?
The Sunne, that measures heaven all day long,
At night doth baite his steedes the Ocean
waves emong.

33

"Then with the Sunne take, Sir, your timely
rest,
And with new day new worke at once begin:
Untroubled night, they say, gives counsell
best."
"Right well, Sir knight, ye have advised bin,"
Quoth then that aged man: "the way to win
Is wisely to advise; now day is spent:
15 Therefore with me ye may take up your In
For this same night." The knight was well
content;
So with that godly father to his home they
went.

34

A litle lowly Hermitage it was,
Downe in a dale, hard by a forests side,
Far from resort of people that did pas
In travaill to and froe: a litle wyde²⁶ 25
There was an holy chappell edifyde,²⁷
Wherein the Hermite dewly wont to say
His holy thinges each morne and eventyde:
Thereby a christall streame did gently play,
30 Which from a sacred fountaine welled forth
alway.

35

Arrived there, the litle house they fill,
Ne looke for entertainment where none was;
Rest is their feast, and all thinges at their will:
The noblest mind the best contentment has.
With faire discourse the evening so they pas;
For that olde man of pleasing wordes had
store, 40
And well could file his tongue as smooth as
glas:
He told of Saintes and Popes, and evermore
He strowd an *Ave-Mary* after and before.

36

The drouping night thus creepeth on them
fast;
And the sad humor²⁸ loading their eyeliddes,
50 As messenger of Morpheus on them cast

²⁴ bending.

²⁵ meddle.

²⁶ way off.

²⁷ built.

²⁸ dampness.

Sweet slombring deaw, the which to sleep
them biddes.

Unto their lodgings then his guesates he riddes:
Where when all drownd in deadly sleepe he
findes,

He to his studie goes; and there amiddes
His magick bookes, and artes of sundrie kindes,
He seekes out mighty charmes to trouble sleepey
minds.

37

Then choosing out few words most horrible,
(Let none them read) thereof did verses frame;
With which, and other spelles like terrible,
He bad awake blacke Plutoes griesly Dame,²⁹ 15
And cursed heven, and spake reprochful shame
Of highest God, the Lord of life and light:
A bold bad man, that dar'd to call by name
Great Gorgon, prince of darknes and dead
night:
At which Cocytus³⁰ quakes, and Styx³⁰ is put to
flight.

38

And forth he cald out of deepe darknes 25
dredd
Legions of Sprights, the which, like litle flyes
Fluttering about his ever-damned hedd,
Awaite whereto their service he applyes,
To aide his friendes, or fray his enimies.
Of those he chose out two, the falsest twoo,
And fittest for to forge true-seeming lyes.
The one of them he gave a message too,
The other by him selfe staide, other worke to
doo.

39

He, making speedy way through spersed
ayre,
And through the world of waters wide and 40
deepe,
To Morpheus house doth hastily repaire.
Amid the bowels of the earth full steepe,
And low, where dawning day doth never
peepe,
His dwelling is; there Tethys³¹ his wet bed
Doth ever wash, and Cynthia³² still doth steepe
In silver deaw his ever-drouping hed,
Whiles sad Night over him her mantle black
doth spred.

²⁹ Proserpine.
³¹ the ocean.

³⁰ river in Hell.
³² the moon.

40

Whose double gates he findeth locked fast,
The one faire fram'd of burnisht Yvory,
5 The other all with silver overcast;
And wakeful dogges before them farre doe lye,
Watching to banish Care their enemy,
Who oft is wont to trouble gentle Sleepe.
By them the Sprite doth passe in quietly,
10 And unto Morpheus comes, whom drownd
deepe
In drowsie fit he findes: of nothing he takes
keepe.³³

41

And more to lulle him in his slumber soft,
A trickling streame from high rock tumbling
downe,
And ever-drizling raine upon the loft,
20 Mixt with a murmuring winde, much like the
sowne
Of swarming Bees, did cast him in a swowne.
No other noyse, nor peoples troublous cryes,
As still are wont t'annoy the walled towne,
Might there be heard; but carelesse Quiet lyes
Wrapt in eternall silence farre from enimyes.

42

The Messenger approaching to him spake;
30 But his waste wordes retourned to him in vaine:
So sound he slept, that nought mought him
awake.
Then rudely he him thrust, and pusht with
paine,
35 Whereat he gan to stretch; but he againe
Shooke him so hard, that forced him to speake.
As one then in a dreame, whose dryer braine
Is tost with troubled sights and fancies weake,
He mumbled soft, but would not all his silence
breake.

43

The Sprite then gan more boldly him to
wake,
45 And threatned unto him the dreaded name
Of Hecate:³⁴ whereat he gan to quake,
And, lifting up his lompish head, with blame
Halfe angrie asked him, for what he came.
"Hether" (quoth he), "me Archimago sent,
50 He that the stubborne Sprites can wisely tame,
He bids thee to him send for his intent

³³ care.

³⁴ goddess of magic.

A fit false dreame, that can delude the sleepers
sent."

44

The God obeyde; and, calling forth straight
way

A diverse Dreame out of his prison darke,
Delivered it to him, and downe did lay
His heaue head, deuoid of careful carke;³⁵
Whose sences all were straight benumbd and 10
starke.

He, backe returning by the Yvorie dore,
Remounted up as light as chearefull Larke;
And on his litle winges the dreame he bore
In hast unto his Lord, where he him left afore. 15

45

Who all this while, with charmes and hidden
artes,

Had made a Lady of that other Spright, 20
And fram'd of liquid ayre her tender partes,
So lively and so like in all mens sight,
That weaker sence it could have ravisht
quight:

The maker selfe, for all his wondrous witt, 25
Was nigh beguiled with so goodly sight.
Her all in white he clad, and over it
Cast a black stole, most like to seeme for Una
fit.

46

Now, when that ydle dreame was to him
brought,

Unto that Elfin knight he bad him fly,
Where he slept soundly void of evil thought, 35
And with false shewes abuse his fantasy,
In sort as he him schooled privily:
And that new creature, borne without her
dew,³⁶

Full of the makers guyle, with usage sly 40
He taught to imitate that Lady trew,
Whose semblance she did carrie under feigned
hew.

47

Thus well instructed, to their worke they
hast,

And comming where the knight in slomber lay,
The one upon his hardy head him plast,
And made him dreame of loves and lustfull 50
play.

³⁵ worry.

³⁶ unnaturally.

That nigh his manly hart did melt away,
Bathed in wanton blis and wicked ioy:
Then seemed him his Lady by him lay,
And to him playnd, how that false winged boy
5 Her chast hart had subdewd, to learne Dame
pleasures toy.

48

And she her selfe of beautie soveraigne
Queene,
Faire Venus seemde unto his bed to bring
Her, whom he waking evermore did weene
To be the chastest flowre, that ay did spring
On earthly braunch, the daughter of a king,
15 Now a loose Leman to vile service bound:
And eke the Graces seemed all to sing,
Hymen iō Hymen, dauncing all around,
Whilst freshest Flora her with Yuie girlond
crownd.

49

In this great passion of unwonted lust,
Or wonted feare of doing ought amis,
He started up, as seeming to mistrust
25 Some secret ill, or hidden foe of his:
Lo there before his face his Lady is,
Under blake stole hyding her bayted hooke,
And as halfe blushing offred him to kis,
With gentle blandishment and lovely looke,
30 Most like that virgin true, which for her knight
him took.

50

All cleane dismayd to see so uncouth sight,
35 And halte enragd at her shamelesse guise,
He thought have slaine her in his fierce de-
spight:
But hasty heat tempring with sufferance wise,
He stayde his hand, and gan himselte advise
40 To prove his sense, and tempt her faigned
truth.
Wringing her hands in wemens pitteous wise,
Tho³⁷ can she weepe, to stirre up gentle ruth,³⁸
Both for her noble bloud, and for her tender
youth.

51

And said, "Ah Sir, my liege Lord and my
love,
Shall I accuse the hidden cruell fate,
And mightie causes wrought in heaven above,

³⁷ Then.

³⁸ pity.

JOHN MILTON · NARRATIVE POETRY

Or the blind God, that doth me thus amate,³⁹
 For hoped love to winne me certaine hate?
 Yet thus perforce he bids me do, or die.
 Die is my dew: yet rew my wretched state
 You, whom my hard avenging destine
 Hath made iudge of my life or death indif-
 ferently.

52

"Your owne deare sake forst me at first to
 leave
 My Fathers kingdome." There she stopt with
 teares;
 Her swollen hart her speach seemd to bereave,
 And then againe begun, "My weaker yeares
 Captiv'd to fortune and frayle worldly feares,
 Fly to your faith for succour and sure ayde:
 Let me not dye in langour and long teares."
 "Why Dame" (quoth he) "what hath ye thus
 dismayd?
 What frayes ye, that were wont to comfort me
 affrayd?"

53

"Love of your selfe," she said, "and deare
 constraint
 Lets me not sleepe, but wast the wearie night
 In secret anguish and unpitted plant,
 Whiles you in carelesse sleepe are drowned
 quight."
 Her doubtfull words made that redouted
 knight
 Suspect her truth: yet since no'untruth he
 knew,

³⁹ dismay.

Her fawning love with foule disdainfull
 spight
 He would not shend,⁴⁰ but said, "Deare dame
 I rew,
 5 That for my sake unknowne such griefe unto
 you grew.

54

"Assure your selfe, it fell not all to ground;
 10 For all so deare as life is to my hart,
 I deeme your love, and hold me to you bound;
 Ne let vaine feares procure your needlesse
 smart,
 Where cause is none, but to your rest depart."
 15 Not all content, yet seemd she to appease
 Her mournfull plaintes, beguiled of her art,
 And fed with words, that could not chuse but
 please,
 So slyding softly forth, she turnd as to her ease.

55

Long after lay he musing at her mood,
 Much grien'd to thinke that gentle Dame so
 light,
 25 For whose defence he was to shed his blood.
 At last dull wearinesse of former fight
 Having yrockt a sleepe his likesome spright,
 That troublous dreame gan freshly tosse his
 braine
 30 With bowres, and beds, and Ladies deare de-
 light:
 But when he saw his labour all was vaine,
 With that misformed spright he backe returnd
 againe.

⁴⁰ reproach.

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

JOHN MILTON

As with Chaucer, Spenser, and Shakespeare, it is well-nigh ridiculous to confine the life of Milton (1608–1674) to a few lines of editorial comment. Nevertheless, if the reader happens to be ignorant of the bare facts of the poet's

career, he may be interested to know that a long, careful preparation for achievement was the procedure in Milton's case: early reading, language training, schooling at St. Paul's and Cambridge, the Grand Tour. Milton was al-

lowed to rusticate, to grow and develop without too many cares, except for those met while tutoring his nephews. Even so, trouble soon began to dog him: his friend Diodati died, and his wife Mary Powell left him. From 1642 on, life was a battle, and Milton fought like a Titan to the end. In prose he attacked episcopacy, advocated divorce, battled royalism, and defended free press (II, 21); he literally wrote himself blind under Cromwell in his defenses of England against foreign pamphleteers. In poetry, after preliminary exercises in the elegy, masque, and sonnet, along with a few occasional poems, Milton wrote the great epic, *Paradise Lost*, and followed it with *Paradise Regained* and the dramatic *Samson Agonistes*, a moving version of the old Biblical tale with unmistakable autobiographical passages drawn in.

Domestically the poet had fared badly: Mary, finally reconciled, had died after bearing three children; Katharine Woodcock, with whom he was happy, died with her baby just over a year after their marriage; a third wife, Elizabeth Minshull, was left as companion to an old man, alone, "blind among enemies." (Politically Milton was in hiding after the Restoration, tired and disillusioned; but the three works mentioned above were the products of his last years, nevertheless.)

Milton has undergone some unfavorable criticism in our day, whereas he was almost unanimously hailed as a literary giant a generation or two ago. Most of the argument settles around his language, the unattractive traits of his personality, his remote theological subject matter, and the like. But Milton is great enough—correct though some criticism may be—to offer much to the modern student. In his impact upon poets who came after him he has shown his stature; the ideas in his prose are still liberal in the twentieth century. Other poets may have more humor, warmth, human appeal; Milton, right or wrong, had nobility of purpose, great strength, and a deep, sincere interest in man's conduct, his struggle with evil, his attempts to reason, his war with himself. In the great sweep of his canvas, much that is ponderous or dated in Milton should be forgiven—in a sense, *Paradise Lost* is a period piece—in favor of much that is strong, solid, worthy of study in this age of indecision, of

groping toward strength and solidity.

PARADISE LOST

BOOK I

The Argument

This First Book proposes, first in brief, the whole subject—Man's disobedience, and the loss thereupon of Paradise, wherein he was placed: then touches the prime cause of his fall—the Serpent, or rather Satan in the Serpent; who, revolting from God, and drawing to his side many legions of Angels, was, by the command of God, driven out of Heaven, with all his crew, into the great Deep. Which action passed over, the Poem hastes into the midst of things; presenting Satan, with his Angels, now fallen into Hell—described here not in the Centre (for heaven and earth may be supposed as yet not made, certainly not yet accursed), but in a place of utter darkness, filliest called Chaos. Here Satan, with his Angels lying on the burning lake, thunderstruck and astonished, after a certain space recovers, as from confusion; calls up him who, next in order and dignity, lay by him: they confer of their miserable fall. Satan awakens all his legions, who lay till then in the same manner confounded. They rise: their numbers; array of battle; their chief leaders named, according to the idols known afterwards in Canaan and the countries adjoining. To these Satan directs his speech; comforts them with hope yet of regaining Heaven; but tells them, lastly, of a new world and new kind of creature to be created, according to an ancient prophecy, or report, in Heaven—for that Angels were long before this visible creation was the opinion of many ancient Fathers. To find out the truth of this prophecy, and what to determine thereon, he refers to a full council. What his associates thence attempt. Pandemonium, the palace of Satan, rises, suddenly built out of the Deep: the infernal Peers there sit in council.

Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
Brought death into the World, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man

Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat,
Sing, Heavenly Muse, that, on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That Shepherd¹ who first taught the chosen
seed

In the beginning how the heavens and earth
Rose out of Chaos: or, if Sion hill
Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that
flowed

Fast by the oracle of God, I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.
And chiefly Thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for Thou know'st; Thou from the
first

Wast present, and, with mighty wings out-
spread,

Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast Abyss,
And mad'st it pregnant: what in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support;
That, to the highth of this great argument,
I may assert Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.

Say first—for Heaven hides nothing from
thy view,
Nor the deep tract of Hell—say first what
cause

Moved our grand Parents, in that happy state,
Favored of Heaven so highly, to fall off
From their Creator, and transgress his will
For one restraint, lords of the World besides.
Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?

The infernal Serpent; he it was whose guile,
Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived
The mother of mankind, what time his pride
Had cast him out from Heaven, with all his
host

Of rebel Angels, by whose aid, aspiring
To set himself in glory above his peers,
He trusted to have equalled the Most High,
If he opposed, and, with ambitious aim
Against the throne and monarchy of God,
Raised impious war in Heaven and battle
proud,

With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
Hurled headling flaming from the ethereal sky,
With hideous ruin and combustion, down

To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In adamant chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms.

5 Nine times the space that measures day and
night

To mortal men, he, with his horrid crew,
Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf,
Confounded, though immortal. But his doom
Reserved him to more wrath; for now the
10 thought

Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
Torments him: round he throws his baleful
eyes,

That witnessed huge affliction and dismay,
15 Mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast hate.

At once, as far as Angels ken, he views
The dismal situation waste and wild.
A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,
As one great furnace flamed; yet from those
20 flames

No light; but rather darkness visible
Served only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell, hope never comes

25 That comes to all, but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed.
Such place Eternal Justice had prepared
For those rebellious, here their prison ordained

30 In utter darkness, and their portion set,
As far removed from God and the light of
Heaven

As from the centre thrice to the utmost pole.
Oh how unlike the place from whence they
fell!

There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelmed
With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous
fire,

He soon discerns; and, weltering by his side,
40 One next himself in power, and next in crime,
Long after known in Palestine, and named
Beelzebub. To whom the Arch-Enemy,
And thence in Heaven called Satan, with bold
words

45 Breaking the horrid silence, thus began:—
"If thou beest he—but Oh how fallen! how
changed

From him!—who, in the happy realms of light,
Clothed with transcendent brightness, didst
50 outshine

Myriads, though bright—if he whom mutual
league,

¹ Moses.

United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
And hazard in the glorious enterprise,
Joined with me once, now misery hath joined
In equal ruin; into what pit thou seest
From what highth fallen: so much the stronger
proved

He with his thunder: and till then who knew
The force of those dire arms? Yet not for those,
Nor what the potent Victor in his rage
Can else inflict, do I repent, or change,
Though changed in outward lustre, that fixed
mind,

And high disdain from sense of injured merit,
That with the Mightiest raised me to contend,
And to the fierce contention brought along
Innumerable force of Spirits armed,
That durst dislike his reign, and, me prefer-
ring,

His utmost power with adverse power op-
posed
In dubious battle on the plains of Heaven,
And shook his throne. What though the field
be lost?

All is not lost—the unconquerable will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield:
And what is else not to be overcome?
That glory never shall his wrath or might
Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace
With suppliant knee, and deify his power
Who, from the terror of this arm, so late
Doubted his empire—that were low indeed;
That were an ignominy and shame beneath
This downfall; since, by fate, the strength of
Gods,

And this empyreal substance, cannot fail;
Since, through experience of this great event,
In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,
We may with more successful hope resolve
To wage by force or guile eternal war,
Irreconcilable to our grand Foe,
Who now triumphs, and in the excess of joy
Sole reigning holds the tyranny of Heaven.”

So spake the apostate Angel, though in pain,
Vaunting aloud, but racked with deep de-
spair;

And him thus answered soon his bold Com-
peer:—

“O Prince, O Chief of many thronèd Powers
That led the embattled Seraphim to war
Under thy conduct, and, in dreadful deeds
Fearless, endangered Heaven’s perpetual King,

And put to proof his high supremacy,
Whether upheld by strength, or chance, or
fate!

Too well I see and rue the dire event

5 That, with sad overthrow and foul defeat,
Hath lost us Heaven, and all this mighty host
In horrible destruction laid thus low,
As far as Gods and Heavenly Essences
Can perish: for the mind and spirit remains
10 Invincible, and vigor soon returns,
Though all our glory extinct, and happy state
Here swallowed up in endless misery.

But what if He our Conqueror (whom I now
Of force believe almighty, since no less
15 Than such could have o’erpowered such force
as ours)

Have left us this our spirit and strength entire,
Strongly to suffer and support our pains,
That we may so suffice his vengeful ire,
20 Or do him mightier service as his thralls
By right of war, what’er his business be,
Here in the heart of Hell to work in fire,
Or do his errands in the gloomy Deep?
What can it then avail though yet we feel
25 Strength undiminished, or eternal being
To undergo eternal punishment?”

Whereto with speedy words the Arch-Fiend
replied:—

“Fallen Cherub, to be weak is miserable,
30 Doing or suffering: but of this be surc—
To do aught good never will be our task,
But ever to do ill our sole delight,
As being the contrary to His high will
Whom we resist. If then his providence
35 Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
Our labor must be to pervert that end,
And out of good still to find means of evil;
Which ofttimes may succeed so as perhaps
Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb
40 His inmost counsels from their destined aim.
But see! the angry Victor hath recalled
His ministers of vengeance and pursuit
Back to the gates of Heaven: the sulphurous
hail,

45 Shot after us in storm, o’erblown hath laid
The fiery surge that from the precipice
Of Heaven received us falling; and the thun-
der,

Winged with red lightning and impetuous rage,
50 Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now
To bellow through the vast and boundless
Deep.

Let us not slip the occasion, whether scorn
 Or satiate fury yield it from our Foe.
 Seest thou yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild,
 The seat of desolation, void of light,
 Save what the glimmering of these livid flames
 Casts pale and dreadful? Thither let us tend
 From off the tossing of these fiery waves,
 There rest, if any rest can harbor there;
 And, re-assembling our afflicted powers,
 Consult how we may henceforth most offend
 Our Enemy, our own loss how repair,
 How overcome this dire calamity,
 What reinforcement we may gain from hope,
 If not what resolution from despair."

Thus Satan, talking to his nearest Mate,
 With head uplift above the wave, and eyes
 That sparkling blazed; his other parts besides
 Prone on the flood, extended long and large,
 Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge
 As whom the fables name of monstrous size,
 Titanian or Earth-born, that warred on Jove,
 Briareos or Typhon,² whom the den
 By ancient Tarsus held, or that sea-beast
 Leviathan, which God of all his works
 Created hugest that swim the ocean-stream.
 Him, haply slumbering on the Norway foam,
 The pilot of some small night-foundered skiff,
 Deeming some island, oft, as seamen tell,
 With fixed anchor in his scaly rind,
 Moors by his side under the lee, while night
 Invests the sea, and wishèd morn delays.
 So stretched out huge in length the Arch-Fiend
 lay,

Chained on the burning lake; nor ever thence
 Had risen, or heaved his head, but that the
 will

And high permission of all-ruling Heaven
 Left him at large to his own dark designs,
 That with reiterated crimes he might
 Heap on himself damnation, while he sought
 Evil to others, and enraged might see
 How all his malice served but to bring forth
 Infinite goodness, grace, and mercy, shewn
 On Man by him seduced, but on himself
 Treble confusion, wrath, and vengeance
 poured.

Forthwith upright he rears from off the pool
 His mighty stature; on each hand the flames
 Driven backward slope their pointing spires,
 and, rolled
 In billows, leave 't the midst a horrid vale.

² Briareos, a Titan; Typhon, a giant.

Then with expanded wings he steers his flight
 Aloft, incumbent on the dusky air,
 That felt unusual weight; till on dry land
 He lights—if it were land that ever burned
 5 With solid, as the lake with liquid fire,
 And such appeared in hue as when the force
 Of subterranean wind transports a hill
 Torn from Pelorus, or the shattered side
 Of thundering Ætna, whose combustible
 10 And fuelled entrails, thence conceiving fire,
 Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds,
 And leave a singèd bottom all involved
 With stench and smoke. Such resting found
 the sole

15 Of unblest feet. Him followed his next Mate;
 Both glorying to have scaped the Stygian flood
 As gods, and by their own recovered strength,
 Not by the sufferance of supernal power.

"Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,"
 20 Said then the lost Archangel, "this the seat
 That we must change for Heaven?—this
 mournful gloom

For that celestial light? Be it so, since He
 Who now is sovran can dispose and bid
 25 What shall be right: farthest from Him is best,
 Whom reason hath equalled, force hath made
 supreme

Above his equals. Farewell, happy fields,
 Where joy for ever dwells! Hail, horrors!
 30 hail,

Infernal World! and thou, profoundest Hell,
 Receive thy new possessor—one who brings
 A mind not to be changed by place or time.

The mind is its own place, and in itself
 35 Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.
 What matter where, if I be still the same,
 And what I should be, all but less than he
 Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at
 least

We shall be free; the Almighty hath not built
 Here for his envy, will not drive us hence:
 Here we may reign secure; and, in my choice,
 To reign is worth ambition, though in Hell:
 Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.

But wherefore let we then our faithful friends,
 The associates and co-partners of our loss,
 Lie thus astonished on the oblivious pool,
 And call them not to share with us their part
 In this unhappy mansion, or once more
 50 With rallied arms to try what may be yet
 Regained in Heaven, or what more lost in
 Hell?"

United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
And hazard in the glorious enterprise,
Joined with me once, now misery hath joined
In equal ruin; into what pit thou seest
From what highth fallen: so much the stronger
proved

He with his thunder: and till then who knew
The force of those dire arms? Yet not for those,
Nor what the potent Victor in his rage
Can else inflict, do I repent, or change,
Though changed in outward lustre, that fixed
mind,

And high disdain from sense of injured merit,
That with the Mightiest raised me to contend,
And to the fierce contention brought along
Innumerable force of Spirits armed,
That durst dislike his reign, and, me prefer-
ring,

His utmost power with adverse power op-
posed
In dubious battle on the plains of Heaven,
And shook his throne. What though the field
be lost?

All is not lost—the unconquerable will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield:
And what is else not to be overcome?
That glory never shall his wrath or might
Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace
With suppliant knee, and deify his power
Who, from the terror of this arm, so late
Doubted his empire—that were low indeed;
That were an ignominy and shame beneath
This downfall; since, by fate, the strength of
Gods,

And this empyreal substance, cannot fail;
Since, through experience of this great event,
In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,
We may with more successful hope resolve
To wage by force or guile eternal war,
Irreconcilable to our grand Foe,
Who now triumphs, and in the excess of joy
Sole reigning holds the tyranny of Heaven.”

So spake the apostate Angel, though in pain,
Vaunting aloud, but racked with deep de-
spair;

And him thus answered soon his bold Com-
peer:—

“O Prince, O Chief of many thronèd Powers
That led the embattled Seraphim to war
Under thy conduct, and, in dreadful deeds
Fearless, endangered Heaven’s perpetual King,

And put to proof his high supremacy,
Whether upheld by strength, or chance, or
fate!

Too well I see and rue the dire event

5 That, with sad overthrow and foul defeat,
Hath lost us Heaven, and all this mighty host
In horrible destruction laid thus low,
As far as Gods and Heavenly Essences
Can perish: for the mind and spirit remains
10 Invincible, and vigor soon returns,
Though all our glory extinct, and happy state
Here swallowed up in endless misery.

But what if He our Conqueror (whom I now
Of force believe almighty, since no less
15 Than such could have o’erpowered such force
as ours)

Have left us this our spirit and strength entire,
Strongly to suffer and support our pains,
That we may so suffice his vengeful ire,
20 Or do him mightier service as his thralls
By right of war, what’er his business be,
Here in the heart of Hell to work in fire,
Or do his errands in the gloomy Deep?
What can it then avail though yet we feel
25 Strength undiminished, or eternal being
To undergo eternal punishment?”

Whereto with speedy words the Arch-Fiend
replied:—

“Fallen Cherub, to be weak is miserable,
30 Doing or suffering: but of this be surc—
To do aught good never will be our task,
But ever to do ill our sole delight,
As being the contrary to His high will
Whom we resist. If then his providence
35 Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
Our labor must be to pervert that end,
And out of good still to find means of evil;
Which ofttimes may succeed so as perhaps
Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb
40 His inmost counsels from their destined aim.
But see! the angry Victor hath recalled
His ministers of vengeance and pursuit
Back to the gates of Heaven: the sulphurous
hail,

45 Shot after us in storm, o’erblown hath laid
The fiery surge that from the precipice
Of Heaven received us falling; and the thun-
der,

Winged with red lightning and impetuous rage,
50 Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now
To bellow through the vast and boundless
Deep.

The heads and leaders thither haste where
stood

Their great Commander—godlike Shapes, and
Forms

Excelling human; princely Dignities;

And Powers that erst in Heaven sat on thrones,
Though of their names in Heavenly records
now

Be no memorial, blotted out and rased
By their rebellion from the Books of Life.
Nor had they yet among the sons of Eve
Got them new names, till, wandering o'er the
earth,

Through God's high sufferance for the trial
of man,

By falsities and lies the greatest part
Of mankind they corrupted to forsake
God their Creator, and the invisible
Glory of Him that made them to transform
Oft to the image of a brute, adorned
With gay religions full of pomp and gold,
And devils to adore for deities:

Then were they known to men by various
names,

And various idols through the heathen
world.⁷ . . .

BOOK II

The Argument

The consultation begun, Satan debates whether another battle be to be hazarded for the recovery of Heaven: some advise it, others dissuade. A third proposal is preferred, mentioned before by Satan—to search the truth of that prophecy or tradition in Heaven concerning another world, and another kind of creature, equal, or not much inferior, to themselves, about this time to be created. Their doubt who shall be sent on this difficult search: Satan, their chief, undertakes alone the voyage; is honored and applauded. The council thus ended, the rest betake them several ways and to several employments, as their inclinations lead them, to entertain the time till Satan return. He passes on his journey to Hell-gates; finds them shut, and who sat there to guard them; by whom at length they are opened, and discover to him the great gulf between Hell

and Heaven. With what difficulty he passes through, directed by Chaos, the Power of that place, to the sight of this new World which he sought.

5 High on a throne of royal state, which far
Outshone the wealth of Ormus¹ and of Ind,
Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold,
10 Satan exalted sat, by merit raised
To that bad eminence; and, from despair
Thus high uplifted beyond hope, aspires
Beyond thus high, insatiate to pursue
Vain war with Heaven; and, by success un-
taught,

15 His proud imaginations thus displayed:—
“Powers and Dominions, Deities of Hea-
ven!—

For, since no deep within her gulf can hold
20 Immortal vigor, though oppressed and fallen,
I give not Heaven for lost: from this descent
Celestial Virtues rising will appear
More glorious and more dread than from no
fall,

25 And trust themselves to fear no second fate!—
Me though just right, and the fixed laws of
Heaven,

Did first create your leader—next, free choice,
With what besides in council or in fight

30 Hath been achieved of merit—yet this loss,
Thus far at least recovered, hath much more
Established in a safe, unenvied throne,

Yielded with full consent. The happier state
In Heaven, which follows dignity, might draw
35 Envy from each inferior; but who here
Will envy whom the highest place exposes

Foremost to stand against the Thunderer's aim
Your bulwark, and condemns to greatest share
Of endless pain? Where there is, then, no good

40 For which to strive, no strife can grow up there
From faction: for none sure will claim in Hell
Precedence; none whose portion is so small
Of present pain that with ambitious mind
Will covet more! With this advantage, then,

45 To union, and firm faith, and firm accord,
More than can be in Heaven, we now return
To claim our just inheritance of old,
Surer to prosper than prosperity

Could have assured us; and by what best way,
50 Whether of open war or covert guile,

⁷ For plot of remainder of Book 1, see “The Argument,” I, 88.

¹ in the Persian Gulf.

United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
And hazard in the glorious enterprise,
Joined with me once, now misery hath joined
In equal ruin; into what pit thou seest
From what highth fallen: so much the stronger
proved

He with his thunder: and till then who knew
The force of those dire arms? Yet not for those,
Nor what the potent Victor in his rage
Can else inflict, do I repent, or change,
Though changed in outward lustre, that fixed
mind,

And high disdain from sense of injured merit,
That with the Mightiest raised me to contend,
And to the fierce contention brought along
Innumerable force of Spirits armed,
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ring,

His utmost power with adverse power op-
posed
In dubious battle on the plains of Heaven,
And shook his throne. What though the field
be lost?

All is not lost—the unconquerable will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield:
And what is else not to be overcome?
That glory never shall his wrath or might
Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace
With suppliant knee, and deify his power
Who, from the terror of this arm, so late
Doubted his empire—that were low indeed;
That were an ignominy and shame beneath
This downfall; since, by fate, the strength of
Gods,

And this empyreal substance, cannot fail;
Since, through experience of this great event,
In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,
We may with more successful hope resolve
To wage by force or guile eternal war,
Irreconcilable to our grand Foe,
Who now triumphs, and in the excess of joy
Sole reigning holds the tyranny of Heaven.”

So spake the apostate Angel, though in pain,
Vaunting aloud, but racked with deep de-
spair;

And him thus answered soon his bold Com-
peer:—

“O Prince, O Chief of many thronèd Powers
That led the embattled Seraphim to war
Under thy conduct, and, in dreadful deeds
Fearless, endangered Heaven’s perpetual King,

And put to proof his high supremacy,
Whether upheld by strength, or chance, or
fate!

Too well I see and rue the dire event

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Hath lost us Heaven, and all this mighty host
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10 Invincible, and vigor soon returns,
Though all our glory extinct, and happy state
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But what if He our Conqueror (whom I now
Of force believe almighty, since no less
15 Than such could have o’erpowered such force
as ours)

Have left us this our spirit and strength entire,
Strongly to suffer and support our pains,
That we may so suffice his vengeful ire,
20 Or do him mightier service as his thralls
By right of war, what’er his business be,
Here in the heart of Hell to work in fire,
Or do his errands in the gloomy Deep?
What can it then avail though yet we feel
25 Strength undiminished, or eternal being
To undergo eternal punishment?”

Whereto with speedy words the Arch-Fiend
replied:—

“Fallen Cherub, to be weak is miserable,
30 Doing or suffering: but of this be surc—
To do aught good never will be our task,
But ever to do ill our sole delight,
As being the contrary to His high will
Whom we resist. If then his providence
35 Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
Our labor must be to pervert that end,
And out of good still to find means of evil;
Which ofttimes may succeed so as perhaps
Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb
40 His inmost counsels from their destined aim.
But see! the angry Victor hath recalled
His ministers of vengeance and pursuit
Back to the gates of Heaven: the sulphurous
hail,

45 Shot after us in storm, o’erblown hath laid
The fiery surge that from the precipice
Of Heaven received us falling; and the thun-
der,

Winged with red lightning and impetuous rage,
50 Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now
To bellow through the vast and boundless
Deep.

Encamp their legions, or with obscure wing
 Scout far and wide into the realm of Night,
 Scorning surprise. Or, could we break our way
 By force, and at our heels all Hell should rise
 With blackest insurrection to confound
 Heaven's purest light, yet our great Enemy,
 All incorruptible, would on his throne
 Sit unpolluted, and the ethereal mould,
 Incapable of stain, would soon expel
 Her mischief, and purge off the baser fire,
 Victorious. Thus repulsed, our final hope
 Is flat despair: we must exasperate
 The Almighty Victor to spend all his rage;
 And that must end us; that must be our cure—
 To be no more. Sad cure! for who would lose,
 Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
 Those thoughts that wander through eternity,
 To perish rather, swallowed up and lost
 In the wide womb of uncreated Night,
 Devoid of sense and motion? And who knows,
 Let this be good, whether our angry Foe
 Can give it, or will ever? How he can
 Is doubtful; that he never will is sure.
 Will He, so wise, let loose at once his ire,
 Belike through impotence or unaware,
 To give his enemies their wish, and end
 Them in his anger whom his anger saves
 To punish endless? 'Wherefore cease we, then?'
 Say they who counsel war; 'we are decreed,
 Reserved, and destined to eternal woe;
 Whatever doing, what can we suffer more,
 What can we suffer worse?' Is this, then,
 worst—
 Thus sitting, thus consulting, thus in arms?
 What when we fled amain, pursued and strook
 With Heaven's afflicting thunder, and besought
 The Deep to shelter us? This Hell then seemed
 A refuge from those wounds. Or when we lay
 Chained on the burning lake? That sure was
 worse.
 What if the breath that kindled those grim
 fires,
 Awaked, should blow them into sevenfold
 rage,
 And plunge us in the flames; or from above
 Should intermitted vengeance arm again
 His red right hand to plague us? What if all
 Her stores were opened, and this firmament
 Of Hell should spout her cataracts of fire,
 Impendent horrors, threatening hideous fall
 One day upon our heads; while we perhaps,
 Designing or exhorting glorious war,

Caught in a fiery tempest, shall be hurled,
 Each on his rock transfixed, the sport and prey
 Of racking whirlwinds, or for ever sunk
 Under yon boiling ocean, wrapt in chains,
 5 There to converse with everlasting groans,
 Unrespited, unpitied, unreprieved,
 Ages of hopeless end? This would be worse.
 War, therefore, open or concealed, alike
 My voice dissuades; for what can force or
 10 guile
 With Him, or who deceive His mind, whose
 eye
 Views all things at one view? He from Heaven's
 highth
 15 All these our motions vain sees and derides,
 Not more almighty to resist our might
 Than wise to frustrate all our plots and wiles.
 Shall we, then, live thus vile—the race of
 Heaven
 20 Thus trampled, thus expelled, to suffer here
 Chains and these torments? Better these than
 worse,
 By my advice; since fate inevitable
 Subdues us, and omnipotent decree,
 25 The Victor's will. To suffer, as to do,
 Our strength is equal; nor the law unjust
 That so ordains. This was at first resolved,
 If we were wise, against so great a foe
 Contending, and so doubtful what might fall.
 30 I laugh when those who at the spear are bold
 And venturous, if that fail them, shrink, and
 fear
 What yet they know must follow—to endure
 Exile, or ignominy, or bonds, or pain,
 35 The sentence of their conqueror. This is now
 Our doom; which if we can sustain and bear,
 Our Supreme Foe in time may much remit
 His anger, and perhaps, thus far removed,
 Not mind us not offending, satisfied
 40 With what is punished; whence these raging
 fires
 Will slacken, if his breath stir not their flames.
 Our purer essence then will overcome
 Their noxious vapor; or, inured, not feel;
 45 Or, changed at length, and to the place con-
 formed
 In temper and in nature, will receive
 Familiar the fierce heat; and, void of pain,
 This horror will grow mild, this darkness light;
 50 Besides what hope the never-ending flight
 Of future days may bring, what chance, what
 change

Worth waiting—since our present lot appears
For happy though but ill, for ill not worst,
If we procure not to ourselves more woe.”

Thus Belial, with words clothed in reason's
garb,
Counselled ignoble ease and peaceful sloth,
Not peace; and after him thus Mammon
spake:—

“Either to disenthroned the King of Heaven
We war, if war be best, or to regain
Our own right lost. Him to unthroned we then
May hope, when everlasting Fate shall yield
To fickle Chance, and Chaos judge the strife.
The former, vain to hope, argues as vain
The latter; for what place can be for us
Within Heaven's bound, unless Heaven's Lord
Supreme

We overpower? Suppose he should relent,
And publish grace to all, on promise made
Of new subjection; with what eyes could we
Stand in his presence humble, and receive
Strict laws imposed, to celebrate his throne
With warbled hymns, and to his Godhead
sing

Forced Halleluiahs, while he lordly sits
Our envied sovran, and his altar breathes
Ambrosial odors and ambrosial flowers,
Our servile offerings? This must be our task
In Heaven, this our delight. How wearisome
Eternity so spent in worship paid
To whom we hate! Let us not then pursue,
By force impossible, by leave obtained
Unacceptable, though in Heaven, our state
Of splendid vassalage; but rather seek
Our own good from ourselves, and from our
own

Live to ourselves, though in this vast recess,
Free and to none accountable, preferring
Hard liberty before the easy yoke
Of servile pomp. Our greatness will appear
Then most conspicuous when great things of
small,

Useful of hurtful, prosperous of adverse,
We can create, and in what place soe'er
Thrive under evil, and work ease out of pain
Through labor and endurance. This deep
world

Of darkness do we dread? How oft amidst
Thick clouds and dark doth Heaven's all-ruling
Sire

Choose to reside, his glory unobscured,
And with the majesty of darkness round

Covers his throne, from whence deep thunders
roar,
Mustering their rage, and Heaven resembles
Hell!

5 As He our darkness, cannot we His light
Imitate when we please? This desert soil
Wants not her hidden lustre, gems and gold;
Nor want we skill or art from whence to raise
Magnificence; and what can Heaven shew
more?

10 Our torments also may, in length of time,
Become our elements, these piercing fires
As soft as now severe, our temper changed
Into their temper; which must needs remove
15 The sensible⁴ of pain. All things invite
To peaceful counsels, and the settled state
Of order, how in safety best we may
Compose our present evils, with regard
Of what we are and where, dismissing quite
20 All thoughts of war. Ye have what I advise.”

He scarce had finished, when such murmur
filled

The assembly as when hollow rocks retain
The sound of blustering winds, which all night
long

25 Had roused the sea, now with hoarse cadence
lull

Seafaring men o'erwatched, whose bark by
chance,

30 Or pinnacle, anchors in a craggy bay
After the tempest. Such applause was heard
As Mammon ended, and his sentence pleased,
Advising peace: for such another field
They dreaded worse than Hell; so much the
fear

Of thunder and the sword of Michael
Wrought still within them; and no less desire
To found this nether empire, which might rise
By policy and long process of time,
40 In emulation opposite to Heaven.

Which when Beelzebub perceived—than
whom,

Satan except, none higher sat—with grave
Aspect he rose, and in his rising seemed
A pillar of state. Deep on his front engraven
Deliberation sat, and public care;

And princely counsel in his face yet shone,
Majestic, though in ruin. Sage he stood,
With Atlantean shoulders, fit to bear

50 The weight of mightiest monarchies; his look
Drew audience and attention still as night

⁴ susceptibility.

Or summer's noontide air, while thus he
spake:—

"Thrones and Imperial Powers, Offspring
of Heaven,

Ethereal Virtues! or these titles now

Must we renounce, and, changing style, be
called

Princes of Hell? for so the popular vote

Inclines—here to continue, and build up here

A growing empire; doubtless! while we dream, 10

And know not that the King of Heaven hath
doomed

This place our dungeon—not our safe retreat

Beyond his potent arm, to live exempt

From Heaven's high jurisdiction, in new league 15

Banded against his throne, but to remain

In strictest bondage, though thus far removed,

Under the inevitable curb, reserved

His captive multitude. For He, be sure,

In highth or depth, still first and last will reign 20

Sole king, and of his kingdom lose no part

By our revolt, but over Hell extend

His empire, and with iron sceptre rule

Us here, as with his golden those in Heaven.

What sit we then projecting peace and war? 25

War hath determined us and foiled with loss

Irreparable; terms of peace yet none

Vouchsafed or sought; for what peace will be
given

To us enslaved, but custody severe,

And stripes and arbitrary punishment

Inflicted? and what peace can we return,

But, to our power, hostility and hate,

Untamed reluctance, and revenge, though slow,

Yet ever plotting how the Conqueror least

May reap his conquest, and may least rejoice 35

In doing what we most in suffering feel?

Nor will occasion want, nor shall we need

With dangerous expedition to invade

Heaven, whose high walls fear no assault or 40
siege,

Or ambush from the Deep. What if we find

Some easier enterprise? There is a place

(If ancient and prophetic fame in Heaven

Err not)—another World, the happy seat 45

Of some new race, called Man, about this time

To be created like to us, though less

In power and excellence, but favored more

Of Him who rules above; so was His will

Pronounced among the gods, and by an oath 50

That shook Heaven's whole circumference con-
firmed.

Thither let us bend all our thoughts, to learn
What creatures there inhabit, of what mould
Or substance, how endued, and what their
power

5 And where their weakness: how attempted
best,

By force or subtlety. Though Heaven be shut,

And Heaven's high Arbitrator sit secure

In his own strength, this place may lie ex-
posed, 10

The utmost border of his kingdom, left

To their defence who hold it: here, perhaps,

Some advantageous act may be achieved

By sudden onset—either with Hell-fire

To waste his whole creation, or possess

All as our own, and drive, as we are driven,

The puny habitants; or, if not drive,

Seduce them to our party, that their God

May prove their foe, and with repenting hand

Abolish his own works. This would surpass

Common revenge, and interrupt His joy

In our confusion, and our joy upraise

In His disturbance; when his darling sons,

Hurled headlong to partake with us, shall
curse

Their frail original, and faded bliss—

Faded so soon! Advise if this be worth

Attempting, or to sit in darkness here

Hatching vain empires." Thus Beelzebub

30 Pleaded his devilish counsel—first devised

By Satan, and in part proposed: for whence,

But from the author of all ill, could spring

So deep a malice, to confound the race

Of mankind in one root, and Earth with Hell

35 To mingle and involve, done all to spite

The great Creator? But their spite still serves

His glory to augment. The bold design

Pleased highly those Infernal States, and joy

Sparkled in all their eyes: with full assent

40 They vote: whereat his speech he thus re-
news:—

"Well have ye judged, well ended long debate,

Synod of Gods, and, like to what ye are,

Great things resolved, which from the lowest
deep

Will once more lift us up, in spite of fate,

Nearer our ancient Seat—perhaps in view

Of those bright confines, whence, with neigh-
boring arms,

50 And opportune excursion, we may chance

Re-enter Heaven; or else in some mild zone

Dwell, not unvisited of Heaven's fair light,

Secure, and at the brightening orient beam
Purge off this gloom: the soft delicious air,
To heal the scar of these corrosive fires,
Shall breathe her balm. But, first, whom shall
we send

In search of this new World? whom shall we
find

Sufficient? who shall tempt with wandering
feet

The dark, unbottomed, infinite Abyss,
And through the palpable obscure find out
His uncouth way, or spread his aerie flight,
Upborne with indefatigable wings
Over the vast Abrupt, ere he arrive
The happy Isle? What strength, what art can
then

Suffice, or what evasion bear him safe
Through the strict senteries and stations thick
Of Angels watching round? Here he had need
All circumspection: and we now no less
Choice in our suffrage; for on whom we send
The weight of all, and our last hope, relies."

This said, he sat; and expectation held
His look suspense, awaiting who appeared
To second, or oppose, or undertake
The perilous attempt. But all sat mute,
Pondering the danger with deep thoughts; and
each

In other's countenance read his own dismay,
Astonished. None among the choice and prime
Of those Heaven-warring champions could be
found

So hardy as to proffer or accept,
Alone, the dreadful voyage; till, at last,
Satan, whom now transcendent glory raised
Above his fellows, with monarchal pride
Conscious of highest worth, unmoved thus
spake:—

"O Progeny of Heaven! Empyrean Thrones!
With reason hath deep silence and demur
Seized us, though undismayed. Long is the
way

And hard, that out of Hell leads up to Light.
Our prison strong, this huge convex of fire,
Outrageous to devour, immures us round
Ninefold; and gates of burning adamant,
Barred over us, prohibit all egress.

These passed, if any pass, the void profound
Of unessential Night receives him next,
Wide-gaping, and with utter loss of being
Threatens him, plunged in that abortive gulf.
If thence he scape, into whatever world,

Or unknown region, what remains him less
Than unknown dangers, and as hard escape?
But I should ill become this throne, O Peers,
And this imperial sovranity, adorned

5 With splendor, armed with power, if aught
proposed

And judged of public moment in the shape
Of difficulty or danger, could deter
Me from attempting. Wherefore do I assume

10 These royalties, and not refuse to reign,

Refusing to accept as great a share
Of hazard as of honor, due alike
To him who reigns, and so much to him due
Of hazard more as he above the rest

15 High honored sits? Go, therefore, mighty
Powers,

Terror of Heaven, though fallen; intend at
home,

20 While here shall be our home, what best may
ease

The present misery, and render Hell
More tolerable; if there be cure or charm
To respite, or deceive, or slack the pain
Of this ill mansion: intermit no watch

25 Against a wakeful Foe, while I abroad
Through all the coasts of dark destruction seek
Deliverance for us all. This enterprise
None shall partake with me." Thus saying, rose
The Monarch, and prevented all reply;

30 Prudent lest, from his resolution raised,
Others among the chief might offer now,
Certain to be refused, what erst they feared,
And, so refused, might in opinion stand
His rivals, winning cheap the high repute

35 Which he through hazard huge must earn. But
they

Dreaded not more the adventure than his
voice

Forbidding; and at once with him they rose.

40 Their rising all at once was as the sound
Of thunder heard remote. Towards him they
bend

With awful reverence prone, and as a God
Extol him equal to the Highest in Heaven.

45 Nor failed they to express how much they
praised

That for the general safety he despised
His own: for neither do the Spirits damned
Lose all their virtue; lest bad men should
50 boast

Their specious deeds on earth, which glory
excites,

Or close ambition varnished o'er with zeal.

Thus they their doubtful consultations dark
Ended, rejoicing in their matchless Chief:
As, when from mountain-tops the dusky clouds
Ascending, while the North-wind sleeps, o'er-
spread

Heaven's cheerful face, the louring element
Scowls o'er the darkened landscape snow or
shower,

If chance the radiant sun, with farewell sweet, 10
Extend his evening beam, the fields revive,
The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds
Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings.
O shame to men! Devil with devil damned
Firm concord holds; men only disagree 15
Of creatures rational, though under hope
Of heavenly grace, and, God proclaiming
peace,

Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife
Among themselves, and levy cruel wars
Wasting the earth, each other to destroy:
As if (which might induce us to accord)
Man had not hellish foes enow besides,
That day and night for his destruction wait!

The Stygian council thus dissolved; and 25
forth

In order came the grand Infernal Peers:
Midst came their mighty Paramount,⁵ and
seemed

Alone the Antagonist of Heaven, nor less 30
Than Hell's dread Emperor, with pomp su-
preme,

And god-like imitated state: him round
A globe of fiery Seraphim inclosed
With bright emblazonry, and horrent⁶ arms. 35
Then of their session ended they bid cry
With trumpet's regal sound the great result:
Toward the four winds four speedy Cherubim
Put to their mouths the sounding alchymy,
By harald's voice explained; the hollow Abyss 40
Heard far and wide, and all the host of Hell
With deafening shout returned them loud ac-
claim.

Thence more at ease their minds, and some-
what raised

By false presumptuous hope, the rang'd
Powers

Disband; and, wandering, each his several way
Pursues, as inclination or sad choice

Leads him perplexed, where he may likeliest 50
find

⁵ leader.

⁶ bristling.

Truce to his restless thoughts, and entertain
The irksome hours, till his great Chief return.
Part on the plain, or in the air sublime,
Upon the wing or in swift race contend,

5 As at the Olympian games or Pythian fields;
Part curb their fiery steeds, or shun the goal
With rapid wheels, or fronted brigads form:
As when, to warn proud cities, war appears
Waged in the troubled sky, and armies rush
10 To battle in the clouds; before each van
Prick forth the aerie knights, and couch their
spears,

Till thickest legions close; with feats of arms
From either end of heaven the welkin burns.

15 Others, with vast Typhœan⁷ rage, more fell,
Rend up both rocks and hills, and ride the air
In whirlwind; Hell scarce holds the wild up-
roar:—

As when Alcides, from Cæchalia crowned
20 With conquest, felt the envenomed robe, and
tore

Through pain up by the roots Thessalian pines,
And Lichas from the top of Ceta, threw
Into the Euboic sea. Others, more mild,

Retreated in a silent valley, sing
With notes angelical to many a harp
Their own heroic deeds, and hapless fall
By doom of battle, and complain that Fate
Free Virtue should enthrall to Force or Chance.
30 Their song was partial;⁸ but the harmony
(What could it less when Spirits immortal
sing?)

Suspended Hell, and took with ravishment
The thronging audience. In discourse more
sweet

(For Eloquence the Soul, Song charms the
Sense)

Others apart sat on a hill retired,

In thoughts more elevate, and reasoned high
40 Of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will, and
Fate—

Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute—
And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.
Of good and evil much they argued then,

45 Of happiness and final misery,
Passion and apathy, and glory and shame:
Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy!—

Yet, with a pleasing sorcery, could charm
Pain for a while or anguish, and excite

⁷ monstrous (after Typhon, a legendary mon-
ster).

⁸ in parts.

Fallacious hope, or arm the obdured⁹ breast
 With stubborn patience as with triple steel.
 Another part, in squadrons and gross bands,
 On bold adventure to discover wide
 That dismal world, if any clime perhaps
 Might yield them easier habitation, bend
 Four ways their flying march, along the banks
 Of four infernal rivers, that disgorge
 Into the burning lake their baleful streams—
 Abhorred Styx, the flood of deadly hate;
 Sad Acheron of sorrow, black and deep;
 Cocytus, named of lamentation loud
 Heard on the rueful stream; fierce Phlegeton,
 Whose waves of torrent fire inflame with rage.
 Far off from these, a slow and silent stream,
 Lethe, the river of oblivion, rolls
 Her watery labyrinth, whereof who drinks
 Forthwith his former state and being forgets—
 Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain.
 Beyond this flood a frozen continent
 Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms
 Of whirlwind and dire hail, which on firm land
 Thaws not, but gathers heap, and ruin seems
 Of ancient pile; all else deep snow and ice,
 A gulf profound as that Serbonian bog
 Betwixt Damiatra and Mount Casius old,
 Where armies whole have sunk: the parching
 air
 Burns froze, and cold performs the effect of
 fire.
 Thither, by harpy-footed Furies haled,
 At certain revolutions all the damned
 Are brought; and feel by turns the bitter
 change
 Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more
 fierce,
 From beds of raging fire to starve in ice
 Their soft ethereal warmth, and there to pine
 Immovable, infixed, and frozen round
 Periods of time,—thence hurried back to fire. 40
 They ferry over this Lethean sound
 Both to and fro, their sorrow to augment,
 And wish and struggle, as they pass, to reach
 The tempting stream, with one small drop to
 lose
 In sweet forgetfulness all pain and woe,
 All in one moment, and so near the brink;
 But Fate withstands, and, to oppose the at-
 tempt,
 Medusa with Gorgonian terror guards

⁹ hardened.

The ford, and of itself the water flies
 All taste of living wight, as once it fled
 The lip of Tantalus. Thus roving on
 In confused march forlorn, the adventurous
 5 bands,
 With shuddering horror pale, and eyes aghast,
 Viewed first their lamentable lot, and found
 No rest. Through many a dark and dreary vale
 They passed, and many a region dolorous,
 10 O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp,
 Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and
 shades of death—
 A universe of death, which God by curse
 Created evil, for evil only good;
 15 Where all life dies, death lives, and Nature
 breeds,
 Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things,
 Abominable, inutterable, and worse
 Than fables yet have feigned or fear con-
 20 ceived,
 Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimæras dire.
 Meanwhile the Adversary of God and Man,
 Satan, with thoughts inflamed of highest de-
 sign,
 25 Puts on swift wings, and toward the gates of
 Hell
 Explores his solitary flight: sometimes
 He scours the right hand coast, sometimes the
 left;
 30 Now shaves with level wing the Deep, then
 soars
 Up to the fiery concave towering high.
 As when far off at sea a fleet descried
 Hangs in the clouds, by equinoctial winds
 35 Close sailing from Bengala, or the isles
 Of Ternate and Tidore, whence merchants
 bring
 Their spicy drugs; they on the trading flood,
 Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape,
 Ply stemming nightly toward the pole: so
 seemed
 Far off the flying Fiend. At last appear
 Hell-bounds, high reaching to the horrid roof,
 And thrice threefold the gates; three folds
 45 were brass,
 Three iron, three of adamant rock,
 Impenetrable, impaled with circling fire,
 Yet unconsumed.¹⁰

50 ¹⁰ For the plot of the remainder of Book II, see
 "The Argument," I, 93. In the ten books that fol-
 low, much theological discussion ensues between

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

ALEXANDER POPE

Ill and crippled, deprived of university training because of his Catholic faith, Pope (1688–1744) managed to become a literary leader in the Age of Reason. He won recognition in his twenties for his Pastorals, the Essay on Criticism, The Rape of the Lock (which follows), and other poems. His translations of Homer were very profitable. The complete list of his works is too long to give here, but mention must be made of the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, The Dunciad, An Essay on Man, the editing of Shakespeare, and the satires. A spiteful little man, Pope attacked Theobald, his old friend Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and Colley Cibber, among others. He was an outstanding member of the Scriblerus Club, which included Swift and Gay. There is intellect but little emotion in Pope's poetry. His mastery of the heroic couplet makes him of interest to poets and critics. He had succinctness and a definite bite to his lines, but he leaves the modern reader wondering just how much poetry there was in his poems. His impact on his own age, however, made him quite definitely a major figure in the history of English literature.

If this poetry section were divided into three, rather than two, main "types," the third would probably be didactic; the selection given in the Lyric Poetry section (I, 242), from Essay on Man, is a good example of didactic poetry. The first epistle, "Of the Nature and State of Man, with Respect to the Universe," is there reprinted in full.

God and Christ; Raphael instructs Adam about the war in Heaven that led up to the expulsion (where Milton begins), about the Creation and operation of the Universe; Satan at last corrupts Adam and Eve (Bk. IX), finally, after a history of the world up to the Crucifixion and Redemption, told them by Michael, Adam and Eve are expelled from the Garden.

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK

AN HEROIC-COMICAL POEM

The first canto of this poem, which is based on an actual event, announces the theme, and introduces Belinda. The fourth and fifth cantos, which normally follow the selection here given, describe her anger at the theft and the search for the Lock, which has risen to the heavens, where it becomes a new star.

CANTO II

- Not with more glories, in th' ethereal plain
 The sun first rises o'er the purpled main,
 Than, issuing forth, the rival of his beams
 Launched on the bosom of the silver Thames.
 5 Fair nymphs, and well-dressed youths around
 her shone,
 But every eye was fixed on her alone.
 On her white breast a sparkling cross she wore,
 Which Jews might kiss, and infidels adore.
 10 Her lively looks a sprightly mind disclose,
 Quick as her eyes, and as unfixed as those:
 Favors to none, to all she smiles extends;
 Oft she rejects, but never once offends.
 Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike,
 15 And, like the sun, they shine on all alike.
 Yet graceful ease, and sweetness void of pride,
 Might hide her faults, if belles had faults to
 hide;
 If to her share some female errors fall,
 20 Look on her face, and you'll forget 'em all.
 This nymph, to the destruction of mankind,
 Nourished two locks, which graceful hung be-
 hind
 In equal curls, and well conspired to deck
 25 With shining ringlets the smooth ivory neck.
 Love in these labyrinths his slaves detains,

And mighty hearts are held in slender chains.
With hairy springes we the birds betray,
Slight lines of hair surprise the finny prey,
Fair tresses man's imperial race ensnare,
And beauty draws us with a single hair.

Th' adventurous Baron the bright locks ad-
mired;

He saw, he wished, and to the prize aspired.
Resolved to win, he meditates the way,
By force to ravish, or by fraud betray;
For when success a lover's toil attends,
Few ask if fraud or force attained his ends.

For this, ere Phœbus rose, he had implored
Propitious Heaven, and every Power adored,
But chiefly Love—to Love an altar built
Of twelve vast French romances, neatly gilt.
There lay three garters, half a pair of gloves,
And all the trophies of his former loves;
With tender billet-doux he lights the pyre,
And breathes three amorous sighs to raise the
fire.

Then prostrate falls, and begs with ardent eyes
Soon to obtain, and long possess the prize:
The Powers gave ear, and granted half his
prayer,

The rest the winds dispersed in empty air.
But now secure the painted vessel glides,
The sunbeams trembling on the floating tides;
While melting music steals upon the sky,
And softened sounds along the waters die:
Smooth flow the waves, the zephyrs gently
play,

Belinda smiled, and all the world was gay.
All but the Sylph—with careful thoughts op-
prest

Th' impending woe sat heavy on his breast.
He summons straight his denizens of air;
The lucid squadrons round the sails repair:
Soft o'er the shrouds aerial whispers breathe
That seemed but zephyrs to the train beneath. 40
Some to the sun their insect-wings unfold,
Waft on the breeze, or sink in clouds of gold;
Transparent forms too fine for mortal sight,
Their fluid bodies half dissolved in light,
Loose to the wind their airy garments flew, 45
Thin glittering textures of the filmy dew,
Dipt in the richest tincture of the skies,
Where light disports in ever-mingling dyes,
While every beam new transient colors flings,
Colors that change whenc'er they wave their 50
wings.

Amid the circle, on the gilded mast,

Superior by the head was Ariel placed;
His purple pinions opening to the sun,
He raised his azure wand, and thus begun:

“Ye Sylphs and Sylphids, to your chief give
5 ear.

Fays, Fairies, Genii, Elves, and Dæmons, hear!
Ye know the spheres and various tasks assigned
By laws eternal to th' aerial kind.

Some in the fields of purest ether play,
10 And bask and whiten in the blaze of day:
Some guide the course of wandering orbs on
high,

Or roll the planets thro' the boundless sky:
Some, less refined, beneath the moon's pale
15 light

Pursue the stars that shoot athwart the night,
Or suck the mists in grosser air below,
Or dip their pinions in the painted bow,
Or brew fierce tempests on the wintry main,
20 Or o'er the globe distil the kindly rain.

Others, on earth, o'er human race preside,
Watch all their ways, and all their actions
guide:

Of these the chief the care of nations own,
25 And guard with arms divine the British Throne.

“Our humbler province is to tend the Fair,
Not a less pleasing, tho' less glorious care;
To save the Powder from too rude a gale;
Nor let th' imprisoned Essences exhale;
30 To draw fresh colors from the vernal flowers;
To steal from rainbows ere they drop in
showers

A brighter Wash; to curl their waving hairs,
Assist their blushes and inspire their airs;
35 Nay oft, in dreams invention we bestow,
To change a Flounce, or add a Furbelow.

“This day black omens threat the brightest
Fair,

That e'er deserved a watchful spirit's care;
Some dire disaster, or by force or slight;
But what, or where, the Fates have wrapt in
night.

Whether the nymph shall break Diana's law,¹
Or some frail China jar receive a flaw;
45 Or stain her honor, or her new brocade,
Forget her prayers, or miss a masquerade,
Or lose her heart, or necklace, at a ball;
Or whether Heaven has doomed that Shock
must fall.

50 Haste, then, ye Spirits! to your charge repair:

¹ chastity.

The fluttering fan be Zephyretta's care;
The drops to thee, Brillante, we consign;
And, Momentilla, let the watch be thine;
Do thou, Crispissa, tend her favorite Lock;
Ariel himself shall be the guard of Shock.

"To fifty chosen sylphs, of special note,
We trust th' important charge, the petticoat;
Oft have we known that seven-fold fence to
fail,

Tho' stiff with hoops, and armed with ribs of 10
whale.

Form a strong line about the silver bound,
And guard the wide circumference around.

"Whatever spirit, careless of his charge,
His post neglects, or leaves the Fair at large, 15
Shall feel sharp vengeance soon o'ertake his
sins:

Be stopped in vials, or transfix'd with pins,
Or plung'd in lakes of bitter washes lie,
Or wedg'd whole ages in a bodkin's eye,
Gums and pomatums shall his flight restrain,
While clogged he beats his silken wings in
vain,

Or alum styptics with contracting power
Shrink his thin essence like a rivell'd flower: 25
Or, as Ixion² fixed, the wretch shall feel
The giddy motion of the whirling mill,
In fumes of burning chocolate shall glow,
And tremble at the sea that froths below!"

He spoke; the spirits from the sails descend; 30
Some, orb in orb, around the nymph extend;
Some thread the mazy ringlets of her hair;
Some hang upon the pendants of her ear;
With beating hearts the dire event they wait,
Anxious, and trembling for the birth of Fate. 35

CANTO III

Close by those meads, for ever crowned with
flowers,
Where Thames with pride surveys his rising 40
towers

There stands a structure of majestic frame,
Which from the neighboring Hampton takes
its name.³

Here Britain's statesmen oft the fall foredoom 45
Of foreign tyrants, and of nymphs at home;
Here, thou, great ANNA!⁴ whom three realms
obey,

² punished for making love to Juno; he was
pinned to a turning wheel in Hades.

³ Hampton Court, a palace near London.

⁴ Queen Anne (reigned 1702–1714).

Dost sometimes counsel take—and sometimes
tea.

Hither the Heroes and the Nymphs resort,
To taste awhile the pleasures of a court;
5 In various talk th' instructive hours they past,
Who gave the ball, or paid the visit last;
One speaks the glory of the British Queen,
And one describes a charming Indian screen;
A third interprets motions, looks, and eyes;
At every word a reputation dies.

Snuff, or the fan, supply each pause of chat,
With singing, laughing, ogling, *and all that*.

Meanwhile, declining from the noon of day,
The sun obliquely shoots his burning ray;
The hungry judges soon the sentence sign,
And wretches hang that jurymen may dine;
The merchant from th' Exchange returns in
peace,

And the long labors of the toilet cease.
20 Belinda now, whom thirst of fame invites,
Burns to encounter two adventurous knights,
At Ombre singly to decide their doom,
And swells her breast with conquests yet to
come.

Straight the three bands prepare in arms to
join,

Each band the number of the sacred Nine.
Soon as she spreads her hand, th' aerial guard
Descend, and sit on each important card:

First Ariel perched upon a Matadore,⁵
Then each according to the rank they bore;
For Sylphs, yet mindful of their ancient race,
Are, as when women, wondrous fond of place.

Behold four Kings in majesty revered,
With hoary whiskers and a forked beard;
And four fair Queens, whose hands sustain a
flower,

Th' expressive emblem of their softer power;
Four Knaves, in garbs succinct, a trusty-band,
Caps on their heads, and halberds in their
hand;

And party-colored troops, a shining train,
Draw forth to combat on the velvet plain.

The skilful nymph reviews her force with
care;

"Let Spades be trumps!" she said, and trumps
they were.

Now move to war her sable Matadores,
In show like leaders of the swarthy Moors.

⁵ In ombre, a card game, a matadore was one of
three high cards: Spadillio, Manillio, Basto—all
named a few lines later.

Spadillio first, unconquerable lord!
Led off two captive trumps, and swept the
board.

As many more Manillio forced to yield,
And marched a victor from the verdant field.
Him Basto followed, but his fate more hard
Gained but one trump and one plebeian card.
With his broad sabre next, a chief in years,
The hoary Majesty of Spades appears,
Puts forth one manly leg, to sight revealed;
The rest his many colored robe concealed.
The rebel Knave, who dares his prince engage,
Proves the just victim of his royal rage.
Even mighty Pam,^a that kings and queens
o'erthrew,

And mowed down armies in the fights of Loo,
Sad chance of war! now destitute of aid,
Falls undistinguished by the victor Spade.

Thus far both armies to Belinda yield;
Now to the Baron Fate inclines the field.
His warlike amazon her host invades,
Th' imperial consort of the crown of Spades.
The Club's black tyrant first her victim died,
Spite of his haughty mien and barbarous pride:
What boots the regal circle on his head,
His giant limbs, in state unwieldy spread;
That long behind he trails his pompous robe,
And of all monarchs only grasps the globe?

The Baron now his Diamonds pours apace;
Th' embroidered King who shows but half his
face,

And his refulgent Queen, with powers com-
bined,

Of broken troops an easy conquest find.

Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts, in wild disorder
seen,

With throngs promiscuous strew the level
green.

Thus when dispersed a routed army runs,
Of Asia's troops, and Afric's sable sons,
With like confusion different nations fly,
Of various habit, and of various dye;
The pierced battalions disunited fall
In heaps on heaps; one fate o'erwhelms them
all.

The Knave of Diamonds tries his wily arts,
And wins (oh shameful chance!) the Queen of
Hearts.

At this, the blood the virgin's cheek forsook,
A livid paleness spreads o'er all her look;

She sees, and trembles at th' approaching ill,
Just in the jaws of ruin, and Codille.⁷

And now (as oft in some distempered state)

On one nice trick depends the general fate!

5 An Ace of Hearts steps forth: the King unseen
Lurked in her hand, and mourned his captive
Queen.

He springs to vengeance with an eager pace,
And falls like thunder on the prostrate Ace.

10 The nymph, exulting, fills with shouts the sky;
The walls, the woods, and long canals reply.

Oh thoughtless mortals! ever blind to fate,

Too soon dejected, and too soon elate.

Sudden these honors shall be snatched away,

15 And cursed for ever this victorious day.

For lo! the board with cups and spoons is
crowned,

The berries^a crackle, and the mill turns round;
On shining altars of japan they raise

20 The silver lamp; the fiery spirits blaze:

From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide,
While China's earth receives the smoking tide.

At once they gratify their scent and taste,

And frequent cups prolong the rich repast.

25 Straight hover round the Fair her airy band,
Some, as she sipped, the fuming liquor fanned,
Some o'er her lap their careful plumes dis-
played,

Trembling, and conscious of the rich brocade.

30 Coffee (which makes the politician wise,
And see thro' all things with his half-shut eyes)

Sent up in vapors to the Baron's brain

New stratagems, the radiant Lock to gain.

Ah, cease, rash youth! desist ere 'tis too late,

35 Fear the just Gods, and think of Scylla's fate!
Changed to a bird, and sent to flit in air,

She dearly pays for Nisus' injured hair!

But when to mischief mortals bend their
will,

40 How soon they find fit instruments of ill!

Just then, Clarissa drew with tempting grace

A two-edged weapon from her shining case:

So ladies in romance assist their knight,

Present the spear, and arm him for the fight.

45 He takes the gift with reverence, and extends

The little engine on his fingers' ends;

This just behind Belinda's neck he spread,

As o'er the fragrant steams she bends her
head.

50 Swift to the Lock a thousand sprites repair;

^a highest card in game of Loo.

⁷ Codille equals "being set."

^a coffee-beans.

A thousand wings, by turns, blow back the
hair;
And thrice they twitched the diamond in her
ear;
Thrice she looked back, and thrice the foe drew
near.

Just in that instant, anxious Ariel sought
The close recesses of the virgin's thought.
As on the nosegay in her breast reclined,
He watched th' ideas rising in her mind,
Sudden he viewed, in spite of all her art,
An earthly Lover lurking at her heart.
Amazed, confused, he found his power ex-
pired,
Resigned to fate, and with a sigh retired.

The Peer now spreads the glittering forfex
wide,
To inclose the Lock; now joins it, to divide.
Even then, before the fatal engine closed,
A wretched Sylph too fondly interposed;
Fate urged the shears, and cut the Sylph in
twain

(But airy substance soon unites again).
The meeting points the sacred hair dis sever
From the fair head, for ever, and for ever!

Then flashed the living lightning from her
eyes,
And screams of horror rend th' affrighted skies.
Not louder shrieks to pitying Heaven are cast,
When husbands, or when lapdogs breathe their
last;

Or when rich China vessels, fallen from high,
In glittering dust and painted fragments lie!
"Let wreaths of triumph now my temples
twine,"

The Victor cried, "the glorious prize is mine!
While fish in streams, or birds delight in air,
Or in a coach and six the British Fair,
As long as Atalantis⁹ shall be read,
Or the small pillow grace a lady's bed,
While visits shall be paid on solemn days,
When numerous wax-lights in bright order
blaze:

While nymphs take treats, or assignations give,
So long my honor, name, and praise shall live! 45
What Time would spare, from Steel receives
its date,

And monuments, like men, submit to Fate!
Steel could the labor of the Gods destroy,

And strike to dust th' imperial towers of Troy;
Steel could the works of mortal pride con-
found

And hew triumphal arches to the ground.

5 What wonder, then, fair Nymph! thy hairs
should feel

The conquering force of unresisted steel?"

10

ROBERT BURNS

Burns (1759-1796) was an obscure farmer who barely made a living and who drew no publicity—except when he was read out in church for affairs with women—until some of his verses reached the right people. Then the poet was lionized by city society, but he was not quite comfortable in such circles. An excise job kept him busy for a while, but he never really found a position which he fitted. Death came early, possibly because of hearty living, though more probably from hard labor in his youth. Burns is remembered as a great lover, of course, and as a nonconformist whose humanism was anathema to the strict Scots clergy. He was more than these, however; there is a strong nationalistic spirit in his poetry which kindles the spirit in any Scot today; there is pleasant sentiment in The Cotter; there are wildness and romantic high color in Tam, keen satire in Holy Fair, homely philosophy scattered broadcast through his lines. Apart from the classroom, however, Burns is loved for his songs, his sad-sweet refrains that reach deep down to fundamental things (like the works of Stephen Foster in America), things people know all over the world. (For the lyrics, see I, 263.)

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TAM O'SHANTER

A TALE

When chapman billies¹ leave the street,
And drouthy² neebors neebors meet;
As market-days are wearing late,
An' folk begin to tak the gate,³
While we sit bousing at the nappy,⁴
An' getting fou and unco happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles,

⁹ *The New Atalantis*, by Mrs. Manley, was a contemporary best seller, largely gossip.

¹ peddler fellows.

² thirsty.

³ go home.

⁴ ale.

The mosses, waters, slaps,⁵ and styles,
That lie between us and our hame,
Whare sits our sulky, sullen dame,
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest Tam o'Shanter,
As he frae Ayr ae night did canter.
(Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses,
For honest men and bonie lasses).

O Tam, had'st thou but been sae wise,
As taen thy ain wife Kate's advice!
She tauld thee weel thou was a skellum,⁶
A blethering, blustering, drunken blellum;⁷ 15
That frae November till October,
Ae market-day thou was nae sober;
That ilka melder⁸ wi' the miller,
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;
That ev'ry naig was ca'd a shoe on, 20
The smith and thee gat roaring fou on;
That at the Lord's house, even on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirkton Jean till Monday.
She prophesied, that, late or soon,
Thou would be found deep drowned in 25
Doon,
Or catched wi' warlocks⁹ in the mirk
By Alloway's auld, haunted kirk.

Ah! gentle dames, it gars me greet,¹⁰ 30
To think how monie counsels sweet,
How monie lengthened, sage advices
The husband frae the wife despises!

But to our tale: Ae market-night,
Tam had got planted unco right,
Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,
Wi' reaming swats,¹¹ that drank divinely;
And at his elbow, Souter¹² Johnie,
His ancient, trusty, doughty crome: 40
Tam lo'ed him like a very brither;
They had been fou for weeks thegither.
The night drave on wi' sangs and clatter;
And ay the ale was growing better:
The landlady and Tam grew gracious 45
Wi' secret favors, sweet and precious:
The Souter tauld his queerest stories;
The landlord's laugh was ready chorus:

The storm without might rair and rustle,
Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drowned himsel among the nappy.
As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
The minutes winged their way wi' pleasure:
Kings may be blest but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!

But pleasures are like poppies spread:
You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed;
Or like the snow falls in the river,
A moment white—then melts for ever;
Or like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form
Evanishing amid the storm.
Nae man can tether time or tide;
The hour approaches Tam maun ride:
That hour, o' night's black arch the keystane,
That dreary hour Tam mounts his beast in;
And sic a night he taks the road in,
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 't wad blawn its last;
The rattling showers rose on the blast;
The speedy gleams the darkness swallowed:
Loud, deep, and lang the thunder bellowed:
That night, a child might understand,
The Deil had business on his hand.

Weel mounted on his gray mare Meg,
A better never lifted leg,
Tam skelpit¹³ on thro' dub¹⁴ and mire,
Despising wind, and rain, and fire;
Whiles holding fast his guid blue bonnet,
Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet,
Whiles glow'ring round wi' prudent cares,
Lest bogles¹⁵ catch him unawares:
Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
Whare ghaists and houlets nightly cry.

By this time he was cross the ford,
Whare in the snaw the chapman smoor'd;¹⁶ 45
And past the birks and meikle stane,
Whare drunken Charlie brak's neck-bane;
And thro' the whin,¹⁷ and by the cairn,
Whare hunters fand the murdered bairn,

⁵ gates.

⁷ babbler.

⁹ wizards.

¹¹ creamy ale.

⁶ good-for-nothing.

⁸ every grinding.

¹⁰ it makes me weep.

¹² Cobbler.

¹³ hurried.

¹⁵ hobgoblins.

¹⁷ furze.

¹⁴ puddle.

¹⁶ smothered.

And near the thorn, aboon the well,
Whare Mungo's mither hanged hersel.
Before him Doon pours all his floods;
The doubling storm roars thro' the woods;
The lightnings flash from pole to pole;
Near and more near the thunders roll:
When, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
Kirk-Alloway seemed in a bleeze,
Thro' ilka bore the beams were glancing,
And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn,
What dangers thou canst make us scorn!
Wi' tippenny,¹⁸ we fear nae evil;
Wi' usquabae,¹⁹ we'll face the Devill
The swats sae reamed in Tammie's noddle,
Fair play, he cared na deils a boddle.²⁰
But Maggie stood, right sair astonished,
Till, by the heel and hand admonished,
She ventured forward on the light;
And, vow! Tam saw an unco sight!

Warlocks and witches in a dance:
Nae cotillion, brent new frae France,
But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,
Put life and mettle in their heels.
A winnock-bunker²¹ in the east,
There sat Auld Nick, in shape o' beast;
A tousie tyke,²² black, grim, and large,
To gie them music was his charge:
He screwed the pipes, and gart them skirl,
Till roof and rafters a' did dirl.²³
Coffins stood round, like open presses,
That shawed the dead in their last dresses;
And, by some devilish cantraip²⁴ sleight,
Each in its cauld hand held a light:
By which heroic Tam was able
To note upon the haly table,
A murderer's banes, in gibbet-airs;
Twa span-lang, wee, unchristened bairns;
A thief new-cutted frae a rape²⁵—
Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape;
Five tomahawks wi' bluid red-rusted;
Five scymitars wi' murder crusted;
A garter which a babe had strangled;
A knife a father's throat had mangled—
Whom his ain son o' life bereft—

The grey-hairs yet stack to the heft;
Wi' mair of horrible and awefu',
Which even to name wad be unlawfu'.

5 As Tammie glowered, amazed, and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious;
The piper loud and louder blew,
The dancers quick and quicker flew,
10 They reeled, they set, they crossed, they cleekit,²⁶
Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,²⁷
And coost her duddies to the wark,²⁸
And linket at it in her sark!²⁹

15 Now Tam, O Tam! had thae been queans,³⁰
A' plump and strapping in their teens!
Their sarks, instead o' creeshie flannen,³¹
20 Been snaw-white seventeen hunder linen!—
Thir brecks o' mine, my only pair,
That ance were plush, o' guid blue hair,
I wad hae gi'en them off my hurdies³²
For ae blink o' the bonie burdies!

25 But withered beldams, auld and droll,
Rigwoodie³³ hags wad spean³⁴ a foal,
Louping and flinging on a crummock,³⁵
30 I wonder did na turn thy stomach!

But Tam kend what was what fu' brawlie:
There was ae winsome wench and wawlie,³⁶
That night enlisted in the core,
Lang after kend on Carrick shore
35 (For monie a beast to dead she shot,
An' perished monie a bonie boat,
And shook baith meikle corn and bear,³⁷
And kept the country-side in fear).
Her cutty sark,³⁸ o' Paisley harn,³⁹
40 That while a lassie she had worn,
In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
It was her best, and she was vauntie.
Ah! little kend thy reverend grannie,

45 ²⁶clutched.
²⁷every hag sweated and steamed.
²⁸threw off her clothes for the work.
²⁹went at it in her shirt.
³⁰wenches.
³¹greasy flannel.
³²bottom.
³³withered.
³⁴wean (from disgust).
³⁵crooked staff.
³⁶well-built.
³⁷barley.
³⁸shirt, smock, chemise.
³⁹coarse cloth.

¹⁸ two-penny ale. ¹⁹ whisky.
²⁰ he didn't care a farthing for devils.
²¹ window seat. ²² shaggy cur.
²³ ring. ²⁴ magic.
²⁵ rope.

That sark she coft⁴⁰ for her wee Nannie,
Wi' twa pund Scots ('twas a' her riches),
Wad ever graced a dance of witches!

But here my Muse her wing maun cour,⁴¹ 5
Sic flights are far beyond her power:
To sing how Nannie lap and flang
(A souple jad she was and strang),
And how Tam stood like ane bewitched,
And thought his very een enriched; 10
Even Satan glowered, and fidgeted fu' fain,⁴²
And hotched⁴³ and blew wi' might and main;
Till first ae caper, syne anither,
Tam tint⁴⁴ his reason a' thegither,
And roars out: "Weel done, Cutty-sark!" 15
And in an instant all was dark;
And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke,⁴⁵ 20
When plundering herds assail their byke;⁴⁶
As open pussie's⁴⁷ mortal foes,
When, pop! she starts before their nose;
As eager runs the market-crowd,
When "Catch the thief!" resounds aloud: 25

⁴⁰ bought.

⁴¹ lower.

⁴² fidgeted with pleasure.

⁴³ jerked.

⁴⁴ lost.

⁴⁵ fuss.

⁴⁶ live.

⁴⁷ a hare's.

So Maggie runs, the witches follow,
Wi' monic an eldritch⁴⁸ skriech and hollo.

Ah, Tam! ah, Tam! thou'll get thy fairin!⁴⁹
In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin!
In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin!
Kate soon will be a woefu' woman!
Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
And win the key-stane of the brig;
There, at them thou thy tail may toss,
A running stream they dare na cross!
But ere the key-stane she could make,
The fient⁵⁰ a tail she had to shake;
For Nannie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle;⁵¹
But little wist she Maggie's mettle!
Ae spring brought off her master hale,
But left behind her ain grey tail:
The carlin claut her by the rump,
And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
Ilk man, and mother's son, take heed:
Whene'er to drink you are inclined,
Or cutty sarks run in your mind,
Think! ye may buy the joys o'er dear:
Remember Tam o'Shanter's mare.

⁴⁸ unearthly.

⁴⁹ reward.

⁵⁰ devil.

⁵¹ intent.

NINETEENTH CENTURY

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

The young Wordsworth touring Europe after college was a typical romantic liberal. Guided by his friend Beaupuy, he grew to pity the French common people and hoped for great things from the Revolution, only to be disillusioned by its aftermath; he had an affair with Annette Vallon, who reared his child, and to whom he never made full amends. (Several early lyrics seem to indicate a guilt complex in their persistent pity for woebegone, deserted

females.) The rest of his long life (1770–1850) was, however, calm, conservative, even dull. With his sister Dorothy, wife Mary, and friend Coleridge, Wordsworth lived a well-ordered existence. He was a Nature romantic, a pantheist who packed thought and feeling into his lines. His Lyrical Ballads, in part a working-out of his own theories of simple language and powerful feeling, mark the official beginning of the Romantic Movement. With security and

a laureateship, however, Wordsworth tended toward ultraconservatism and cold intellectualism. He criticized the later Romantics, whom he outlived. The best of his pieces are among the best in the language; but from Matthew Arnold's time to the present, the number of surviving reprinted poems has steadily dropped, even with friendly editors. Changing tastes account for some of the excisions. The lack of warmth in the poet himself keeps him away from many young readers. But few will argue against the poetic worth of the best sonnets, two or three odes, parts of the Prelude, Michael, and a half-dozen imperishable lyrics. As a trailblazer in the Romantic Movement, Wordsworth deserves lasting credit for his attacks on neo-classic diction, which had all but wrecked the English language for poetic purposes. (For his lyrics, see I, 269.)

MICHAEL

A PASTORAL POEM

If from the public way you turn your steps
Up the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,¹
You will suppose that with an upright path
Your feet must struggle; in such bold ascent
The pastoral mountains front you, face to face.
But, courage! for around that boisterous brook
The mountains have all opened out themselves,
And made a hidden valley of their own.
No habitation can be seen; but they
Who journey thither find themselves alone
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and
kites
That overhead are sailing in the sky.
It is in truth an utter solitude;
Nor should I have made mention of this Dell
But for one object which you might pass by,
Might see and notice not. Beside the brook
Appears a straggling heap of unhewn stones!
And to that simple object appertains
A story—unenriched with strange events,
Yet not unfit, I deem, for the fireside,
Or for the summer shade. It was the first
Of those domestic tales that spake to me
Of shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
Whom I already loved; not verily
For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills
Where was their occupation and abode.

¹ ravine.

And hence this Tale, while I was yet a Boy
Careless of books, yet having felt the power
Of Nature, by the gentle agency
Of natural objects, led me on to feel
5 For passions that were not my own, and think
(At random and imperfectly indeed)
On man, the heart of man, and human life.
Therefore, although it be a history
Homely and rude, I will relate the same
10 For the delight of a few natural hearts;
And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
Of youthful Poets, who among these hills
Will be my second self when I am gone.
15 Upon the forest-side in Grasmere Vale
There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his
name;
An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
20 Of an unusual strength: his mind was keen,
Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs.
And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
And watchful more than ordinary men.
Hence had he learned the meaning of all
winds,
Of blasts of every tone; and, oftentimes,
When others heeded not, he heard the South
Make subterraneous music, like the noise
Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.
30 The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
Bethought him, and he to himself would say,
"The winds are now devising work for me!"
And, truly, at all times, the storm, that drives
The traveller to a shelter, summoned him
35 Up to the mountains: he had been alone
Amid the heart of many thousand mists,
That came to him, and left him, on the heights
So lived he till his eightieth year was past;
And grossly that man errs, who should suppose
40 That the green valleys, and the streams and
rocks,
Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's
thoughts.
Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had
breathed
45 The common air; hills, which with vigorous
step
He had so often climbed; which had impressed
So many incidents upon his mind
50 Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear;
Which, like a book, preserved the memory
Of the dumb animals, whom he had saved,

NARRATIVE POETRY · WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts
The certainty of honorable gain;
Those fields, those hills—what could they less?
—had laid

Strong hold on his affections, were to him
A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
The pleasure which there is in life itself.

His days had not been passed in singleness.
His Helpmate was a comely matron, old,
Though younger than himself full twenty 10
years.

She was a woman of a stirring life,
Whose heart was in her house: two wheels she
had

Of antique form; this large, for spinning wool; 15
That small, for flax; and if one wheel had rest,
It was because the other was at work.

The Pair had but one inmate in their house,
An only Child, who had been born to them
When Michael, telling o'er his years, began 20
To deem that he was old,—in shepherd's
phrase,

With one foot in the grave. This only Son,
With two brave sheep-dogs tried in many a
storm,

The one of an inestimable worth,
Made all their household. I may truly say,
That they were as a proverb in the vale
For endless industry. When day was gone,
And from their occupations out of doors 30
The Son and Father were come home, even
then,

Their labor did not cease; unless when all
Turned to the cleanly supper-board, and there,
Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed 35
milk,

Sat round the basket piled with oaten cakes,
And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when
the meal

Was ended, Luke (for so the Son was named) 40
And his old Father both betook themselves
To such convenient work as might employ
Their hands by the fireside; perhaps to card
Wool for the Housewife's spindle, or repair
Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe, 45
Or other implement of house or field.

Down from the ceiling, by the chimney's
edge,

That in our ancient uncouth country style
With huge and black projection overbrowed 50
Large space beneath, as duly as the light
Of day grew dim, the Housewife hung a lamp;

An aged utensil, which had performed
Service beyond all others of its kind.

Early at evening did it burn—and late,
Surviving comrade of uncounted hours,
5 Which, going by from year to year, had found,
And left, the couple neither gay perhaps
Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,
Living a life of eager industry.

And now, when Luke had reached his eight-
centh year, 10

There by the light of this old lamp they sate,
Father and Son, while far into the night
The Housewife plied her own peculiar work,
Making the cottage through the silent hours

Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.
This light was famous in its neighborhood,
And was a public symbol of the life
That thrifty Pair had lived. For, as it chanced,
Their cottage on a plot of rising ground 20

Stood single, with large prospect, north and
south,

High into Easedale, up to Dunmail-Raise,
And westward to the village near the lake;
And from this constant light, so regular

25 And so far seen, the House itself, by all
Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
Both old and young, was named THE EVENING
STAR.

Thus living on through such a length of
years, 30

The Shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs
Have loved his Helpmate; but to Michael's
heart

This son of his old age was yet more dear—
Less from instinctive tenderness, the same
Fond spirit that blindly works in the blood of
all—

Than that a child, more than all other gifts
That earth can offer to declining man,

40 Brings hope with it, and forward-looking
thoughts,

And stirrings of inquietude, when they
By tendency of nature needs must fail.
Exceeding was the love he bare to him,

45 His heart and his heart's joy! For often-times
Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,
Had done him female service, not alone
For pastime and delight, as is the use
Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced
To acts of tenderness; and he had rocked
His cradle, as with a woman's gentle hand.

And, in a later time, ere yet the Boy

Had put on boy's attire, did Michael love,
Albeit of a stern unbending mind,
To have the Young-one in his sight, when he
Wrought in the field, or on his shepherd's stool
Sat with a fettered sheep before him stretched
Under the large old oak, that near his door
Stood single, and, from matchless depth of
shade,

Chosen for the Shearer's covert from the sun,
Thence in our rustic dialect was called
The CLIPPING TREE,² a name which yet it
bears.

There, while they two were sitting in the
shade,

With others round them, earnest all and blithe, 15
Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
Of fond correction and reproof bestowed
Upon the Child, if he disturbed the sheep
By catching at their legs, or with his shouts
Scared them, while they lay still beneath the 20
shears.

And when by Heaven's good grace the boy
grew up
A healthy Lad, and carried in his cheek
Two steady roses that were five years old,
Then Michael from a winter coppice cut
With his own hand a sapling, which he hooped
With iron, making it throughout in all
Due requisites a perfect shepherd's staff,
And gave it to the Boy; wherewith equipt
He as a watchman oftentimes was placed
At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock;
And, to his office prematurely called,
There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
Something between a hindrance and a help;
And for this cause not always, I believe,
Receiving from his Father hire or praise;
Though nought was left undone which staff,
or voice,
Or looks, or threatening gestures, could per- 40
form.

But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could
stand
Against the mountain blasts; and to the heights,
Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways, 45
He with his Father daily went, and they
Were as companions, why should I relate
That objects which the Shepherd loved before
Were dearer now? that from the Boy there
came

² Wordsworth notes that in the north "clipping" is used for "shearing."

Feelings and emanations—things which were
Light to the sun and music to the wind;
And that the old Man's heart seemed born
again?

5 Thus in his Father's sight the Boy grew up:
And now, when he had reached his eighteenth
year,

He was his comfort and his daily hope.

While in this sort the simple household lived
10 From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
Distressful tidings. Long before the time
Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been
bound

In surety for his brother's son, a man

Of an industrious life, and ample means;
But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
Had prest upon him; and old Michael now
Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture,
A grievous penalty, but little less
20 Than half his substance. This unlooked-for
claim,

At the first hearing, for a moment took
More hope-out of his life than he supposed
That any old man ever could have lost;

25 As soon as he had armed himself with strength
To look his trouble in the face, it seemed
The Shepherd's sole resource to sell at once
A portion of his patrimonial fields.

Such was his first resolve; he thought again,

30 And his heart failed him. "Isabel," said he,
Two evenings after he had heard the news,
"I have been toiling more than seventy years,
And in the open sunshine of God's love
Have we all lived; yet if these fields of ours
Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think
35 That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
Our lot is a hard lot; the sun himself
Has scarcely been more diligent than I;
And I have lived to be a fool at last

To my own family. An evil man
That was, and made an evil choice, if he
Were false to us; and if he were not false,
There are ten thousand to whom loss like this
Had been no sorrow. I forgive him;—but

45 'Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus.

"When I began, my purpose was to speak
Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.

Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel; the land
Shall not go from us, and it shall be free;

50 He shall possess it, free as is the wind
That passes over it. We have, thou know'st,
Another kinsman,—he will be our friend

In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
Thriving in trade,—and Luke to him shall go,
And with his kinsman's help and his own
thrift
He quickly will repair this loss, and then
He may return to us. If here he stay,
What can be done? Where every one is poor,
What can be gained?"

At this the old Man paused,
And Isabel sat silent, for her mind
Was busy, looking back into past times.
There's Richard Bateman, thought she to her-
self,

He was a 'parish-boy;—at the church-door
They made a gathering for him, shillings, 15
pence
And halfpennies, wherewith the neighbors
bought

A basket, which they filled with pedlar's wares;
And, with this basket on his arm, the lad
Went up to London, found a master there,
Who, out of many, chose the trusty boy
To go and overlook his merchandise
Beyond the seas; where he grew wondrous
rich,

And left estates and monies to the poor,
And, at his birth-place, built a chapel, floored
With marble which he sent from foreign lands.
These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel,
And her face brightened. The old Man was
glad,

And thus resumed:—"Well, Isabel! this scheme
These two days, has been meat and drink to
me.

Far more than we have lost is left us yet.
—We have enough;—I wish indeed that I
Were younger;—but this hope is a good hope.
—Make ready Luke's best garments, of the
best

Buy for him more, and let us send him forth
To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night:
—If he *could* go, the Boy should go to-night."

Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went
forth

With a light heart. The Housewife for five
days

Was restless morn and night, and all day long
Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare
Things needful for the journey of her son.

But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
To stop her in her work: for, when she lay

By Michael's side, she through the last two
nights

Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep:
And when they rose at morning she could see
5 That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon
She said to Luke, while they two by them-
selves

Were sitting at the door, "Thou must not go:
We have no other Child but thee to lose,

10 None to remember;—do not go away,
For if thou leave thy Father he will die."

The Youth made answer with a jocund voice;
And Isabel, when she had told her fears,
Recovered heart. That evening her best fare
15 Did she bring forth, and all together sat
Like happy people round a Christmas fire.

With daylight Isabel resumed her work;
And all the ensuing week the house appeared
As cheerful as a grove in Spring: at length

20 The expected letter from their kinsman came,
With kind assurances that he would do
His utmost for the welfare of the Boy;
To which, requests were added, that forthwith
He might be sent to him. Ten times or more

25 The letter was read over; Isabel
Went forth to show it to the neighbors round;
Nor was there at that time on English land
A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel
Had to her house returned, the old Man said,
30 "He shall depart to-morrow." To this word
The Housewife answered, talking much of
things

Which, if at such short notice he should go,
Would surely be forgotten. But at length

35 She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.
Near the tumultuous brook of Greenhead
Chyll,

In that deep valley, Michael had designed
To build a Sheepfold; and, before he heard

40 The tidings of his melancholy loss,
For this same purpose he had gathered up
A heap of stones, which by the streamlet's
edge

Lay thrown together, ready for the work.

45 With Luke that evening thitherward he
walked:

And soon as they had reached the place he
stopped,

And thus the old Man spake to him:—"My
50 Son,

To-morrow thou wilt leave me: with full heart
I look upon thee, for thou art the same

That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,
 And all thy life has been my daily joy.
 I will relate to thee some little part
 Of our two histories; 'twill do thee good
 When thou art from me, even if I should 5
 touch
 On things thou canst not know of.—After
 thou
 First cam'st into the world—as oft befalls
 To new-born infants—thou didst sleep away 10
 Two days, and blessings from thy Father's
 tongue
 Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,
 And still I loved thee with increasing love.
 Never to living ear came sweeter sounds
 Than when I heard thee by our own fireside
 First uttering, without words, a natural tune;
 While thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
 Sing at thy Mother's breast. Month followed
 month,
 And in the open fields my life was passed
 And on the mountains; else I think that thou
 Hadst been brought up upon thy Father's
 knees.
 But we were playmates, Luke: among these 25
 hills,
 As well thou knowest, in us the old and young
 Have played together, nor with me didst thou
 Lack any pleasure which a boy can know."
 Luke had a manly heart; but at these words 30
 He sobbed aloud. The old Man grasped his
 hand,
 And said, "Nay, do not take it so—I see
 That these are things of which I need not
 speak.
 —Even to the utmost I have been to thee
 A kind and a good Father: and herein
 I but repay a gift which I myself
 Received at others' hands; for, though now
 old
 Beyond the common life of man, I still
 Remember them who loved me in my youth.
 Both of them sleep together: here they lived,
 As all their Forefathers had done; and when
 At length their time was come, they were not 45
 loth
 To give their bodies to the family mold.
 I wished that thou should'st live the life they
 lived:
 But, 'tis a long time to look back, my Son, 50
 And see so little gain from threescore years.
 These fields were burthened when they came
 to me;
 Till I was forty years of age, not more
 Than half of my inheritance was mine.
 I toiled and toiled; God blessed me in my
 work,
 And till these three weeks past the land was
 free.
 —It looks as if it never could endure
 Another Master. Heaven forgive me, Luke,
 If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
 That thou should'st go."
 At this the old Man paused;
 Then, pointing to the stones near which they
 stood,
 15 Thus, after a short silence, he resumed:
 "This was a work for us; and now, my Son,
 It is a work for me. But, lay one stone,—
 Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own
 hands.
 20 Nay, Boy, be of good hope;—we both may live
 To see a better day. At eighty-four
 I still am strong and hale;—do thou thy part;
 I will do mine.—I will begin again
 With many tasks that were resigned to thee:
 25 Up to the heights, and in among the storms,
 Will I without thee go again, and do
 All works which I was wont to do alone,
 Before I knew thy face.—Heaven bless thee,
 Boy!
 30 Thy heart these two weeks has been beating
 fast
 With many hopes; it should be so;—yes—
 yes—
 I knew that thou could'st never have a wish
 35 To leave me, Luke: thou hast been bound to
 me
 Only by links of love: when thou art gone,
 What will be left to us!—But, I forget
 My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone,
 40 As I requested; and hereafter, Luke,
 When thou art gone away, should evil men
 Be thy companions, think of me, my Son,
 And of this moment; hither turn thy thoughts,
 And God will strengthen thee: amid all fear
 45 And all temptation, Luke, I pray that thou
 May'st bear in mind the life thy Fathers
 lived,
 Who, being innocent, did for that cause
 Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee
 well;
 When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt
 see

A work which is not here: a covenant
'Twill be between us; but, whatever fate
Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
And bear thy memory with me to the grave."

The Shepherd ended here; and Luke stooped
down,

And, as his Father had requested, laid
The first stone of the Sheepfold. At the sight
The old Man's grief broke from him; to his
heart

He pressed his Son, he kissèd him and wept;
And to the house together they returned.

—Hushed was that House in peace, or seem-
ing peace,

Ere the night fell:—with morrow's dawn the
Boy

Began his journey, and when he had reached
The public way, he put on a bold face;
And all the neighbors, as he passed their doors,
Came forth with wishes and with farewell
prayers,

That followed him till he was out of sight.

A good report did from their Kinsman come,
Of Luke and his well-doing: and the Boy
Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news,
Which, as the Housewife phrased it, were
throughout

"The prettiest letters that were ever seen."

Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.
So, many months passed on: and once again
The Shepherd went about his daily work
With confident and cheerful thoughts; and
now

Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour
He to that valley took his way, and there
Wrought at the Sheepfold. Meantime Luke be-
gan

To slacken in his duty; and, at length,
He in the dissolute city gave himself
To evil courses: ignominy and shame
Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.

There is a comfort in the strength of love;
'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
Would overset the brain, or break the heart:
I have conversed with more than one who well
Remember the old Man, and what he was
Years after he had heard this heavy news.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
He went, and still looked up to sun and cloud,
And listened to the wind; and, as before,

Performed all kinds of labor for his sheep,
And for the land, his small inheritance.

And to that hollow dell from time to time
Did he repair, to build the Fold of which

His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet
The pity which was then in every heart
For the old Man—and 'tis believed by all
That many and many a day he thither went,
And never lifted up a single stone.

There, by the Sheepfold, sometimes was he
seen

Sitting alone, or with his faithful Dog,
Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.

The length of full seven years, from time to
time,

He at the building of this Sheepfold wrought,
And left the work unfinished when he died.

Three years, or little more, did Isabel

Survive her Husband: at her death the estate
Was sold and went into a stranger's hand.

The Cottage which was named the EVENING
STAR

Is gone;—the ploughshare has been through
the ground

On which it stood; great changes have been
wrought

In all the neighborhood:—yet the oak is left
That grew beside their door; and the remains
Of the unfinished Sheepfold may be seen

Beside the boisterous brook of Greenhead
Ghyll.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

The career of Coleridge (1772–1834) is one of
tragic incompleteness, of isolated flashes of
brilliance against a backdrop of frustration. He
never quite realized his universally acknowl-
edged potentialities. He left Cambridge, had a
comic-opera experience in the Army. He wrote,
he lectured, he traveled, he preached. As a
Romantic he naturally hoped for a change in
the world after the French Revolution; with
Southey, Coleridge conceived the idea of a
pantisocracy in America. Both ideals were un-
realized. One reason for his failure to finish
many pieces of poetry was, of course, his ad-
diction to narcotics, but this detail can be
easily exaggerated in importance. Equipped
with a magnificent memory and unusual con-
versational ability, Coleridge had moments

when he was king. In *The Ancient Mariner* and two fragments, *Kubla Khan* and *Christabel*, he shows to fine advantage his particular type of romanticism, marked by the uellding of strangeness and beauty, of music and madness. And while scholars still argue the fine points, it seems safe to say that the future will know Coleridge the poet for only one or two pieces which show clear marks of genius. By then, however, others with more works in print may be completely forgotten; already Scott and Southey, for example, have begun to slip into the shadows.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

IN SEVEN PARTS

Argument

How a Ship having passed the Line was driven by storms to the cold Country towards the South Pole; and how from thence she made her course to the tropical Latitude of the Great Pacific Ocean; and of the strange things that befell, and in what manner the Ancyent Marinere came back to his own Country.

PART I

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
"By thy long gray beard and glittering eye,

An ancient Mariner meeteth three Gallants bound to a wedding-feast and detaineth one.

Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

"The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin,
The guests are met, the feast is set:
May'st hear the merry din."

He holds him with his skinny hand;
"There was a ship," quoth he.
"Hold off! unhand me, gray-beard loon!"
Eftsoons¹ his hand dropt he.

He holds him with his glittering eye—
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child.
The Mariner hath his will.

¹ at once.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:

He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
5 The bright-eyed Mariner.

The Wedding-Guest is spell-bound by the eye of the old seafaring man and cannot turn to hear his tale.

"The ship was cheered, the harbor cleared,
Merrily did we drop
10 Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the light-house top.

"The sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he!
15 And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.

The Mariner tells how the ship sailed southward with a good wind and fair weather till it reached the Line.

"Higher and higher every day
20 Till over the mast at noon—"
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon

The bride hath paced into the hall,
25 Red as a rose is she;
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest hears the bridal music, but the Mariner cannot turn his tale.

30 The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

35 "And now the Storm-blast came,
and he
Was tyrannous and strong:
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

The ship driven by a storm toward the south pole.

40 "With sloping masts and dipping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
45 The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
And southward aye we fled.

"And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold.
50 And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

NARRATIVE POETRY · SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

"And through the drifts the
snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken—
The ice was all between.

The land of ice,
and of fearful
sounds where no
living thing was to
be seen.

"The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around:
It cracked and growled, and roared and
howled,
Like noises in a swound!

"At length did cross an Albatross,
Thorough the fog it came;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name.

Till a great sea-
bird, called the
Albatross, came
through the snow-
fog, and was re-
ceived with great
joy and hospi-
tality.

"It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
The helmsman steered us through!

"And a good south wind sprung
up behind;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariners' hollo!

And lo! the Alba-
tross proved a
bird of good omen,
and followeth the
ship as it returned
northward
through fog and
floating ice

"In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white moon-shine."

"God save thee, ancient Mar-
iner!
From the fields, that plague thee
thus!—
Why look'st thou so?"—"With my crossbow
I shot the Albatross!

The ancient Mar-
iner inhospitably
killeth the pious
bird of good omen.

PART II

"The Sun now rose upon the right:
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.

"And the good south wind still blew be-
hind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day for food or play
Came to the mariners' hollo!

"And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe:
For all averred, I had killed the
bird

His shipmates cry
out against the
ancient Mariner,
for killing the bird
of good luck.

5 That made the breeze to blow.
Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow!

"Nor dim nor red, like God's own
head,
The glorious Sun uprist:
Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
15 That bring the fog and mist.

But when the fog
cleared off they
justify the same,
and thus make
themselves accomp-
lices in the crime.

"The fair breeze blew, the white
foam flew,
The furrow followed free;
20 We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

The fair breeze
continues, the ship
enters the Pacific
Ocean, and sails
northward, even
till it reaches the
Line

"Down dropt the breeze, the sails
dropt down,
25 'Twas sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the seal

The ship hath
been suddenly be-
calmed

"All in a hot and copper sky,
30 The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

"Day after day, day after day,
35 We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

"Water, water, everywhere,
40 And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink.

And the Albatross
begins to be
avenged

"The very deep did rot: O Christ!
45 That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

"About, about, in reel and rout
50 The death-fires danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue and white.

A Spirit had fol-
lowed them, one
of the invisible in-
habitants of this
planet, neither de-
parted souls nor
angels, concerning
whom the learned

"And some in dreams assured
were

Of the Spirit that plagued us so;
Nine fathom deep he had fol-
lowed us
From the land of mist and snow.

Jew, Josephus,
and the Platonic
Constantinopolit-
tan, Michael Psell-
lus, may be con-
sulted. They are
very numerous,
and there is no
climate or element
without one or more

"See! see! (I cried) she tacks no
more!

Hither to work us weal,—
Without a breeze, without a tide,
5 She steadies with upright keel!

And hence fol-
lows. For can it be
a ship that comes
onward without
wind or tide?

"And every tongue, through utter
drought,

Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more than
if

We had been choked with soot.

The shipmate, in
their sore distress,
would fain throw
the whole guilt on
the ancient Mari-
ner, in sign
whereof they hang
the dead sea-bird
round his neck

10 Rested the broad bright Sun;
When that strange shape drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the Sun.

"Ah! well-a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

"And straight the Sun was flecked
15 with bars,
(Heaven's Mother send us grace!)
As if through a dungeon-grate he peered
With broad and burning face.

It seemeth him
but the skeleton
of a ship.

PART III

"There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time! a weary time!
How glazed each weary eye,
When looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

The ancient Mari-
ner beholdeth a
sign in the element
afar off

20 "Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
How fast she nears and nears!
Are those her sails that glance in the Sun,
Like restless gossameres?

"At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist;
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.

25 "Are those her ribs through
which the Sun
Did peer, as through a grate?
And is that Woman all her crew?
Is that a Death? and are there
30 two?
Is Death that woman's mate?

And its ribs are
seen as bars on the
face of the setting
Sun

The Spectre-
Woman and her
Deathmate, and
no other on board
the skeleton-ship

"A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it neared and neared:
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tacked and veered.

"Her lips were red, her looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold:
35 Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The Night-mare Life-in-Death was she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

Like vessel, like
crew!

"With throats unslaked, with
black lips baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail,
Through utter drought all dumb
we stood!
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, A sail! a sail!

At its nearer ap-
proach it seemeth
him to be a ship,
and at a dear ran-
som he freeth his
speech from the
bond of throat.

40 "The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice;
"The game is done! I've won! I've
won!"
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

Death and Life-
in-Death have
died for the ship's
crew, and she (the
latter) winneth
the ancient Mari-
ner

"With throats unslaked, with black lips
baked,
Agape they heard me call:
Gramercy! they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath
drew in,
As they were drinking all.

A flash of joy;

45 "The Sun's rim dips; the stars
rush out:
At one stride comes the dark;
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
Off shot the spectre-bark.

No twilight within
the courts of the
Sun.

50 "We listened and looked side-
ways up!

At the rising of the
Moon,

Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip!
The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed
white;
From the sails the dew did drip—
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The horned Moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip.

"One after one, by the star- One after another,
dogged Moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye.

"Four times fifty living men, His shipmates
dropped down dead.
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.

"The souls did from their bodies But Life-in-Death
begins her work on
the ancient Mar-
iner
fly,—
They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it passed me by
Like the whizz of my cross-bow!"

PAINT IV

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, and lank, and
brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

The Wedding-
Guest feareth that
a "Spirit" is talking
to him.

"I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand, so brown."—
"Fear not, fear not, thou Wed-
ding-Guest!
This body dropt not down.

But the ancient
Mariner, aware of
him of his bodily
life, and proceed-
eth to relate his
horrible penance.

"Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide, wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

"The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie:
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on; and so did I.

He describeth the
creatures of the
calm.

"I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away;

And envieth that
they should live,
and so many lie
dead.

I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

"I looked to heaven, and tried to pray;
5 But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

"I closed my lids, and kept them close,
10 And the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

15 "The cold sweat melted from But the curse
liveth for him in
the eye of the dead
men
their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they:
The look with which they looked on me
Had never passed away.

20 "An orphan's curse would drag to hell
A spirit from on high;
But oh! more horrible than that
Is a curse in a dead man's eye!
25 Seven days, seven nights, I saw
that curse,
And yet I could not die.

In his loneliness
and hardness he
yearneth towards
the journeying
Moon, and the
stars that still
sojourn, yet still
move onward, and
everywhere the
blue sky belongs
to them and in
their appointed
rest, and their
native country
and their own
natural homes,
which they enter
unannounced, as
foes that are
certainly ex-
pected, and yet
there is a silent
joy at their ar-
rival.

"The moving Moon went up the
30 sky,
And nowhere did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside—

35 "Her beams bemoaned the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charmed water burnt away
A still and awful red.

40 "Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes:
They moved in tracks of shining
white,

By the light of the
Moon he be-
holdeth God's
creatures of the
great calm

45 And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

"Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:
50 Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

"O happy living things! no
tongue

Their beauty and
their happiness.

Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware;
Sure my kind saint took pity on
me,

He blesseth them
in his heart.

And I blessed them unaware;

The spell begins
to break

"The selfsame moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

PART V

"Oh sleep! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
That slid into my soul.

"The silly² buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled
with dew;

By grace of the
holy Mother, the
ancient Mariner is
refreshed with
rain

And when I awoke, it rained.

"My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

"I moved, and could not feel my limbs:
I was so light—almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed ghost.

"And soon I heard a roaring
wind:

He heareth sounds
and seeth strange
sights and com-
motions in the sky
and the elements

It did not come anear;
But with its sound it shook the
sails,

That were so thin and sere.

"The upper air burst into life!
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
To and fro they were hurried about!
And to and fro, and in and out,
The wan stars danced between.

"And the coming wind did roar more loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge;

² empty.

And the rain poured down from one black
cloud;

The Moon was at its edge.

5 "The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
The Moon was at its side:
Like waters shot from some high crag,
The lightning fell with never a jag,
A river steep and wide.

10

"The loud wind never reached
the ship,

The bottom of the
ship & crew are in-
jured, and the
ship moves on.

Yet now the ship moved on!
Beneath the lightning and the Moon

15 The dead men gave a groan.

"They groaned, they stirred, they all up-
rose,

Nor spake, nor moved their eyes,

20 It had been strange, even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise.

"The helmsman steered, the ship moved on;
Yet never a breeze up blew;

25 The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,

Where they were wont to do;

They raised their limbs like lifeless tools—
We were a ghastly crew.

30 "The body of my brother's son

Stood by me, knee to knee.

The body and I pulled at one rope,
But he said nought to me."

35 "I fear thee, ancient Mariner!"

"Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest!

"Twas not those souls that fled
in pain,

But not by the
sails of the men,
nor by demons of
earth or middle
air, but by a
blissful troop of
angelic spirits
sent down by the
intervention of the
guardian saint

Which to their corsets came again,

40 But a troop of spirits blest:

"For when it dawned—they dropped their
arms,

And clustered round the mast;

45 Sweet sounds rose slowly through their
mouths,

And from their bodies passed.

"Around, around, flew each sweet sound,

50 Then darted to the Sun;

Slowly the sounds came back again,

Now mixed, now one by one.

NARRATIVE POETRY · SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

"Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
I heard the skylark sing;
Sometimes all little birds that are,
How they seemed to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning!

"And now 'twas like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the heavens be mute.

"It ceased; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

"Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe:
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

"Under the keel nine fathom-
deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The Spirit slid: and it was he
That made the ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

The lonesome Spirit from the south-pole carries on the ship as far as the lane, in obedience to the angelic troop, but still requireth vengeance.

"The Sun, right up above the mast,
Had fixed her to the ocean:
But in a minute she 'gan stir,
With a short uneasy motion—
Backwards and forwards half her length
With a short uneasy motion.

"Then like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound:
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell down in a swoond.

"How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare;
But ere my living life returned,
I heard, and in my soul discerned,
Two voices in the air.

The Polar Spirit's fellow demons the invisible inhabitants of the element, take part in his wrong, and two of them relate, one to the other, that penance long and heavy for the ancient Mariner hath been accorded to the Polar Spirit, who returneth southward.

" 'Is it he?' quoth one, 'Is this the man?
By him who died on cross,

With his cruel bow he laid full low
The harmless Albatross.

" 'The Spirit who bideth by himself
5 In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow.'

"The other was a softer voice,
10 As soft as honey-dew:
Quoth he, 'The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do.'

PART VI

First Voice

" 'But tell me, tell me! speak again,
Thy soft response renewing—
20 What makes that ship drive on so fast?
What is the ocean doing?'"

Second Voice

" 'Still as a slave before his lord,
25 The ocean hath no blast;
His great bright eye most silently
Up to the Moon is cast—

" 'If he may know which way to go;
30 For she guides him smooth or grim.
See, brother, see! how graciously
She looketh down on him.'

First Voice

35 " 'But why drives on that ship
so fast,
Without or wave or wind?'"

The Mariner hath been cast into a trance for the angelic power causeth the vessel to drive northward faster than human life could endure.

Second Voice

40 " 'The air is cut away before,
And closes from behind.'

" 'Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high!
Or we shall be belated:
45 For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the Mariner's trance is abated.'

"I woke, and we were sailing on
As in a gentle weather:
50 'Twas night, calm night, the
moon was high;
The dead men stood together.

The supernatural motion is retarded the Mariner awakes, and his penance begins anew

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE · NARRATIVE POETRY

"All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter:
All fixed on me their stony eyes,
That in the Moon did glitter.

"The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never passed away:
I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
Nor turn them up to pray.

"And now this spell was snapt: The curse is finally
expiated
once more
I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen—

"Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round, walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows, a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

"But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made:
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

"It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring—
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

"Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sailed softly too:
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze—
On me alone it blew.

"Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed
The light-house top I see?
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
Is this mine own cuntry?" And the ancient
Mariner behold-
eth his native
country

"We drifted o'er the harbor-bar,
And I with sobs did pray—
O let me be awake, my God!
Or let me sleep away.

"The harbor-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn!
And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the Moon.

"The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.

5 "And the bay was white with silent light
Till, rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows The angelic spirits
leave the dead
bodies,
were,

10 In crimson colors came.

"A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were:
I turned my eyes upon the deck—
15 Oh, Christ! what saw I there!

"Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And, by the holy rood!
A man all light, a seraph-man, And appear in
their own forms
of light
20 On every corse there stood.

"This seraph-band, each waved his hand:
It was a heavenly sight!
They stood as signals to the land,
25 Each one a lovely light;

"This seraph-band, each waved his hand,
No voice did they impart—
No voice; but oh! the silence sank
30 Like music on my heart.

"But soon I heard the dash of oars,
I heard the Pilot's cheer;
My head was turned perforce away,
35 And I saw a boat appear.

"The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,
I heard them coming fast:
Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy
40 The dead men could not blast.

"I saw a third—I heard his voice:
It is the Hermit good!
He singeth loud his godly hymns
45 That he makes in the wood.
He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away
The Albatross's blood.

PART VII

50 "This Hermit good lives in that The Hermit of the
wood.
wood
Which slopes down to the sea.

NARRATIVE POETRY · SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
He loves to talk with mariners
That come from a far countree.

"He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve— 5
He hath a cushion plump:
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak-stump.

"The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk, 10
'Why, this is strange, I trow!
Where are those lights so many and fair,
That signal made but now?'

"'Strange, by my faith!' the Her- Approacheth the 15
mit said— ship with wonder.
'And they answered not our cheer!
The planks looked warped! and see those
sails,
How thin they are and sere!
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

"'Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along;
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
And the owl whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf's young.'

"'Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look—
(The Pilot made reply)
I am a-feared'—'Push on, push on!
Said the Hermit cheerily.

"The boat came closer to the ship, 35
But I nor spake nor stirred;
The boat came close beneath the ship,
And straight a sound was heard.

"Under the water it rumbled on, The ship suddenly 40
Still louder and more dread: sinketh
It reached the ship, it split the bay,
The ship went down like lead.

"Stunned by that loud and dread- The ancient Mar- 45
ful sound, iner is saved in the
Which sky and ocean smote, Pilot's boat.
Like one that hath been seven days drowned
My body lay afloat;
But swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot's boat.

"Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,
The boat spun round and round;
And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound.

"I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked
And fell down in a fit;
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit.

"I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro.
'Ha! ha!' quoth he, 'full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row.'

"And now, all in my own countree,
I stood on the firm land!
20 The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

"'O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy The ancient Mar- 30
man!' iner earnestly en-
25 The Hermit crossed his brow. treateth the Her-
'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee mit to shrieve
say— him, and the
What manner of man art thou?' penance of life
falls on him

30 "Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale;
And then it left me free.

35 "Since then, at an uncertain hour, And ever and anon
That agony returns; throughout his
And till my ghastly tale is told, future life an
This heart within me burns. agony constrain-
eth him to travel
from land to land

40 "I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach.

"What loud uproar bursts from that door!
The wedding-guests are there:
But in the garden-bower the bride
And bride-maids singing are:
50 And hark the little vesper bell,
Which biddeth me to prayer!

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON · NARRATIVE POETRY

"O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide, wide sea:
So lonely 'twas, that God himself
Scarce seemèd there to be.

"Oh sweeter than the marriage-feast,
'Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company!—

"To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
And youths and maidens gay!

"Farewell, farewell! but this I
tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

"He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone: and now the Wedding-Guest
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and a wiser man,
He rose the morrow morn.

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON

Space does not permit presentation of the classic arguments for and against Byron (1788–1824). As often happens, judgment of his case is difficult for some, because some cannot separate moral from literary values. With a grandfather whose ships perennially ran into storms, a father called "Mad Jack," and a mother who cursed him as a "lame brat," Byron was hardly destined for a dull life. His affairs with women were not entirely his fault; women rarely complained and often invited. But public opinion

forced him into exile, where he could continue to write and to live unconventionally. One is impressed with his vigor, his athletic attempts to compensate for a bad foot by becoming a fine swimmer; his headlong tilt with Southey over literature, politics, and morals; his boisterous escapades on the Continent (see his inimitable letters); his speed in writing. Byron was a success in his day, where Shelley was almost unknown. Byron made money and spent it. He is the Romantic to the French, and, as a matter of fact, does show the best and worst of romanticism in his humanitarian interest in the Greek cause as against the maudlin self-pity of the Oriental tales. We must remember, too, that Byron was a living paradox: the poets he praised most consistently were classic poets. There is little profound thought in Byron—but there are some deceptively clever half-truths. There is much that is gallant—and much that is not a little shameful, as in the treatment of his half-sister and his wife. As a poet, he wrote few lyrics in an age of lyricism. His plays and tales are dated or plainly inferior. Looked at purely as a poet, Byron survives as an extremely able versifier and satirist; his original ability is seen in the twists and turns of Don Juan, Beppo, and Vision of Judgment. No one before or since has turned the English language so cleverly in the tricky ottava rima form; lyrics, satire, digressions, sermons, autobiography, forced rhymes, playfulness—in Don Juan especially—show Byron as master of the Italianate medley-poem.

DON JUAN

The poem opens with a slashing "Dedication" to Southey; the first canto gives details of Juan's intrigue with Donna Julia; the second describes his "cooling-off" voyage, shipwreck, and casting away on a Greek island, where he meets and woos Haidée.

CANTO THE THIRD

1

Hail, Muse! *et cetera*.—We left Juan sleeping,
Pillowed upon a fair and happy breast,
And watched by eyes that never yet knew
weeping,

And loved by a young heart, too deeply
blest
To feel the poison through her spirit
creeping,
Or know who rested there, a foe to rest,
Had soiled the current of her sinless years,
And turned her pure heart's purest blood to
tears.

2

Oh, Love! what is it in this world of ours
Which makes it fatal to be loved? Ah, why
With cypress branches hast thou wreathed
thy bowers,
And made thy best interpreter a sigh?
As those who dote on odors pluck the flowers,
And place them on their breast—but place
to die—
Thus the frail beings we would fondly cherish
Are laid within our bosoms but to perish.

3

In her first passion Woman loves her lover,
In all the others all she loves is love,
Which grows a habit she can ne'er get over, 25
And fits her loosely—like an easy glove,
As you may find, whene'er you like to prove
her:
One man alone at first her heart can move;
She then prefers him in the plural number,
Not finding that the additions much encumber.

4

I know not if the fault be men's or theirs;
But one thing's pretty sure; a woman
planted
(Unless at once she plunge for life in prayers)
After a decent time must be gallanted;
Although, no doubt, her first of love affairs
Is that to which her heart is wholly granted; 40
Yet there are some, they say, who have had
none,
But those who have ne'er end with only *one*.

5

'Tis melancholy, and a fearful sign
Of human frailty, folly, also crime,
That love and marriage rarely can combine,
Although they both are born in the same
clime;
Marriage from love, like vinegar from wine—
A sad, sour, sober beverage—by time,

Is sharpened from its high celestial flavor
Down to a very homely household savor.

6

5 There's something of antipathy, as 'twere,
Between their present and their future state;
A kind of flattery that's hardly fair
Is used until the truth arrives too late—
Yet what can people do, except despair?
10 The same things change their names at
such a rate;
For instance—passion in a lover's glorious,
But in a husband is pronounced uxorious.

7

15 Men grow ashamed of being so very fond,
They sometimes also get a little tired
(But that, of course, is rare), and then
despond:
20 The same things cannot always be admired,
Yet 'tis "so nominated in the bond,"
That both are tied till one shall have ex-
pired.
Sad thought! to lose the spouse that was
adorning
Our days, and put one's servants into
mourning.

8

30 There's doubtless something in domestic
doings
Which forms, in fact, true love's antithesis;
Romances paint at full length people's
wooings,
35 But only give a bust of marriages;
For no one cares for matrimonial cooings,
There's nothing wrong in a connubial kiss:
Think you, if Laura had been Petrarch's
wife,
40 He would have written sonnets all his life?

9

All tragedies are finished by a death,
All comedies are ended by a marriage;
45 The future states of both are left to faith,
For authors fear description might disparage
The worlds to come of both, or fall beneath,
And then both worlds would punish their
miscarriage;
50 So leaving each their priest and prayerbook
ready,
They say no more of Death or of the Lady.

10

The only two that in my recollection
Have sung of heaven and hell, or marriage,
are
Dante and Milton, and of both the affection
Was hapless in their nuptials, for some bar
Of fault or temper ruined the connection
(Such things, in fact, it don't ask much to
mar);
But Dante's Beatrice and Milton's Eve
Were not drawn from their spouses, you
conceive.

11

Some persons say that Dante meant theology
By Beatrice, and not a mistress—I,
Although my opinion may require apology,
Deem this a commentator's phantasy,
Unless indeed it was from his own
knowledge he
Decided thus, and showed good reason
why;
I think that Dante's more abstruse ecstasies
Meant to personify the mathematics.

12

Haidée and Juan were not married, but
The fault was theirs, not mine: it is not fair,
Chaste reader, then, in any way to put
The blame on me, unless you wish they
were;
Then if you'd have them wedded, please to
shut
The book which treats of this erroneous
pair,
Before the consequences grow too awful;
'Tis dangerous to read of loves unlawful.

13

Yet they were happy,—happy in the illicit
Indulgence of their innocent desires;
But more imprudent grown with every visit,
Haidée forgot the island was her sire's:
When we have what we like, 'tis hard to
miss it,
At least in the beginning, ere one tires;
Thus she came often, not a moment losing,
Whilst her piratical papa was cruising.

14

Let not his mode of raising cash seem strange,

Although he fleeced the flags of every
nation,

For into a prime minister but change
His title, and 'tis nothing but taxation;
5 But he, more modest, took an humbler range
Of life, and in an honest vocation
Pursued o'er the high seas his watery journey,
And merely practiced as a sea-attorney.

15

10 The good old gentleman had been detain'd
By winds and waves, and some important
captures;
And, in the hope of more, at sea remain'd,
15 Although a squall or two had damp'd his
raptures,
By swamping one of the prizes; he had chain'd
His prisoners, dividing them like chapters
In number'd lots; they all had cuffs and
20 collars,
And averaged each from ten to a hundred
dollars.

16

25 Some he disposed of off Cape Matapan
Among his friends the Mainots; some he
sold
To his Tunis correspondents, save one man
Toss'd overboard unsaleable (being old):
30 The rest—save here and there some richer
one,
Reserved for future ransom—in the hold,
Were link'd alike, as for the common people
he
35 Had a large order from the Dey of Tripoli.

17

The merchandise was served in the same way,
Pieced out for different marts in the Levant,
40 Except some certain portions of the prey,
Light classic articles of female want,
French stuffs, lace, tweezers, toothpicks, tea-
pot, tray,
Guitars and castanets from Alicant,
45 All which selected from the spoil he gathers,
Robb'd for his daughter by the best of fathers.

18

A monkey, a Dutch mastiff, a mackaw,
50 Two parrots, with a Persian cat and kittens,
He chose from several animals he saw—
A terrier, too, which once had been a

Briton's,
Who dying on the coast of Ithaca,
The peasants gave the poor dumb thing a
pittance.
These to secure in this strong blowing weather, 5
He caged in one huge hamper all together.

19

Then, having settled his marine affairs,
Despatching single cruisers here and there, 10
His vessel having need of some repairs,
He shaped his course to where his daughter
fair
Continued still her hospitable cares;
But that part of the coast being shoal and 15
bare,
And rough with reefs which ran out many a
mile,
His port lay on the other side o' the isle.

20

And there he went ashore without delay,
Having no custom-house nor quarantine
To ask him awkward questions on the way,
About the time and place where he had
been:
He left his ship to be hove down next day,
With orders to the people to careen;
So that all hands were busy beyond measure,
In getting out goods, ballast, guns, and
treasure.

21

Arriving at the summit of a hill
Which overlooked the white walls of his 35
home,
He stopped.—What singular emotions fill
Their bosoms who have been induced to
roam!
With fluttering doubts if all be well or ill— 40
With love for many, and with fears for
some;
All feelings which o'erleap the years long lost,
And bring our hearts back to their starting-
post.

22

The approach of home to husbands and to
sires,
After long traveling by land or water, 50
Most naturally some small doubt inspires—
A female family's a serious matter

(None trusts the sex more, or so much
admires—
But they hate flattery, so I never flatter);
Wives in their husbands' absences grow
subtler,
And daughters sometimes run off with the
butler.

23

An honest gentleman at his return
May not have the good fortune of Ulysses;
Not all lone matrons for their husbands
mourn,
Or show the same dislike to suitors' kisses;
The odds are that he finds a handsome urn
To his memory—and two or three young
misses
Born to some friend, who holds his wife and
riches,—
20 And that *his* Argus!—bites him by the
breeches.

24

If single, probably his plighted fair
Has in his absence wedded some rich miser;
25 But all the better, for the happy pair
May quarrel, and the lady growing wiser,
He may resume his amatory care
As *cavalier servente*,² or despise her;
30 And that his sorrow may not be a dumb one,
Writes odes on the Inconstancy of Woman.

25

And oh! ye gentlemen who have already
Some chaste *liaison* of the kind—I mean
An honest friendship with a married lady—
The only thing of this sort ever seen
To last—of all connections the most steady,
And the true Hymen (the first's but a
screen)—
Yet, for all that, keep not too long away,
I've known the absent wronged four times a
day.

26

Lambro, our sea-solicitor, who had
Much less experience of dry land than ocean,
On seeing his own chimney-smoke, felt glad;

50 ¹ Ulysses' dog, who recognized him after many
years.
² escort for married lady.

But not knowing metaphysics, had no notion
Of the true reason of his not being sad,
Or that of any other strong emotion;
He loved his child, and would have wept the
loss of her,
But knew the cause no more than a philosopher.

27

He saw his white walls shining in the sun,
His garden trees all shadowy and green;
He heard his rivulet's light bubbling run,
The distant dog-bark; and perceived be-
tween
The umbrage of the wood, so cool and dun,
The moving figures, and the sparkling sheen 15
Of arms (in the East all arm)—and various
dyes
Of colored garbs, as bright as butterflies.

28

And as the spot where they appear he hears
Surprised at these unwonted signs of idling,
He hears—alas! no music of the spheres,
But an unhallowed, earthly sound of
fiddling!
A melody which made him doubt his ears,
The cause being past his guessing or un-
riddling;
A pipe, too, and a drum, and shortly after,
A most unoriental roar of laughter.

29

And still more nearly to the place advancing,
Descending rather quickly the declivity,
Through the waved branches, o'er the green- 35
sward glancing,
'Midst other indications of festivity,
Seeing a troop of his domestics dancing
Like dervises, who turn as on a pivot, he
Perceived it was the Pyrrhic dance so martial, 40
To which the Levantines are very partial.

30

And further on a group of Grecian girls,
The first and tallest her white kerchief
waving,
Were strung together like a row of pearls,
Link'd hand in hand, and dancing: each too
having
Down her white neck long floating auburn 50
curls—
(The least of which would set ten poets

raving);
Their leader sang—and bounded to her song,
With choral step and voice, the virgin throng.

31

5 And here, assembled cross-legg'd round their
trays,
Small social parties just begun to dine;
Pilaus and meats of all sorts met the gaze,
10 And flasks of Samian and of Chian wine,
And sherbet cooling in the porous vase;
Above them their dessert grew on its vine,
The orange and pomegranate nodding o'er
Dropp'd in their laps, scarce pluck'd, their mel-
low store.

32

A band of children, round a snow-white ram,
There wreath his venerable horns with
20 flowers;
While peaceful as if still an unwean'd lamb,
The patriarch of the flock all gently cowers
His sober head, majestically tame,
Or eats from out the palm, or playful lowers
25 His brow, as if in act to butt, and then
Yielding to their small hands, draws back
again.

33

30 Their classical profiles, and glittering dresses,
Their large black eyes, and soft seraphic
cheeks,
Crimson as cleft pomegranates, their long
tresses,
35 The gesture which enchants, the eye that
speaks,
The innocence which happy childhood blesses,
Made quite a picture of these little Greeks;
So that the philosophical beholder
40 Sigh'd for their sakes—that they should e'er
grow older.

34

Afar, a dwarf buffoon stood telling tales
45 To a sedate gray circle of old smokers,
Of secret treasures found in hidden vales,
Of wonderful replies from Arab jokers,
Of charms to make good gold and cure bad
ails,
50 Of rocks bewitched that open to the
knockers,
Of magic ladies who, by one sole act,

Transformed their lords to beasts (but that's a
fact).

35

Here was no lack of innocent diversion
For the imagination or the senses,
Song, dance, wine, music, stories from the
Persian,
All pretty pastimes in which no offense is;
But Lambro saw all these things with aversion, 10
Perceiving in his absence such expenses,
Dreading that climax of all human ills,
The inflammation of his weekly bills.

36

Ah! what is man? what perils still environ
The happiest mortals even after dinner!
A day of gold from out an age of iron
Is all that Life allows the luckiest sinner;
Pleasure (whene'er she sings, at least) 's a
siren,
That lures, to flay alive, the young beginner;
Lambro's reception at his people's banquet
Was such as fire accords to a wet blanket.

37

He—being a man who seldom used a word
Too much, and wishing gladly to surprise
(In general he surprised men with the sword)
His daughter—had not sent before to
advise
Of his arrival, so that no one stirred;
And long he paused to re-assure his eyes,
In fact much more astonished than delighted,
To find so much good company invited.

38

He did not know (alas! how men will lie)
That a report (especially the Greeks)
Avouched his death (such people never die), 40
And put his house in mourning several
weeks,—
But now their eyes and also lips were dry;
The bloom, too, had returned to Haidée's
cheeks.
Her tears, too, being returned into their fount,
She now kept house upon her own account.

39

Hence all this rice, meat, dancing, wine, and
fiddling,
Which turned the isle into a place of

pleasure;

The servants all were getting drunk or idling,
A life which made them happy beyond
measure.

5 Her father's hospitality seemed middling,
Compared with what Haidée did with his
treasure;
'Twas wonderful how things went on
improving,
10 While she had not one hour to spare from
loving.

40

Perhaps you think, in stumbling on this feast,
15 He flew into a passion, and in fact
There was no mighty reason to be pleased;
Perhaps you prophesy some sudden act,
The whip, the rack, or dungeon at the least,
To teach his people to be more exact,
20 And that, proceeding at a very high rate,
He showed the royal penchants of a pirate.

41

You're wrong.—He was the mildest manner'd
25 man
That ever scuttled ship or cut a throat,
With such true breeding of a gentleman,
You never could divine his real thought,
No courtier could, and scarcely woman can
30 Gird more deceit within a petticoat;
Pity he loved adventurous life's variety,
He was so great a loss to good society.

42

35 Advancing to the nearest dinner tray,
Tapping the shoulder of the highest guest,
With a peculiar smile, which, by the way,
Boded no good, whatever it expressed,
He asked the meaning of this holiday;
40 The vinous Greek to whom he had
addressed
His question, much too merry to divine
The questioner, filled up a glass of wine,

43

45 And without turning his facetious head,
Over his shoulder, with a Bacchant air,
Presented the o'erflowing cup, and said,
"Talking's dry work, I have no time to
50 spare."
A second hiccuped, "Our old master's dead,
You'd better ask our mistress who's his

heir."
 "Our mistress!" quoth a third: "Our mistress!
 —pooh!—
 You mean our master—not the old, but new."

44

These rascals, being new comers, knew not
 whom
 They thus addressed—and Lambro's vis-
 age fell—
 And o'er his eye a momentary gloom
 Passed, but he strove quite courteously to
 quell
 The expression, and endeavoring to resume
 His smile, requested one of them to tell
 The name and quality of his new patron,
 Who seemed to have turned Haidée into a
 matron.

45

"I know not," quoth the fellow, "who or what
 He is, nor whence he came—and little care;
 But this I know, that this roast capon's fat,
 And that good wine ne'er washed down bet-
 ter fare;
 And if you are not satisfied with that,
 Direct your questions to my neighbor there;
 He'll answer all for better or worse,
 For none likes more to hear himself converse."

46

I said that Lambro was a man of patience,
 And certainly he showed the best of
 breeding,
 Which scarce France, the paragon of nations,
 E'er saw her most polite of sons exceeding;
 He bore these sneers against his near relations,
 His own anxiety, his heart, too, bleeding,
 The insults, too, of every servile glutton,
 Who all the time was eating up his mutton.

47

Now in a person used to much command—
 To bid men come, and go, and come again—
 To see his orders done, too, out of hand—
 Whether the word was death, or but the
 chain—
 It may seem strange to find his manners bland;
 Yet such things are, which I cannot explain,
 Though doubtless he who can command
 himself
 Is good to govern—almost as a Cuelf.

48

Not that he was not sometimes rash or so,
 But never in his real and serious mood;
 5 Then calm, concentrated, and still, and slow,
 He lay coild like the boa in the wood;
 With him it never was a word and blow,
 His angry word once o'er, he shed no blood,
 But in his silence there was much to rue,
 10 And his *one* blow left little work for *two*.

49

He ask'd no further questions, and proceeded
 On to the house, but by a private way,
 15 So that the few who met him hardly heeded,
 So little they expected him that day;
 If love paternal in his bosom pleaded
 For Haidée's sake, is more than I can say,
 But certainly to one deem'd dead returning,
 20 This revel seem'd a curious mode of mourn-
 ing.

50

If all the dead could now return to life,
 25 (Which God forbid!) or some, or a great
 many,
 For instance, if a husband or his wife
 (Nuptial examples are as good as any),
 No doubt whate'er might be their former
 30 strife,
 The present weather would be much more
 rainy—
 Tears shed into the grave of the connexion
 Would share most probably its resurrection.

51

He enter'd in the house no more his home,
 A thing to human feelings the most trying,
 And harder for the heart to overcome,
 40 Perhaps, than even the mental pangs of
 dying;
 To find our hearthstone turn'd into a tomb,
 And round its once warm precincts palely
 lying
 45 The ashes of our hopes, is a deep grief,
 Beyond a single gentleman's belief.

52

He enter'd in the house—his home no more,
 50 For without hearts there is no home;—and
 felt
 The solitude of passing his own door

Without a welcome: *there* he long had
dwelt,
There his few peaceful days Time had swept
o'er,
There his warm bosom and keen eye would
melt
Over the innocence of that sweet child,
His only shrine of feelings undefiled.

53

He was a man of a strange temperament,
Of mild demeanour though of savage mood,
Moderate in all his habits, and content
With temperance in pleasure, as in food,
Quick to perceive, and strong to bear, and
meant
For something better, if not wholly good;
His country's wrongs and his despair to save
her
Had stung him from a slave to an enslaver.

54

The love of power, and rapid gain of gold,
The hardness by long habitude produced,
The dangerous life in which he had grown old, 25
The mercy he had granted oft abused,
The sights he was accusom'd to behold,
The wild seas, and wild men with whom he
cruised,
Had cost his enemies a long repentance,
And made him a good friend, but bad ac-
quaintance.

55

But something of the spirit of old Greece 35
Flash'd o'er his soul a few heroic rays,
Such as lit onward to the Golden Fleece
His predecessors in the Colchian days;
'T is true he had no ardent love for peace—
Alas! his country show'd no path to praise: 40
Hate to the world and war with every nation
He waged, in vengeance of her degradation.

56

Still o'er his mind the influence of the clime 45
Shed its Ionian elegance, which showed
Its power unconsciously full many a time,—
A taste seen in the choice of his abode,
A love of music and of scenes sublime,
A pleasure in the gentle stream that flowed 50
Past him in crystal, and a joy in flowers,
Bedewed his spirit in his calmer hours.

57

But whatsoe'er he had of love reposed
On that belovéd daughter; she had been
5 The only thing which kept his heart unclosed
Amidst the savage deeds he had done and
seen,
A lonely pure affection unopposed:
There wanted but the loss of this to wean
10 His feelings from all milk of human
kindness,
And turn him like the Cyclops mad with
blindness.

58

15 The cubless tigress in her jungle raging
Is dreadful to the shepherd and the flock;
The ocean when its yeasty war is waging
Is awful to the vessel near the rock;
20 But violent things will sooner bear assuaging,
Their fury being spent by its own shock,
Than the stern, single, deep, and wordless ire
Of a strong human heart, and in a sire.

59

It is a hard although a common case
To find our children running restive—they
In whom our brightest days we would retrace.
Our little selves re-formed in finer clay,
30 Just as old age is creeping on apace,
And clouds come o'er the sunset of our day.
They kindly leave us, though not quite alone,
But in good company—the gout or stone.

60

35 Yet a fine family is a fine thing
(Provided they don't come in after dinner).
'Tis beautiful to see a matron bring
Her children up (if nursing them don't
thin her);
40 Like cherubs round an altar-piece they cling
To the fire-side (a sight to touch a sinner).
A lady with her daughters or her nieces
Shine like a guinea and seven-shilling pieces.

61

Old Lambro passed unseen a private gate,
And stood within his hall at eventide;
Meantime the lady and her lover sate
50 At wassail in their beauty and their pride:
An ivory inlaid table spread with state
Before them, and fair slaves on every side;

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<p>Gems, gold, and silver, formed the service mostly, Mother of pearl and coral the less costly.</p>	<p>Though sages may pour out their wisdom's treasure, There is no sterner moralist than Pleasure.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">62</p> <p>The dinner made about a hundred dishes; Lamb and pistachio nuts—in short, all meats, And saffron soups, and sweetbreads; and the fishes Were of the finest that e'er flounced in nets, Drest to a Sybarite's most pampered wishes; The beverage was various sherbets Of raisin, orange, and pomegranate juice, Squeezed through the rind, which makes it best for use.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">66</p> <p>A beauty at the season's close grown hectic, A genius who has drunk himself to death, A rake turned Methodistic, or Eclectic (For that's the name they like to pray be- neath)— But most, an alderman struck apoplectic, Are things that really take away the breath,— And show that late hours, wine, and love are able To do not much less damage than the table.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">63</p> <p>These were ranged round, each in its crystal ewer, And fruits, and date-bread loaves closed the repast, And Mocha's berry, from Arabia pure, In small fine China cups, came in at last; Gold cups of filigree, made to secure The hand from burning, underneath them placed; Cloves, cinnamon, and saffron too were boiled Up with the coffee, which (I think) they spoiled.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">67</p> <p>Haidée and Juan carpeted their feet On crimson satin, bordered with pale blue; Their sofa occupied three parts complete Of the apartment—and appeared quite new; The velvet cushions (for a throne more meet) Were scarlet, from whose glowing center grew A sun embossed in gold, whose rays of tissue, Meridian-like, were seen all light to issue.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">64</p> <p>The hangings of the room were tapestry, made Of velvet panels, each of different hue, And thick with damask flowers of silk inlaid; And round them ran a yellow border too, The upper border, richly wrought, displayed, Embroidered delicately o'er with blue, Soft Persian sentences, in lilac letters, From poets, or the moralists their betters.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">68</p> <p>Crystal and marble, plate and porcelain, Had done their work of splendour; Indian mats And Persian carpets, which the heart bled to stain, Over the floors were spread; gazelles and cats, And dwarfs and blacks, and such like things that gain Their bread as ministers and favourites— (that's To say, by degradation)—mingled there As plentiful as in a court or fair.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">65</p> <p>These Oriental writings on the wall, Quite common in those countries, are a kind Of monitors adapted to recall, Like skulls at Memphian banquets, to the mind, The words which shook Belshazzar in his hall, And took his kingdom from him: you will find,</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">69</p> <p>There was no want of lofty mirrors, and The tables, most of ebony inlaid With mother of pearl or ivory, stood at hand, Or were of tortoise-shell or rare woods made, Fretted with gold or silver:—by command, The greater part of these were ready spread</p>

With viands and sherbets in ice—and wine—
Kept for all comers at all hours to dine.

70

Of all the dresses I select Haidée's:
She wore two jelicks—one was of pale
yellow;
Of azure, pink, and white was her chemise—
'Neath which her breast heaved like a little
billow,
With buttons form'd of pearls as large as peas,
All gold and crimson shone her jelick's
fellow,
And the striped white gauze baracan that
bound her,
Like fleecy clouds about the moon, flow'd
round her.

71

One large gold bracelet clasp'd each lovely 20
arm,
Lockless—so pliable from the pure gold
That the hand stretch'd and shut it without
harm,
The limb which it adorn'd its only mould;
So beautiful—its very shape would charm,
And clinging as if loath to lose its hold,
The purest ore enclosed the whitest skin
That e'er by precious metal was held in.

72

Around, as princess of her father's land,
A like gold bar above her instep roll'd
Announced her rank; twelve rings were on her
hand;
Her hair was starr'd with gems; her veil's
fine fold
Below her breast was fasten'd with a band
Of lavish pearls, whose worth could scarce
be told;
Her orange silk full Turkish trousers furl'd
About the prettiest ankle in the world.

73

Her hair's long auburn waves down to her 45
heel
Flow'd like an Alpine torrent which the sun
Dyes with his morning light,—and would con-
ceal
Her person if allow'd at large to run,
And still they seem'd resentfully to feel
The silken fillet's curb, and sought to shun

Their bonds whene'er some Zephyr caught
began
To offer his young pinion as her fan.

74

5 Round her she made an atmosphere of life,
The very air seem'd lighter from her eyes,
They were so soft and beautiful, and rife
With all we can imagine of the skies,
10 And pure as Psyche ere she grew a wife—
Too pure even for the purest human ties;
Her overpowering presence made you feel
It would not be idolatry to kneel.

75

15 Her eyelashes, though dark as night, were
tinged
(It is the country's custom), but in vain;
For those large black eyes were so blackly
fringed,
The glossy rebels mock'd the jetty stain,
And in their native beauty stood avenged:
Her nails were touch'd with henna; but
again
25 The power of art was turn'd to nothing, for
They could not look more rosy than before.

76

The henna should be deeply dyed to make
30 The skin relieved appear more fairly fair;
She had no need of this, day ne'er will break
On mountain tops more heavenly white
than her:
The eye might doubt if it were well awake,
35 She was so like a vision; I might err,
But Shakespeare also says, 'tis very silly
"To gild refinéd gold, or paint the lily."³

77

40 Juan had on a shawl of black and gold,
But a white baracan, and so transparent
The sparkling gems beneath you might be-
hold,
Like small stars through the milky way
apparent;
His turban, furled in many a graceful fold,
An emerald aigrette, with Haidée's hair in 't,
Surmounted, as its clasp, a glowing crescent,
Whose rays shone ever trembling, but
50 incessant.

³ *King John*, IV, 2, 11.

- 78
And now they were diverted by their suite,
Dwarfs, dancing girls, black eunuchs, and
a poet,
Which made their new establishment
complete;
The last was of great fame, and liked to
show it;
His verses rarely wanted their due feet;
And for his theme—he seldom sung below
it,
He being paid to satirize or flatter,
As the Psalm says, "inditing a good matter."⁴
- 79
He praised the present, and abused the past,
Reversing the good custom of old days,
An Eastern anti-jacobin at last
He turned, preferring pudding to no
praise—
For some few years his lot had been, o'ercast
By his seeming independent in his lays,
But now he sung the Sultan and the Pasha—
With truth like Southey, and with verse like 25
Crashaw.
- 80
He was a man who had seen many changes,
And always changed as true as any needle, 30
His polar star being one which rather ranges,
And not the fixed—he knew the way to
wheedle:
So vile he 'scaped the doom which oft
avenges;
And being fluent (save indeed when fee'd
ill),
He lied with such a fervor of intention—
There was no doubt he earned his laureate
pension.
- 81
But *he* had genius,—when a turncoat has it,
The *Vates irritabilis*⁵ takes care
That without notice few full moons shall pass 45
it;
Even good men like to make the public
stare:—
But to my subject—let me see—what was it?—
Oh!—the third canto—and the pretty pair— 50
—
- 82
Their loves, and feasts, and house, and dress,
and mode
Of living in their insular abode.
5
Their poet, a sad trimmer, but, no less
In company a very pleasant fellow,
Had been the favorite of full many a mess
Of men, and made them speeches when
half mellow;
And though his meaning they could rarely
guess,
Yet still they deigned to hiccup or to bellow
The glorious meed of popular applause,
15 Of which the first ne'er knows the second
cause.
- 83
But now being lifted into high society,
20 And having picked up several odds and ends
Of free thoughts in his travels for variety,
He deemed, being in a lone isle, among
friends,
That, without any danger of a riot, he
Might for long lying make himself amends,
And, singing as he sung in his warm youth,
Agree to a short armistice with truth.
- 84
He had travelled 'mongst the Arabs, Turks,
and Franks,
And knew the self-loves of the different na-
tions;
And having lived with people of all ranks,
35 Had something ready upon most occasions—
Which got him a few presents and some
thanks.
He varied with some skill his adulations;
To "do at Rome as Romans do," a piece
40 Of conduct was which *he* observed in Greece.
- 85
Thus, usually, when *he*⁶ was asked to sing,
He gave the different nations something
national;
'Twas all the same to him—"God save the
king,"
Or "*Ça ira*,"⁷ according to the fashion all:
His muse made increment of any thing,
50 —
- ⁴ Psalm 45:1. ⁵ irritable poet. ⁶ Southey.
⁷ French Revolutionary song

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It made Anacreon's song divine;
He served—but served Polycrates—
A tyrant; but our masters then
Were still, at least, our countrymen.

12

The tyrant of the Chersonese¹⁸
Was freedom's best and bravest friend;
That tyrant was Miltiades!
Oh! that the present hour would lend
Another despot of the kind!
Such chains as his were sure to bind.

13

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
On Suli's rock, and Parga's shore,¹⁹
Exists the remnant of a line
Such as the Dione mothers bore,
And there, perhaps, some seed is sown,
The Heracleidan blood²⁰ might own.

14

Trust not for freedom to the Franks—
They have a king who buys and sells:
In native swords, and native ranks,
The only hope of courage dwells,
But Turkish force, and Latin fraud,
Would break your shield, however broad.

15

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
Our virgins dance beneath the shade—
I see their glorious black eyes shine,
But gazing on each glowing maid,
My own the burning tear-drop laves,
To think such breasts must suckle slaves.

16

Place me on Sunium's²¹ marbled steep,
Where nothing, save the waves and I,
May hear our mutual murmurs sweep,
There, swan-like, let me sing and die:
A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine—
Dash down yon cup of Samian wine!

87

Thus sung, or would, or could, or should have
sung,
The modern Greek, in tolerable verse;
If not like Orpheus quite, when Greece was
young,
Yet in these times he might have done
much worse:
His strain displayed some feeling—right or

¹⁸ Gallipoli.
¹⁹ in Albania.

²⁰ blood of Hercules.
²¹ in Greece.

wrong;

And feeling, in a poet, is the source
Of others' feeling; but they are such liars,
And take all colors—like the hands of dyers.

5

88

But words are things, and a small drop of ink,
Falling like dew, upon a thought, produces
That which makes thousands, perhaps millions,
10 think;
'Tis strange, the shortest letter which man
uses
Instead of speech, may form a lasting link
Of ages; to what straits old Time reduces
15 Frail man, when paper—even a rag like this,
Survives himself, his tomb, and all that's his.

89

And when his bones are dust, his grave a
20 blank,
His station, generation, even his nation,
Become a thing, or nothing, save to rank
In chronological commemoration,
Some dull MS. Oblivion long has sank,
25 Or graven stone found in a barrack's station
In digging the foundation of a closet,
May turn his name up, as a rare deposit.

90

30 And Glory long has made the sages smile;
'Tis something, nothing, words, illusion,
wind—
Depending more upon the historian's style
Than on the name a person leaves behind:
35 Troy owes to Homer what whist owes to
Hoyle:
The present century was growing blind
To the great Marlborough's skill in giving
knocks,
40 Until his late Life by Archdeacon Cox.

91

Milton's the Prince of Poets—so we say;
A little heavy, but no less divine:
45 An independent being in his day—
Learned, pious, temperate in love and wine;
But, his life falling into Johnson's way,
We're told this great High Priest of all the
Nine
50 Was whipt at college—a harsh sire—odd
spouse,
For the first Mrs. Milton left his house.

92

All these are, *certainly*, entertaining facts,
 Like Shakespeare's stealing deer, Lord
 Bacon's bribes;
 Like Titus' youth, and Caesar's earliest acts;
 Like Burns (whom Doctor Currie well de-
 scribes);
 Like Cromwell's pranks;—but although Truth
 exacts
 These amiable descriptions from the scribes,
 As most essential to their hero's story,
 They do not much contribute to his glory.

93

All are not moralists, like Southey, when
 He prated to the world of "Pantisocracy;"
 Or Wordsworth unexcised, unhired, who then
 Seasoned his pedlar poems with Democ-
 racy;
 Or Coleridge, long before his flighty pen
 Let to the *Morning Post* its aristocracy;
 When he and Southey, following the same
 path,
 Espoused two partners (milliners of Bath).

94

Such names at present cut a convict figure,
 The very Botany Bay²² in moral geography;
 Their loyal treason, renegade rigor,
 Are good manure for their more bare biog-
 raphy.
 Wordsworth's last quarto, by the way, is bigger
 Than any since the birthday of typography;
 A drowsy frowsy poem, called the "*Excursion*,"
 Writ in a manner which is my aversion.

95

He there builds up a formidable dyke
 Between his own and others' intellect;
 But Wordsworth's poem, and his followers,
 like
 Joanna Southcote's²³ Shiloh, and her sect,
 Are things which in this century don't strike
 The public mind,—so few are the elect;
 And the new births of both their stale vir-
 ginities
 Have proved but dropsies, taken for divinities.

²² English convict colony in Australia.

²³ a crank who said she was to bear a new Mes-
 siah.

96

But let me to my story: I must own,
 If I have any fault, it is digression—
 5 Leaving my people to proceed alone,
 While I soliloquize beyond expression;
 But these are my addresses from the throne,
 Which put off business to the ensuing
 session:
 10 Forgetting each omission is a loss to
 The world, not quite so great as Ariosto.²⁴

97

I know that what our neighbors call "*lon-
 gueurs*"²⁵
 (We've not so good a *word*, but have the
thing,
 In that complete perfection which insures
 An epic from Bob Southey every spring),
 20 Form not the true temptation which allures
 The reader; but 'twould not be hard to bring
 Some fine examples of the *épopée*,²⁶
 To prove its grand ingredient is *ennui*.

98

We learn from Horace, "Homer sometimes
 sleeps;"
 We feel without him,—Wordsworth some-
 times wakes,—
 30 To show with what complacency he creeps,
 With his dear "*Waggoners*," around his
 lakes.
 He wishes for "a boat" to sail the deeps—
 Of Ocean?—No, of air; and then he makes
 35 Another outcry for "a little boat,"
 And drivels seas to set it well afloat.

99

If he must fain sweep o'er the ethereal plain,
 40 And Pegasus runs restive in his "*Waggon*,"
 Could he not beg the loan of Charles's Wain?²⁷
 Or pray Medea for a single dragon?
 Or if, too classic for his vulgar brain,
 He feared his neck to venture such a nag
 on,
 And he must needs mount nearer to the moon,
 Could not the blockhead ask for a balloon?

²⁴ author of *Orlando Furioso*.

²⁵ boredom.

²⁶ epic.

²⁷ Charles's Wagon, the constellation known as
 the "Dipper."

100

"Pedlars," and "Boats," and "Waggons!"
 Oh! ye shades
 Of Pope and Dryden, are we come to this?
 That trash of such sort not alone evades
 Contempt, but from the bathos' vast abyss
 Floats scumlike uppermost, and these Jack
 Cades
 Of sense and song above your graves may
 hiss—
 The "little boatman" and his "Peter Bell"
 Can sneer at him who drew "Achutophel!"²⁸

101

T' our tale.—The feast was over, the slaves
 gone,
 The dwarfs and dancing girls had all re-
 tired;
 The Arab lore and Poet's song were done,
 And every sound of revelry expired;
 The lady and her lover, left alone,
 The rosy flood of 'Twilight's sky admired,—
 Ave Maria! o'er the earth and sea,
 That heavenliest hour of Heaven is worth-
 est thee!

102

Ave Maria! blessed be the hour!
 The time, the clime, the spot, where I so oft
 Have felt that moment in its fullest power
 Sink o'er the earth so beautiful and soft,
 While swung the deep bell in the distant
 tower,
 Or the faint dying day-hymn stole aloft,
 And not a breath crept through the rosy air,
 And yet the forest leaves seemed stirred with
 prayer.

103

Ave Maria! 'tis the hour of prayer!
 Ave Maria! 'tis the hour of Love!
 Ave Maria! may our spirits dare
 Look up to thine and to thy Son's above!
 Ave Maria! oh that face so fair!
 Those downcast eyes beneath the Almighty
 Dove—
 What though 'tis but a pictured image?—
 strike—
 That painting is no idol,—'tis too like.

²⁸ Dryden's *Absalom and Achutophel*.

104

Some kinder casuists are pleased to say,
 In nameless print—that I have no devotion;
 5 But set those persons down with me to pray,
 And you shall see who has the properest
 notion
 Of getting into Heaven the shortest way;
 My altars are the mountains and the Ocean,
 10 Earth, air, stars,—all that springs from the
 great Whole,
 Who hath produced, and will receive the Soul.

105

15 Sweet Hour of Twilight!—in the solitude
 Of the pine forest, and the silent shore
 Which bounds Ravenna's immemorial wood,
 Rooted where once the Adrian wave flowed
 o'er,
 20 To where the last Caesarean fortress stood,
 Evergreen forest! which Boccaccio's lore
 And Dryden's lay made haunted ground to
 me,
 How have I loved the twilight hour and thee!

106

The shrill cicalas, people of the pine,
 Making their summer lives one ceaseless
 song,
 30 Were the sole echoes, save my steed's and
 mine,
 And Vesper bell's that rose the boughs
 along;
 The spectre huntsman²⁹ of Onesti's line,
 35 His hell-dogs, and their chase, and the fair
 throng
 Which learned from this example not to fly
 From a true lover,—shadowed my mind's eye.

107

40 Oh, Hesperus! thou bringest all good things—
 Home to the weary, to the hungry cheer,
 To the young bird the parent's brooding
 wings,
 45 The welcome stall to the o'erlabored steer;
 Whate'er of peace about our hearthstone
 clings,
 Whate'er our household gods protect of
 dear,
 50 Are gathered round us by thy look of rest;

²⁹ reference to story by Boccaccio.

Thou bring'st the child, too, to the mother's
breast.

108

Soft Hour! which wakes the wish and melts
the heart

Of those who sail the seas, on the first day
When they from their sweet friends are torn
apart;

Or fills with love the pilgrim on his way 10
As the far bell of Vesper makes him start,

Seeming to weep the dying day's decay;
Is this a fancy which our reason scorns?
Ahl surely Nothing dies but Something
mourns!

109

When Nero perished by the justest doom
Which ever the Destroyer yet destroyed,
Amidst the roar of liberated Rome, 20
Of nations freed, and the world overjoyed,
Some hands unseen strewed flowers upon his
tomb:

Perhaps the weakness of a heart not void
Of feeling for some kindness done, when 25
Power

Had left the wretch an uncorrupted hour.

110

But I'm digressing; what on earth has Nero, 30
Or any such like sovereign buffoons,
To do with the transactions of my hero,
More than such madmen's fellow man—
the moon's?

Sure my invention must be down at zero, 35
And I grown one of many "wooden spoons"
Of verse (the name with which we Cantabs³⁰
please
To dub the last of honors in degrees).

111

I feel this tediousness will never do—
'Tis being *too* epic, and I must cut down
(In copying) this long canto into two;

They'll never find it out, unless I own 45
The fact, excepting some experienced few;
And then as an improvement 'twill be
shown:

I'll prove that such the opinion of the critic is
From Aristotle *passim*.—See II 1017 1017.³¹ 50

The following cantos—the poem is sixteen cantos
in length—narrate the return of Haidée's father,
Lambro the pirate, who captures Juan and sells him
as a slave in Constantinople; the death of Haidée;
Juan's slavery under a sultana, from whom he
escapes, only to become involved in a Russian mili-
tary campaign; his arrival at the court of Catharine
the Great; his appointment as ambassador to Eng-
land; and finally, in the closing stages, his observa-
tions on English social life.

JOHN KEATS

Where Shelley and Byron were literally of the
15 aristocracy, Keats (1795–1821) was of the peo-
ple, respectable and successful innkeepers and
ostlers. From such origins came the poet who
lived fewer years than any other major figure
in English literature; whose death was, in its
20 prematurity, its frustration of high genius, per-
haps the greatest tragedy in English letters.
The influences on his life are relatively clear:
school at Enfield, and the all-important friend-
ship with Charles Couden Clarke, who intro-
duced Keats to Spenser and a love of poetry,
the death of his parents, leading to the guardi-
anship of the Abbots and the subsequent study
of the surgeon's art, and a turning away to
literature; Leigh Hunt's circle with its entree
to a new world; Fanny Brawne, the one true
love whom he never could possess, and the
gnawing evil within him, tuberculosis. The first
poems were harshly criticized, but it is sheer
romance to say that Keats's death was hastened
35 by the reviews. Keats was a fighter. The rush
to Italy and possible salvation came too late—
but not before another volume had been well
received, not before the poet had turned out
in a few months a dozen or more masterpieces.
40 He had nursed his brother Tom and watched
him die. George, another brother, was in Amer-
ica. Pride and lack of money had presumably
kept Keats from marrying Fanny. The short
tragic life was over.

In his sonnets and odes, in *Endymion* and
45 *Hyperion*, and in the longer narratives (par-
ticularly in *The Eve of St. Agnes*) John
Keats reached into another direction, a bit
apart from Byron's and Shelley's but, like
theirs, fundamentally "romantic." He was the
Romantic of rich color and imagery, of sensu-
ous language and impression, of thoughtful

³⁰ Cambridge students.

³¹ *The Poetics*.

pursuit of the truth beyond the object. In many ways he was the most well rounded of the whole group: bright, but not erratic; stable, but not dull; sensuous, but not sensual.

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

"Ah, what can ail thee, Knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge has withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.

"Ah, what can ail thee, Knight-at-arms,
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

"I see a lily on thy brow
With anguish moist and fever-dew,
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
Fast withereth too."

"I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful—a faery's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

"I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She looked at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

"I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
A faery's song.

"She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild and manna-dew;
And sure in language strange she said,
'I love thee true.'

"She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she gazed and sighed full sore,
And there I shut her wild, wild eyes—
With kisses four.

"And there she lulled me asleep,
And there I dreamed—ah! woe betide!—
The latest dream I ever dreamed
On the cold hill's side.

"I saw pale kings, and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried—'La belle Dame sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall!'

"I saw their starved lips in the gloam
With horrid warning gapèd wide,
And I awoke, and found me here
On the cold hill side.

"And this is why I sojourn here
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is withered from the lake,
And no birds sing."

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

1

St. Agnes' Eve¹—Ah, bitter chill it was!
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;
The hare limped trembling through the
frozen grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold:
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while
he told
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
Like pious incense from a censer old,
Seemed taking flight for heaven, without a
death,
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his
prayer he saith.

2

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man;
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his
knees,
And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees:
The sculptured dead, on each side, seem to
freeze,
Emprisoned in black, purgatorial rails:
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,²
He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and
mails.

3

Northward he turneth through a little door,

¹ January 20. Legend ran that a girl would dream of her future husband on the Eve.

² small chapels with sculptured (dumb) figures.

And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden
tongue
Flattered to tears this aged man and poor;
But no—already had his death-bell rung:
The joys of all his life were said and sung: 5
His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve:
Another way he went, and soon among
Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,
And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to
grieve. 10

4

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude
soft;
And so it chanced, for many a door was 15
wide,
From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft,
The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide:
The level chambers, ready with their pride,
Were glowing to receive a thousand guests: 20
The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,
Stared, where upon their heads the cornice
rests,
With hair blown back, and wings put cross-
wise on their breasts. 25

5

At length burst in the argent revelry,
With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
Numerous as shadows haunting faerily 30
The brain, new-stuffed, in youth, with tri-
umphs gay
Of old romance. These let us wish away,
And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,
Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry 35
day,
On love, and winged St. Agnes' saintly care,
As she had heard old dames full many times
declare.

6

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,
Young virgins might have visions of de-
light,
And soft adorings from their loves receive 45
Upon the honeyed middle of the night,
If ceremonies due they did aright;
As, supperless to bed they must retire,
And couch supine their beauties, lily white;
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require 50
Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they
desire.

7

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline:
The music, yearning like a God in pain,
She scarcely heard: her maiden eyes divine,
Fixed on the floor, saw many a sweeping
train
Pass by—she heeded not at all: in vain
Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,
And back retired; not cooled by high dis-
dain,
But she saw not: her heart was elsewhere;
She sighed for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of
the year.

8

She danced along with vague, regardless
eyes,
Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and
short:
The hallowed hour was near at hand: she
sighs
Amid the timbrels, and the thronged resort
Of whisperers in anger, or in sport;
'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,
Hoodwinked with faery fancy; all amorn,³
Save to St. Agnes and her lambs,⁴ unshorn.
And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

9

So, purposing each moment to retire,
She lingered still. Meantime, across the
moors,
Had come young Porphyro, with heart on
fire
For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
Buttressed from moonlight, stands he, and
implores
All saints to give him sight of Madeline,
But for one moment in the tedious hours,
That he might gaze and worship all unseen;
Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in sooth
such things have been.

10

He ventures in: let no buzzed whisper tell:
All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords

³ dead.

⁴ On the anniversary of St. Agnes' martyrdom
two lambs, later shorn, were prominent in the
service; nuns wove the wool into cloth.

Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel:
 For him, those chambers held barbarian
 hordes,
 Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
 Whose very dogs would execrations howl
 Against his lineage: not one breast affords
 Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,
 Save one old beldame, weak in body and in
 soul.

11

Ah, happy chance! the aged creature came,
 Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
 To where he stood, hid from the torch's
 flame,
 Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
 The sound of merriment and chorus bland:
 He startled her; but soon she knew his face,
 And grasped his fingers in her palsied hand,
 Saying, "Mercy, Porphyro! hie thee from
 this place;
 They are all here to-night, the whole blood-
 thirsty race!

12

"Get hence! get hence! there's dwarfish
 Hildebrand;
 He had a fever late, and in the fit
 He cursed thee and thine, both house and
 land:
 Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a
 whit
 More tame for his gray hairs—Alas me! flit!
 Flit like a ghost away."—"Ah, Gossip⁵ dear,
 We're safe enough; here in this armchair sit,
 And tell me how"—"Good Saints! not here,
 not here;
 Follow me, child, or else these stones will be
 thy bier."

13

He followed through a lowly arched way,
 Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume;
 And as she muttered "Well-a—well-a-day!"
 He found him in a little moonlight room,
 Pale, latticed, chill, and silent as a tomb.
 "Now tell me where is Madeline," said he,
 "O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom
 Which none but secret sisterhood may see,
 When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving,
 piously."

⁵ here means "good old friend."

14

"St. Agnes! Ah! it is St. Agnes' Eve—
 Yet men will murder upon holy days:
 Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,
 And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays,
 To venture so: it fills me with amaze
 To see thee, Porphyro!—St. Agnes' Eve!
 God's help! my lady fair the conjuror plays
 This very night: good angels her deceive!
 But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle⁶ time to
 grieve."

15

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,
 While Porphyro upon her face doth look,
 Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone
 Who keepeth closed a wondrous riddle-
 book,
 As spectacled she sits in chimney nook.
 But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she
 told
 His lady's purpose; and he scarce could
 brook
 Tears, at the thought of those enchantments
 cold,
 And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

16

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown
 rose,
 Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart
 Made purple riot: then doth he propose
 A stratagem, that makes the beldame start:
 "A cruel man and impious thou art:
 Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and
 dream
 Alone with her good angels, far apart
 From wicked men like thee. Go, go! I deem
 Thou canst not surely be the same that thou
 didst seem."

17

"I will not harm her, by all saints I swear,"
 Quoth Porphyro: "O may I ne'er find grace
 When my weak voice shall whisper its last
 prayer,
 If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
 Or look with ruffian passion in her face:
 Good Angela, believe me by these tears;
 Or I will, even in a moment's space,

⁶ much.

NARRATIVE POETRY · JOHN KEATS

Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,
And beard them, though they be more fanged
than wolves and bears."

18

"Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul?
A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard
thing,
Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight
toll;
Whose prayers for thee, each morn and
evening,
Were never missed." Thus plaining, doth
she bring
A gentler speech from burning Porphyro;
So woful, and of such deep sorrowing,
That Angela gives promise she will do
Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or
woe.

19

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide
Him in a closet, of such privacy
That he might see her beauty unespied,
And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,
While legioned faeries paced the coverlet,
And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.
Never on such a night have lovers met,
Since Merlin paid his Demon⁷ all the mon-
strous debt.

20

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the Dame:
"All cates⁸ and dainties shall be stored there
Quickly on this feast-night: by the tambor
frame⁹
Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to spare,
For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare
On such a catering trust my dizzy head.
Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel
in prayer
The while: Ah! thou must needs the lady
wed,
Or may I never leave my grave among the
dead."

21

So saying, she hobbled off with busy fear.

⁷ his legendary father.

⁸ delicacies.

⁹ embroidery frame.

The lover's endless minutes slowly passed;
The Dame returned, and whispered in his
ear

To follow her; with aged eyes aghast
From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,
Through many a dusky gallery, they gain
The maiden's chamber, silken, hushed and
chaste;
Where Porphyro took covert, pleased amain.
His poor guide hurried back with agues in her
brain.

22

Her faltering hand upon the balustrade,
Old Angela was feeling for the stair,
When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmed maid,
Rose, like a missioned spirit, unaware:
With silver tape's light, and pious care,
She turned, and down the aged gossip led
To a safe level matting. Now prepare,
Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed;
She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove
frayed and fled.

23

Out went the taper as she hurried in;
Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died:
She closed the door, she panted, all akin
To spirits of the air, and visions wide:
No uttered syllable, or, woe betidel
But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
Paining with eloquence her balmy side;
As though a tongueless nightingale should
swell
Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled in her
dell.

24

A casement high and triple-arched there was,
All garlanded with carven imag'ries
Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-
grass,
And diamonded with panes of quaint de-
vice,
Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
As are the tiger-moth's deep-damasked
wings;
And in the mist, 'mong thousand herald-
ries,
And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
A shielded scutcheon blushed with blood of
queens and kings.

25

Full on this casement shone the wintry
moon,
And threw warm gules¹⁰ on Madeline's fair breast,
As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon;
Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,
And on her silver cross soft amethyst, 10
And on her hair a glory, like a saint:
She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,
Save wings, for heaven.—Porphyro grew faint:
She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal 15
taint.

26

Anon his heart revives, her vespers done,
Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees; 20
Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one,
Loosens her fragrant bodice, by degrees
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees.
Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,
Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees, 25
In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
But dares not look behind, or all the charm
is fled.

27

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplexed she lay,
Until the popped warmth of sleep oppressed
Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued away;
Flown, like a thought, until the morrow- 35
day;
Blissfully havened both from joy and pain,
Clasped like a missal where swart Paynims
pray;¹¹
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain, 40
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud
again.

28

Stol'n to this paradise, and so entranced. 45
Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,
And listened to her breathing, if it chanced
To wake into a slumberous tenderness,

Which when he heard, that minute did he
bless,
And breathed himself: then from the closet
crept,
Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,
And over the hushed carpet, silent, stept,
And 'tween the curtains peeped, where lol—
how fast she slept.

29

Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon
Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
A table, and, half anguished, threw thereon
A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet.—
O for some drowsy Morphean anaulet!
The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarionet,
Allay his ears, though but in dying tone:—
The hall-door shuts again, and all the noise is
gone.

30

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
In blanched linen, smooth, and lavendered,
While he from forth the closet brought a
heap
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and
gourd;
With jellies soother¹² than the creamy curd,
And lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon;
Manna and dates, in argosy transferred
From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one,
From silken Samarcand to cedared Lebanon.

31

These delicacies he heaped with glowing
hand
On golden dishes and in baskets bright
Of wreathed silver: sumptuous they stand
In the retired quiet of the night,
Filling the chilly room with perfume light.—
"And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!
Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite:¹³
Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes' sake,
Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth
ache."

32

Thus whispering, his warm, unnerved arm
Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream

¹⁰ red (heraldry).¹¹ shut like a prayer book (safe and secret) in the company of non-believers.¹² smoother.¹³ hermit (figuratively)

By the dusk curtains:—'twas a midnight
charm
Impossible to melt as iced stream:
The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam;
Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies: 5
It seemed he never, never could redeem
From such a steadfast spell his lady's eyes;
So mused awhile, entailed in woofed phan-
tasies.

33

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute,—
Tumultuous,—and, in chords that tender-
est be,
He played an ancient ditty, long since mute, 15
In Provence called "La belle dame sans
mercy:"
Close to her ear touching the melody;—
Wherewith disturbed, she uttered a soft
moan: 20
He ceased—she panted quick—and sud-
denly
Her blue affrayed eyes wide open shone:
Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-
sculptured stone. 25

34

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep:
There was a painful change, that nigh ex- 30
pelled
The blisses of her dream so pure and deep
At which fair Madeline began to weep,
And moan forth witless words with many
a sigh; 35
While still her gaze on Porphyro would
keep;
Who knelt, with joined hands and piteous
eye,
Fearing to move or speak, she looked so 40
dreamingly.

35

"Ah, Porphyro!" said she, "but even now
Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear, 45
Made tuneable with every sweetest vow;
And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear:
How changed thou art! how pallid, chill,
and drear!
Give me that voice again, my Porphyro, 50
Those looks immortal, those complainings
dear!

Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,
For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where
to go."

36

Beyond a mortal man impassioned far
At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
Ethereal, flushed, and like a throbbing star
Seen mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose;
10 Into her dream he melted, as the rose
Blendeth its odor with the violet,—
Solution sweet: meantime the frost-wind
blows
Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet
15 Against the window-panes; St. Agnes' moon
hath set.

37

'Tis dark: quick pattereth the flaw-blown¹⁴
sleet:
"This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline!"
'Tis dark: the iced gusts still rave and beat:
"No dream, alas! alas! and woe is mine!
Porphyro will leave me here to fade and
pine.—
Cruell what traitor could thee hither bring?
I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,
Though thou forsakest a deceived thing;—
A dove forlorn and lost with sick unpruned
wing."

38

"My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely bride!
Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest?
Thy beauty's shield, heart-shaped and ver-
meil dyed?
Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
After so many hours of toil and quest,
A famished pilgrim,—saved by miracle.
Though I have found, I will not rob thy
nest
Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st well
To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

39

"Hark! 'tis an elfin storm from faery land,
Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed:
Arise—arise! the morning is at hand:—
The bloated wassailers will never heed:—
Let us away, my love, with happy speed;

¹⁴ wind-blown.

There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see,—
Drowned all in Rhenish and the sleepy
mead:

Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be,
For o'er the southern moors I have a home
for thee."

40

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
For there were sleeping dragons all around, 10
At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready
spears—

Down the wide stairs a darkling way they
found.—

In all the house was heard no human sound, 15
A chain-drooped lamp was flickering by
each door;

The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and
hound,

Fluttered in the besieging wind's uproar, 20

And the long carpets rose along the gusty
floor.

41

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide 25
hall;

Like phantoms to the iron porch they glide,
Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,
With a huge empty flagon by his side:

The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook 30
his hide,

But his sagacious eye an inmate owns:

By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide:—

The chains lie silent on the footworn
stones;—

The key turns, and the door upon its hinges
groans.

42

And they are gone: ay, ages long ago
These lovers fled away into the storm.

That night the Baron dreamt of many a
woe,

And all his warrior-guests, with shade and
form

Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,
Were long be-nightmared. Angela the old
Died palsy-twitched, with meagre face de-
form;

The Beadsman, after thousand aves told, 50
For aye unsought-for slept among his ashes
cold.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

*Evangeline, Hiawatha, and The Courtship of
Miles Standish are among America's most be-
loved poems, and Longfellow (1807-1882),
their author, is to many the greatest name in
traditional American literature. Like Bryant,
however, he always seems "safe" but hardly
moring; one plows through too much sweet-
ness and looks almost in vain for flashes of wit
or deep perception. Longfellow was educated
at Bowdoin, became a professor there after
travel abroad, and eventually taught at Harvard
for almost twenty years. The death of his
second wife (in a fire) stopped his writing for a
time. The poet otherwise had little to worry
about; through inheritance and large sales his
income grew steadily. Although popular in his
day and revered in the classroom down to the
present, Longfellow does not impress people
so much as he did; one regrets his avoidance of
most real issues; his second-hand Germanic
romanticism doesn't quite jell; with much good
material to work with, he seldom goes below
the surface. The future may judge him for the
unfamiliar sonnets in this volume or for his
sound service in helping America establish her
reputation abroad—and forget the harmless
tales which the public took to its bosom. (See
also I, 292.)*^{*}

THE WRECK OF THE HESPERUS¹

35 It was the schooner Hesperus,
That sailed the wintry sea,
And the skipper had taken his little daughter,
To bear him company.

40 Blue were her eyes as the fairy-flax,
Her cheeks like the dawn of day,
And her bosom white as the hawthorn buds,
That ope in the month of May.

45 The skipper he stood beside the helm,
His pipe was in his mouth,

^{*} The selections from Longfellow's poetry are
reprinted through kind permission of the publisher,
Houghton Mifflin Company.

¹ Based upon details of an actual wreck of a ship
by this name.

NARRATIVE POETRY · HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

And he watched how the veering flaw did blow The smoke now West, now South.	The lantern gleamed through the gleaming snow On his fixed and glassy eyes.
Then up and spake an old Sailòr, Had sailed to the Spanish Main, 'I pray thee, put into yonder port, For I fear a hurricane.	5 Then the maiden clasped her hands and prayed That savèd she might be; And she thought of Christ, who stilled the wave, On the Lake of Galilee.
'Last night, the moon had a golden ring, And to-night no moon we see!' The skipper, he blew a whiff from his pipe, And a scornful laugh laughed he.	10 And fast through the midnight dark and drear, Through the whistling sleet and snow, Like a sheeted ghost, the vessel swept Tow'rds the reef of Norman's Woe. ²
Colder and louder blew the wind, A gale from the Northeast, The snow fell hissing in the brine, And the billows frothed like yeast.	15 And ever the fitful gusts between A sound came from the land; It was the sound of the trampling surf On the rocks and the hard sea-sand.
Down came the storm, and smote amain The vessel in its strength; She shuddered and paused, like a frightened steed, Then leaped her cable's length.	20 The breakers were right beneath her bows, She drifted a dreary wreck, And a whooping billow swept the crew Like icicles from her deck.
'Come hither! come hither! my little daughtèr, 25 And do not tremble so; For I can weather the roughest gale That ever wind did blow.'	She struck where the white and fleecy waves Looked soft as carded wool, But the cruel rocks, they gored her side Like the horns of an angry bull.
He wrapped her warm in his seaman's coat Against the stinging blast; He cut a rope from a broken spar, And bound her to the mast.	30 Her rattling shrouds, all sheathed in ice, With the masts went by the board; Like a vessel of glass, she stove and sank, Ho! ho! the breakers roared!
'O father! I hear the church-bells ring. Oh say, what may it be?' 'T is a fog-bell on a rock-bound coast!— And he steered for the open sea.	35 At daybreak, on the bleak sea-beach, A fisherman stood aghast, To see the form of a maiden fair, Lashed close to a drifting mast.
'O father! I hear the sound of guns, Oh say, what may it be?' 'Some ship in distress, that cannot live In such an angry sea!'	40 The salt sea was frozen on her breast, The salt tears in her eyes; And he saw her hair, like the brown seaweed, On the billows fall and rise.
'O father! I see a gleaming light, Oh say, what may it be?' But the father answered never a word, A frozen corpse was he.	45 Such was the wreck of the Hesperus, In the midnight and the snow! Christ save us all from a death like this, On the reef of Norman's Woe!
Lashed to the helm, all stiff and stark, With his face turned to the skies,	50 ————— ² near Gloucester.

THE SKELETON IN ARMOR

Speak! speak! thou fearful guest!
 Who, with thy hollow breast
 Still in rude armor drest, 5
 Comest to daunt me!
 Wrapt not in Eastern balms,
 But with thy fleshless palms
 Stretched, as if asking alms,
 Why dost thou haunt me? 10

Then, from those cavernous eyes
 Pale flashes seemed to rise,
 As when the Northern skies
 Gleam in December, 15
 And, like the water's flow
 Under December's snow,
 Came a dull voice of woe
 From the heart's chamber. 20

"I was a Viking old!
 My deeds, though manifold,
 No Skald in song has told,
 No Saga taught thee!
 Take heed, that in thy verse 25
 Thou dost the tale rehearse,
 Else dread a dead man's curse;
 For this I sought thee.

"Far in the Northern Land, 30
 By the wild Baltic's strand,
 I, with my childish hand,
 Tamed the gerfalcon;
 And, with my skates fast-bound,
 Skimmed the half-frozen Sound, 35
 That the poor whimpering hound
 Trembled to walk on.

"Oft to his frozen lair
 Tracked I the grisly bear, 40
 While from my path the hare
 Fled like a shadow;
 Oft through the forest dark
 Followed the were-wolf's bark,
 Until the soaring lark 45
 Sang from the meadow.

"But when I older grew,
 Joining a corsair's crew,
 O'er the dark sea I flew 50
 With the marauders.

Wild was the life we led,
 Many the souls that sped,
 Many the hearts that bled,
 By our stern orders.

"Many a wassail-bout
 Wore the long Winter out;
 Often our midnight shout
 Set the cocks crowing,
 As we the Berserk's tale
 Measured in cups of ale,
 Draining the oaken pail,
 Filled to o'erflowing.

"Once as I told in glee
 Tales of the stormy sea,
 Soft eyes did gaze on me,
 Burning yet tender,
 And as the white stars shine
 On the dark Norway pine,
 On that dark heart of mine
 Fell their soft splendor.

"I wooed the blue-eyed maid,
 Yielding, yet half afraid,
 And in the forest's shade
 Our vows were plighted.
 Under its loosened vest
 Fluttered her little breast,
 Like birds within their nest
 By the hawk frightened.

"Bright in her father's hall
 Shields gleamed upon the wall,
 Loud sang the minstrels all,
 Chanting his glory,
 When of old Hildebrand
 I asked his daughter's hand,
 Mute did the minstrels stand
 To hear my story.

"While the brown ale he quaffed,
 Loud then the champion laughed,
 And as the wind-gusts waft
 The sea-foam brightly,
 So the loud laugh of scorn
 Out of those lips unshorn,
 From the deep drinking-horn
 Blew the foam lightly.

"She was a Prince's child,

I but a Viking wild,
And though she blushed and smiled,
I was discarded!
Should not the dove so white
Follow the sea-mew's flight?
Why did they leave that night
Her nest unguarded?

"Scarce had I put to sea,
Bearing the maid with me,
Fairest of all was she
Among the Norsemen!
When on the white sea-strand,
Waving his armed hand,
Saw we old Hildebrand,
With twenty horsemen.

"Then launched they to the blast,
Bent like a reed each mast,
Yet we were gaining fast,
When the wind failed us;
And with a sudden flaw
Came round the gusty Skaw,
So that our foe we saw
Laugh as he hailed us.

"And as to catch the gale
Round veered the flapping sail,
'Death!' was the helmsman's hail,
'Death without quarter!
Midships with iron keel
Struck we her ribs of steel;
Down her black hulk did reel
Through the black water!

"As with his wings aslant,
Sails the fierce cormorant,
Seeking some rocky haunt,
With his prey laden,—
So toward the open main,
Beating to sea again,
Through the wild hurricane,
Bore I the maiden.

"Three weeks we westward bore,
And when the storm was o'er,
Cloud-like we saw the shore
Stretching to leeward;
There for my lady's bower
Built I the lofty tower,
Which, to this very hour,
Stands looking seaward.

"There lived we many years;
Time dried the maiden's tears;
She had forgot her fears,
She was a mother;
Death closed her mild blue eyes;
Under that tower she lies;
Ne'er shall the sun arise
On such another!

"Still grew my bosom then,
Still as a stagnant fen!
Hateful to me were men,
The sunlight hatefull
In the vast forest here,
Clad in my warlike gear,
Fell I upon my spear,
Oh, death was gratefull!

"Thus, seamed with many scars,
Bursting these prison bars
Up to its native stars
My soul ascended!
There from the flowing bowl
Deep drinks the warrior's soul,
Skoal! to the Northland! *skaal!*"
Thus the tale ended.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

- 30 *Whittier (1807–1892) was not so fortunate in his New England background as were Emerson and Longfellow; he had little formal education. However, he was at home in books and was*
35 *sustained by his Quaker training. He wrote for country journals and had editorial experience—a pattern as familiar for the early American group as the Cambridge-diplomatic mission-court pattern was for young English Cavaliers.*
40 *Whittier served in the legislature and was connected with the early Liberty party. As a devoted abolitionist he often used his pen to serve the cause of emancipation. His poetry is of the idyllic New England country scene and,*
45 *generally speaking, has the solid virtues of morality and sentiment peculiar to his contemporaries. There is little that approaches great art in Whittier's work, but it had strong local appeal in its day. (See also I, 295.)**

50 * The selection from Whittier's poetry is reprinted by kind permission of the publisher, Houghton Mifflin Company.

SKIPPER IRESON'S RIDE¹

Of all the rides since the birth of time,
Told in story or sung in rhyme,—
On Apuleius's Golden Ass,
Or one-eyed Calender's horse of brass,
Witch astride of a human back,
Islam's prophet on Al-Borák,—
The strangest ride that ever was sped
Was Ireson's, out from Marblehead!
Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

Body of turkey, head of owl,
Wings a-droop like a rained-on fowl,
Feathered and ruffled in every part,
Skipper Ireson stood in the cart.
Scores of women, old and young,
Strong of muscle, and glib of tongue,
Pushed and pulled up the rocky lane,
Shouting and singing the shrill refrain:
'Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
By the women o' Morble'ead!

Wrinkled scolds with hands on hips,
Girls in bloom of cheek and lips,
Wild-eyed, free-limbed, such as chase
Bacchus round some antique vase,
Brief of skirt, with ankles bare,
Loose of kerchief and loose of hair,
With conch-shells blowing and fish-horns'
twang,
Over and over the Mænads sang:
'Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
By the women o' Morble'ead!

Small pity for him!—He sailed away
From a leaking ship in Chaleur Bay,—
Sailed away from a sinking wreck,
With his own town's-people on her deck!
'Lay by! lay by!' they called to him.
Back he answered, 'Sink or swim!
Brag of your catch of fish again!
And off he sailed through the fog and rain!
Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,

¹ Whittier based this ballad on a story he heard in school. He began it in 1828, published it in 1857. He later learned that Ireson was not guilty of abandoning ship.

Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

Fathoms deep in dark Chaleur
5 That wreck shall lie forevermore.
Mother and sister, wife and maid,
Looked from the rocks of Marblehead
Over the moaning and rainy sea,—
Looked for the coming that might not be!
10 What did the winds and the sea-birds say
Of the cruel captain who sailed away?—
Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!
15 Through the street, on either side,
Up flew windows, doors swung wide;
Sharp-tongued spinsters, old wives gray,
Treble lent the fish-horn's bray.
20 Sea-worn grandsires, cripple-bound,
Hulks of old sailors run aground,
Shook head, and fist, and hat, and cane,
And cracked with curses the hoarse refrain:
'Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
25 'Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
By the women o' Morble'ead!

Sweetly along the Salein road
Bloom of orchard and lilac showed.
30 Little the wicked skipper knew
Of the fields so green and the sky so blue.
Riding there in his sorry trim,
Like an Indian idol glum and grim,
Scarcely he seemed the sound to hear
35 Of voices shouting, far and near:
'Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
'Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
By the women o' Morble'ead!

40 'Hear me, neighbors!' at last he cried,—
'What to me is this noisy ride?
What is the shame that clothes the skin
To the nameless horror that lives within?
Waking or sleeping, I see a wreck,
45 And hear a cry from a reeling deck!
Hate me and curse me,—I only dread
The hand of God and the face of the dead!
Said old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

Then the wife of the skipper lost at sea

Said, 'God has touched him! why should we!'
 Said an old wife mourning her only son,
 'Cut the rogue's tether and let him run!'
 So with soft relentings and rude excuse,
 Half scorn, half pity, they cut him loose, 5
 And gave him a cloak to hide him in,
 And left him alone with his shame and sin.
 Poor Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
 Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
 By the women of Marblehead! 10

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

*Tennyson (1809–1892) had early impetus toward literature from guided reading in the family books. After leaving Cambridge he rusticated, as Milton had done, and wrote verses which were not well received. He experienced grief over the death of his friend Hallam (see In Memoriam); he had financial difficulties; he found himself holding the family together after his father, the rector, died. Something came of this hard growth. The Poems of 1842 and the later Princess set him on the road; from then on he won everything a poet might hope for—money, wife, laureateship, peerage, critical and popular acclaim. Tennyson is an artist, a painter of pretty Arthurian pictures, a stanch moralist in a moral age, a musician with an ear for melody and hypnotic sound-effects. He dodges many of the deeper questions in a time crowded with questions, avoids unpleasant realities, remains (like Spenser) strangely virginal. And yet his best lyrics and Greek or Arthurian idylls continue to be effective, probably because their author is such a sweet singer. If ever a major poet fitted his period, that man was Tennyson. (For lyric verse see I, 297.)** 25 30 35

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

PART I

On either side the river lie
 Long fields of barley and of rye, 45
 That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
 And thro' the field the road runs by
 To many-towered Camelot;¹

* The following selections are from Tennyson's *Poetical Works*. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers. 50

¹ King Arthur's city in Cornwall.

And up and down the people go,
 Gazing where the lilies blow
 Round an island there below,
 The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
 Little breezes dusk and shiver
 Thro' the wave that runs for ever
 By the island in the river
 Flowing down to Camelot.
 Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
 Overlook a space of flowers,
 And the silent isle imbowers
 The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veiled,
 Slide the heavy barges trailed
 By slow horses; and unhailed
 The shallop flitteth silken-sailed
 Skimming down to Camelot:
 But who hath seen her wave her hand?
 Or at the casement seen her stand?
 Or is she known in all the land,
 The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
 In among the bearded barley,
 Hear a song that echoes cheerly
 From the river winding clearly,
 Down to towered Camelot;
 And by the moon the reaper weary,
 Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
 Listening, whispers "'Tis the fairy
 Lady of Shalott."

PART II

There she weaves by night and day
 A magic web with colors gay.
 She has heard a whisper say,
 A curse is on her if she stay
 To look down to Camelot.
 She knows not what the curse may be,
 And so she weaveth steadily,
 And little other care hath she,
 The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
 That hangs before her all the year,
 Shadows of the world appear.
 There she sees the highway near
 Winding down to Camelot;
 There the river eddy whirls,

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON · NARRATIVE POETRY

And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-haired page in crimson clad,
Goes by to towered Camelot;
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, went to Camelot;
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed:
"I am half-sick of shadows," said
The Lady of Shalott.

PART III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A redcross knight for ever kneeled
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glittered free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot;
And from his blazoned baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armor rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewelled shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burned like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot;
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

5 His broad clear brow in sunlight glowed;
On burnished hooves his war-horse trode,
From underneath his helmet flowed
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
10 From the bank and from the river
He flashed into the crystal mirror,
"Tirra lirra," by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

15 She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She looked down to Camelot.
20 Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror cracked from side to side;
"The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott.

25

PART IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
30 Heavily the low sky raining
Over towered Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
35 *The Lady of Shalott.*

And down the river's dim expanse—
Like some bold seer in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
40 With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
45 *The Lady of Shalott.*

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
50 Thro' the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot;
And as the beat-head wound along

NARRATIVE POETRY · ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darkened wholly,
Turned to towered Camelot;
For ere she reached upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
A corse between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they crossed themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, "She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott."

ULYSSES

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Matched with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know
not me.

I cannot rest from travel. I will drink
Life to the lees. All times I have enjoyed
Greatly, have suffered greatly, both with those 45
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and
when

Through scudding drifts the rainy Hyades¹
Vexed the dim sea. I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart

Much have I seen and known; cities of men,
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honored of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
5 Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met.
Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough
Gleams that untraveled world, whose margin
fades

10 Forever and forever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnished, not to shine in use!
As though to breathe were life. Life piled on
life

15 Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains. But every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
20 And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the scepter and the isle—
25 Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfill
This labor, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and through soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centered in the sphere
30 Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine
There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail;
35 There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toiled, and wrought, and
thought with me—

That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
40 Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are
old;

Old age hath yet his honor and his toil;
Death closes all. But something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks;
The long day wanes; the slow moon climbs;
the deep

Moans round with many voices. Come, my
50 friends,

'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite

¹ group of stars in constellation Taurus.

The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,²
And see the great Achilles,³ whom we knew.
Though much is taken, much abides; and
though
We are not now that strength which in old
days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are,
we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in
will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

MORTE D'ARTHUR

So all day long the noise of battle rolled
Among the mountains by the winter sea,
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,
Had fallen in Lyonesse about their lord,
King Arthur; then, because his wound was
deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
On one side lay the Ocean and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.
Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made,—
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again
To rule once more—but let what will be, be,
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,

Which was my pride, for thou rememberest
how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword—and how I rowed across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king;
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known.
But now delay not; take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere;
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me
word."

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm.
A little thing may harm a wounded man.
Yet I thy best¹ will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee
word."

So saying, from the ruined shrine he stept
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping
down

By zigzag paths, and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.
There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran
forth

And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt;
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw; but at the last it seemed
Better to leave Excalibur concealed
There in the many-knotted waterflags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded king.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"Hast thou performed my mission which I
gave?
What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag."

² Isles of the Blest, where god-favored elite went
after death.

³ greatest warrior of the Greeks, slayer of Hector.

¹ bidding.

NARRATIVE POETRY · ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:
 "Thou hast betrayed thy nature and thy name,
 Not rendering true answer, as beseemed
 Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight;
 For surer sign had followed, either hand,
 Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
 This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
 Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again
 As thou art lief² and dear, and do the thing
 I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me
 word."
 Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
 Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
 Counting the dewy pebbles, fixed in thought; 15
 But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
 How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
 His palms together, and he cried aloud:
 "And if indeed I cast the brand away,
 Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
 Should thus be lost forever from the earth,
 Which might have pleased the eyes of many
 men.
 What good should follow this, if this were
 done?
 What harm, undone? deep harm to disobey,
 Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
 Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
 An act unprofitable, against himself?
 The King is sick, and knows not what he does. 30
 What record, or what relic of my lord
 Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
 And rumors of a doubt? but were this kept,
 Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
 Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
 Saying, 'King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
 Wrought by the lonely maiden of the lake;
 Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
 Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'
 So might some old man speak in the aftertime 40
 To all the people, winning reverence;
 But now much honor and much fame were
 lost."
 So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,³
 And hid Excalibur the second time,
 And so strode back slow to the wounded King.
 Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:
 "What is it thou hast seen? or what hast
 heard?"
 And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere: 50

"I heard the water lapping on the crag,
 And the long ripple washing in the reeds."
 To whom replied King Arthur, much in
 wrath:
 5 "Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
 Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
 Authority forgets a dying king,
 Laid widowed of the power in his eye
 That bowed the will. I see thee what thou art,
 For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,
 In whom should meet the offices of all,
 Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;
 Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
 Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
 15 Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
 And the third time may prosper, get thee
 hence;
 But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
 I will arise and slay thee with my hands."
 20 Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
 And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
 Among the bulrush-beds, and clutched the
 sword,
 And strongly wheeled and threw it. The great
 25 brand
 Made lightnings in the splendor of the moon,
 And flashing round and round, and whirled in
 an arch,
 Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
 30 Seen where the moving isles⁴ of winter shock
 By night, with noises of the northern sea.
 So flashed and fell the brand Excalibur;
 But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
 35 And caught him by the hilt, and brandished
 him
 Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
 And lightly went the other to the King.
 Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker
 40 breath:
 "Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
 Speak out; what is it thou hast heard, or seen?"
 And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
 "Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
 45 Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
 Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
 Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,
 So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
 Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling
 50 him;

² beloved.

³ notion.

⁴ icebergs.

But when I looked again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandished
him

Three times, and drew him under in the mere."
And answer made King Arthur, breathing
hard:

"My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were
gone.

Make broad thy shoulders to receive my
weight,

And bear me to the margin; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere

Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not
words,

Then took with care, and kneeling on one
knee,

O'er both his shoulders drew the languid
hands,

And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walked, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sighed the
King,

Muttering and murmuring at his ear, "Quick,
quick!

I fear it is too late, and I shall die."
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to
ridge,

Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he
walked,

Larger than human on the frozen hills.

He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him like a
goad.

Dry clashed his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clanged round him, as he
based

His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky
barge,

Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were ware

That all the decks were dense with stately
forms

Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by
these

5 Three Queens with crowns of gold—and from
them rose

A cry that shivered to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony

Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills

10 All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmured Arthur, "Place me in the
barge,"

And to the barge they came. There those three
queens

15 Put forth their hands, and took the king, and
wept.

But she, that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,

20 And loosed the shattered casque, and chafed
his hands,

And called him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against his brow

Striped with dark blood; for all his face was
white

25 And colorless, and like the withered moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;

And all his greaves and cuisses dashed with
drops

30 Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls—
That made his forehead like a rising sun

High from the dais-throne—were parched
with dust;

Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,

35 Mixed with the knightly growth that fringed
his lips.

So like a shattered column lay the king;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,

From spur to plume a star of tournament,

40 Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere:

"Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?

Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?

45 For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance,

And every chance brought out a noble knight.
Such times have been not since the light that

led
50 The holy Elders⁵ with the gift of myrrh.

⁵ the Magi.

But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world;
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other minds." 5

And slowly answered Arthur from the barge:
"The old order changeth, yielding place to
new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the 10
world.

Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have
done

May He within himself make pure! but thou, 15
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by
prayer

Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy
voice

Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them 25
friend?

For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of
God.

But now farewell. I am going a long way 30
With these thou seest—if indeed I go—
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)
To the island-valley of Avilion;

Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies 35
Deep-meadowed, happy, fair with orchard
lawns

And bowery hollows crowned with summer
sea,

Where I will heal me of my grievous wound." 40

So said he, and the barge with oar and
sail

Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted
swan

That, fluting a wild carol ere her death, 45
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the
flood

With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull

Looked one black dot against the verge of 50
dawn,

And on the mere the wailing died away.

THE REVENGE

A BALLAD OF THE FLEET¹

1

At Flores in the Azores Sir Richard Grenville
lay,

And a pinnace, like a fluttered bird, came
flying from far away:

"Spanish ships of war at seal we have sighted
fifty-three!"

Then sware Lord Thomas Howard: "'Fore
God I am no coward;

But I cannot meet them here, for my ships
are out of gear,

And the half my men are sick. I must fly, but
follow quick.

We are six ships of the line; can we fight with
fifty-three?"

2

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville: "I know
you are no coward;

You fly them for a moment to fight with them
again.

But I've ninety men and more that are lying
sick ashore.

I should count myself the coward if I left
them, my Lord Howard,

30 To these Inquisition dogs and the devildoms
of Spain."

3

So Lord Howard passed away with five ships
of war that day,

35 Till he melted like a cloud in the silent sum-
mer heaven;

But Sir Richard bore in hand all his sick men
from the land

Very carefully and slow,
Men of Bideford in Devon,

And we laid them on the ballast down below;
For we brought them all aboard,

And they blessed him in their pain, that they
were not left to Spain,

To the thumb-screw and the stake, for the
glory of the Lord.

4

He had only a hundred seamen to work the

¹ Based on Raleigh's account of the actual en-
gagement in 1591.

ship and to fight,
And he sailed away from Flores till the Span-
iard came in sight,
With his huge sea-castles heaving upon the
weather bow.
"Shall we fight or shall we fly?
Good Sir Richard, tell us now,
For to fight is but to die!
There'll be little of us left by the time this
sun be set."
And Sir Richard said again: "We be all good
English men.
Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the children
of the devil,
For I never turned my back upon Don or 15
devil yet."

5

Sir Richard spoke and he laughed, and we
roared a hurrah, and so
The little *Revenge* ran on sheer into the heart
of the foe,
With her hundred fighters on deck, and her
ninety sick below;
For half of their fleet to the right and half to 25
the left were seen,
And the little *Revenge* ran on through the
long sea-lane between.

6

Thousands of their soldiers looked down from
their decks and laughed,
Thousands of their seamen made mock at the
mad little craft
Running on and on, till delayed 35
By their mountain-like *San Philip* that, of
fifteen hundred tons,
And up-shadowing high above us with her
yawning tiers of guns,
Took the breath from our sails, and we 40
stayed.

7

And while now the great *San Philip* hung
above us like a cloud
Whence the thunderbolt will fall
Long and loud,
Four galleons drew away
From the Spanish fleet that day,
And two upon the larboard and two upon the 50
starboard lay,
And the battle-thunder broke from them all.

8

But anon the great *San Philip*, she bethought
herself and went,
5 Having that within her womb that had left
her ill content;
And the rest they came aboard us, and they
fought us hand to hand,
For a dozen times they came with their pikes
and musketeers, 10
And a dozen times we shook 'em off as a dog
that shakes his ears
When he leaps from the water to the land.

9

And the sun went down, and the stars came
out far over the summer sea,
But never a moment ceased the fight of the
one and the fifty-three.
20 Ship after ship, the whole night long, their
high-built galleons came,
Ship after ship, the whole night long, with
her battle-thunder and flame;
Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew
back with her dead and her shame.
25 For some were sunk and many were shattered,
and so could fight us no more—
God of battles, was ever a battle like this in
the world before?

10

For he said, "Fight on! fight on!"
Though his vessel was all but a wreck;
And it chanced that, when half of the short
summer night was gone, 35
With a grisly wound to be dressed he had left
the deck,
But a bullet struck him that was dressing it
suddenly dead,
And himself he was wounded again in the side
and the head,
And he said, "Fight on! fight on!"

11

And the night went down, and the sun smiled
out far over the summer sea,
And the Spanish fleet with broken sides lay
round us all in a ring;
But they dared not touch us again, for they
feared that we still could sting,
So they watched what the end would be.
And we had not fought them in vain,

But in perilous plight were we,
 Seeing forty of our poor hundred were slain,
 And half of the rest of us maimed for life
 In the crash of the cannonades and the des-
 perate strife;
 And the sick men down in the hold were most
 of them stark and cold,
 And the pikes were all broken or bent, and
 the powder was all of it spent;
 And the masts and the rigging were lying 10
 over the side;
 But Sir Richard cried in his English pride:
 "We have fought such a fight for a day and a
 night
 As may never be fought again!
 We have won great glory, my men!
 And a day less or more
 At sea or ashore,
 We die—does it matter when?
 Sink me the ship, Master Gunner—sink her, 20
 split her in twain!
 Fall into the hands of God, not into the hands
 of Spain!"

12

And the gunner said, "Ay, ay," but the seamen
 made reply:
 "We have children, we have wives,
 And the Lord hath spared our lives.
 We will make the Spaniard promise, if we
 yield, to let us go;
 We shall live to fight again and to strike
 another blow."
 And the lion there lay dying, and they yielded
 to the foe.

13

And the stately Spanish men to their flagship
 bore him then,
 Where they laid him by the mast, old Sir
 Richard caught at last,
 And they praised him to his face with their
 courtly foreign grace;
 But he rose upon their decks, and he
 cried:
 "I have fought for Queen and Faith like a
 valiant man and true;
 I have only done my duty as a man is bound
 to do.
 With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard Grenville
 die!"
 And he fell upon their decks, and he died.

14

And they stared at the dead that had been
 so valiant and true,
 5 And had holden the power and glory of Spain
 so cheap
 That he dared her with one little ship and his
 English few;
 Was he devil or man? He was devil for aught
 they knew,
 10 But they sank his body with honor down into
 the deep,
 And they manned the *Revenge* with a swarth-
 ier alien crew,
 15 And away she sailed with her loss and longed
 for her own;
 When a wind from the lands they had ruined
 awoke from sleep,
 And the water began to heave and the weather
 to moan,
 20 And or ever that evening ended a great gale
 blew,
 And a wave like the wave that is raised by an
 earthquake grew,
 25 Till it smote on their hulls and their sails and
 their masts and their flags,
 And the whole sea plunged and fell on the
 shot-shattered navy of Spain,
 And the little *Revenge* herself went down by
 30 the island crags
 To be lost evermore in the main.

ROBERT BROWNING

35 *Like his famous contemporary, Tennyson, Browning (1812–1889) had a literary start in life—in his father's library. Like Tennyson, he knew the Romantics and early felt their influence. Travel and tutors gave him fundamentals to build on. Eventually Browning produced a great quantity of verse, much of it first-rank, some of it obscure, some of it (the later work) unexciting. His reputation is almost unassailable at the present time; students coming to Browning after difficulties with earlier authors relax with understanding and enjoyment as they read the best lyrics, the half-dozen outstanding dramatic monologues, The Ring and the Book; something in Browning seems modern to them. His love for Elizabeth Barrett has been exploited on the stage, but it takes*

more than a literary love duet to excite undergraduates. They generally like his Renaissance backgrounds, or his stream-of-consciousness technique in the monologues, or his philosophy of work and noble risks, or his ability to spin a yarn, or his psychological approach to truth—or some combination of these. One answer for Browning's popularity, then, is that he has so many facets: he is poet, thinker, psychologist. And, of course, his language is modern. Finally, his living men and women are dramatically real, whereas much earlier literature too often is remote or merely pretty. (See also I, 304.)*

MY LAST DUCHESS

FERRARA

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's hand
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Frà Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they
durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps
Frà Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat:" such
stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart—how shall I say?—too soon made
glad,
Too easily impressed: she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went every-
where.
Sir, 'twas all one! My favor at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,

* The selections which follow are from Browning's *Poetical Works*. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

¹ imaginary painter.

The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace—all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving
speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men,—good!
but thanked
Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech—(which I have not)—to make your
will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark"—and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
—E'en then would be some stooping; and I
choose
Never to stoop. Oh sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed with-
out
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave com-
mands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she
stands
As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck² cast in bronze for
me!

SOLILOQUY OF THE SPANISH
CLOISTER

Gr-r—there go, my heart's abhorrence!
Water your damned flower-pots, do!
If hate killed men, Brother Lawrence,
God's blood, would not mine kill you!
What? your myrtle-bush wants trimming?
Oh, that rose has prior claims—
Needs its leaden vase filled brimming?
Hell dry you up with its flames!

² imaginary sculptor.

At the meal we sit together:
*Salve tibi!*¹ I must hear
 Wise talk of the kind of weather,
 Sort of season, time of year:
Not a plenteous cork-crop: scarcely
Dare we hope oak-galls, I doubt:
What's the Latin name for "parsley"?
 What's the Greek name for Swine's Snout?

Whew! We'll have our platter burnished,
 Laid with care on our own shelf!
 With a fire-new spoon we're furnished,
 And a goblet for ourself,
 Rinsed like something sacrificial
 Ere 'tis fit to touch our chaps—
 Marked with L for our initial!
 (He-hel! There his lily snaps!)

Saint, forsooth! While brown Dolores
 Squats outside the Convent bank
 With Sanchicha, telling stories,
 Steeping tresses in the tank,
 Blue-black, lustrous, thick like horsechairs,
 —Can't I see his dead eye glow,
 Bright as 'twere a Barbary corsair's?
 (That is, if he'd let it show!)

When he finishes refection,
 Knife and fork he never lays
 Cross-wise, to my recollection,
 As do I, in Jesu's praise.
 I the Trinity illustrate,
 Drinking watered orange-pulp—
 In three sips the Arian² frustrate;
 While he drains his at one gulp.

Oh, those melons! If he's able
 We're to have a feast! so nice!
 One goes to the Abbot's table,
 All of us get each a slice.
 How go on your flowers? None double?
 Not one fruit-sort can you spy?
 Strange!—And I, too, at such trouble
 Keep them close-nipped on the sly!

There's a great text in Galatians,
 Once you trip on it, entails
 Twenty-nine distinct damnations,

One sure, if another fails:
 If I trip him just a-dying,
 Sure of heaven as sure can be,
 Spin him round and send him flying
 Off to hell, a Manichee?³

Or, my scrofulous French novel
 On gray paper with blunt type!
 Simply glance at it, you grovel
 Hand and foot in Belial's⁴ gripe:
 If I double down its pages
 At the woeful sixteenth print,
 When he gathers his greengages,
 Ope a sieve and slip it in't?

Or, there's Satan!—one might venture
 Pledge one's soul to him, yet leave
 Such a flaw in the indenture
 As he'd miss till, past retrieve,
 20 Blasted lay that rose-acacia
 We're so proud of! *Hy, Zy, Hine . . .*
 'St, there's Vespers! *Plena gratia*,
*Ave, Virgo!*⁵ Gr-r-r—you swine!

25 THE BISHOP ORDERS HIS TOMB
 AT SAINT PRAXED'S CHURCH

ROME, 15—

Vanity, saith the preacher, vanity!
 30 Draw round my bed: is Anselm keeping back?
 Nephews—sons mine . . . ah God, I know
 not! Well—
 She, men would have to be your mother once,
 Old Candolf envied me, so fair she was!
 35 What's done is done, and she is dead beside,
 Dead long ago, and I am Bishop since,
 And as she died so must we die ourselves,
 And thence ye may perceive the world's a
 dream.
 40 Life, how and what is it? As here I lie
 In this state-chamber, dying by degrees,
 Hours and long hours in the dead night, I ask
 "Do I live, am I dead?" Peace, peace seems all.
 Saint Praxed's ever was the church for peace;
 45 And so, about this tomb of mine. I fought
 With tooth and nail to save my niche, ye know:
 —Old Candolf cozened me, despite my care;

¹ Hail to thee.

² a follower of Arius (fourth century), who believed Christ not co-equal with God, and was deemed heretical by the Council of Nicea.

³ Manichean, heretical follower of Manes (third century), who mixed Christian and Zoroastrian doctrines.

⁴ a prominent devil.

⁵ Hail, Virgin, full of grace.

Shrewd was that snatch from out the corner
 South
 He graced his carrion with, God curse the
 same!
 Yet still my niche is not so cramped but thence
 One sees the pulpit o' the epistle-side,
 And somewhat of the choir, those silent seats,
 And up into the aery dome where live
 The angels, and a sunbeam's sure to lurk:
 And I shall fill my slab of basalt there,
 And 'neath my tabernacle take my rest,
 With those nine columns round me, two and
 two,
 The odd one at my feet where Anselm stands:
 Peach-blossom marble all, the rare, the ripe
 As fresh-poured red wine of a mighty pulse.
 —Old Gandolf with his paltry onion-stone,
 Put me where I may look at him! True peach,
 Rosy and flawless: how I earned the prize!
 Draw close: that conflagration of my church
 —What then? So much was saved if aught
 were missed!
 My sons, ye would not be my death? Go dig
 The white-grape vineyard where the oil-press
 stood,
 Drop water gently till the surface sink,
 And if ye find . . . Ah God, I know not,
 It . . .
 Bedded in store of rotten fig-leaves soft,
 And corded up in a tight olive-frail,¹
 Some lump, ah God, of *lapis lazuli*,
 Big as a Jew's head cut off at the nape,
 Blue as a vein o'er the Madonna's breast . . .
 Sons, all have I bequeathed you, villas, all,
 That brave Frascati villa with its bath,
 So, let the blue lump poise between my knees,
 Like God the Father's globe on both his hands
 Ye worship in the Jesu Church so gay,
 For Gandolf shall not choose but see and burst!
 Swift as a weaver's shuttle fleet over years:
 Man goeth to the grave, and where is he?
 Did I say basalt for my slab, sons? Black—
 'Twas ever antique-black I meant! How else
 Shall ye contrast my frieze to come beneath?
 The bas-relief in bronze ye promised me,
 Those Pans and Nymphs ye wot of, and per-
 chance
 Some tripod, thyrsus, with a vase or so,
 The Savior at his sermon on the mount,
 Saint Praxed in a glory, and one Pan
 Ready to twitch the Nymph's last garment off,
 And Moses with the tables . . . but I know
 Ye mark me not! What do they whisper thee,
 Child of my bowels, Anselm? Ah, ye hope
 5 To revel down my villas while I gasp
 Bricked o'er with beggar's moldy travertine
 Which Gandolf from his tomb-top chuckles at!
 Nay, boys, ye love me—all of jasper, then!
 'Tis jasper ye stand pledged to, lest I grieve
 10 My bath must needs be left behind, alas!
 One block, pure green as a pistachio-nut,
 There's plenty jasper somewhere in the
 world—
 And have I not Saint Praxed's ear to pray
 15 Horses for ye, and brown Greek manuscripts,
 And mistresses with great smooth marbly
 limbs?
 —That's if ye carve my epitaph aright,
 Choice Latin, picked phrase, Tully's² every
 word,
 No gaudy ware like Gandolf's second line—
 Tully, my masters? Ulpian³ serves his need!
 And then how I shall lie through centuries,
 And hear the blessed mutter of the mass,
 25 And see God made and eaten all day long,
 And feel the steady candle-flame, and taste
 Good strong thick stupefying incense-smoke!
 For as I lie here, hours of the dead night,
 Dying in state and by such slow degrees,
 30 I fold my arms as if they clasped a crook,
 And stretch my feet forth straight as stone
 can point,
 And let the bedclothes, for a mortcloth, drop
 Into great laps and folds of sculptor's-work:
 35 And as yon tapers dwindle, and strange
 thoughts
 Grow, with a certain humming in my ears,
 About the life before I lived this life,
 And this life too, popes, cardinals and priests,
 40 Saint Praxed at his sermon on the mount,
 Your tall pale mother with her talking eyes,
 And new-found agate urns as fresh as day,
 And marble's language, Latin pure, discreet,
 —Aha, *ELUCESCEBAT*⁴ quoth our friend?
 45 No Tully, said I, Ulpian at the best!
 Evil and brief hath been my pilgrimage.
 All *lapis*, all, sons! Else I give the Pope
 My villas! Will ye ever eat my heart?
 Ever your eyes were as a lizard's quick,
 50 They glitter like your mother's for my soul,

¹ basket for holding olives.

² Cicero. ³ Roman jurist. ⁴ he was famous.

NARRATIVE POETRY · ROBERT BROWNING

Or ye would heighten my impoverished frieze,
 Piece out its starved design, and fill my vase
 With grapes, and add a visor and a Term,⁵
 And to the tripod ye would tie a lynx
 That in his struggle throws the thyrsus down,
 To comfort me on my entablature
 Whereon I am to lie till I must ask
 "Do I live, am I dead?" There, leave me,
 there!
 For ye have stabbed me with ingratitude
 To death—ye wish it—God, ye wish it!
 Stone—
 Gritstone, a-crumble! Clammy squares which
 sweat
 As if the corpse they keep were oozing
 through—
 And no more *lapis* to delight the world!
 Well, go! I bless ye. Fewer tapers there,
 But in a row: and, going, turn your backs
 —Ay, like departing altar-ministrants,
 And leave me in my church, the church for
 peace,
 That I may watch at leisure if he leers—
 Old Candolf—at me, from his onion-stone,
 As still he envied me, so fair she was!

THE STATUE AND THE BUST

There's a palace in Florence, the world knows
 well,
 And a statue watches it from the square,
 And this story both do our townsmen tell.

 Ages ago, a lady there,
 At the farthest window facing the East
 Asked, "Who rides by with the royal air?"

 The bridesmaids' prattle around her ceased;
 She leaned forth, one on either hand;
 They saw how the blush of the bride in-
 creased—

 They felt by its beats her heart expand—
 As one at each ear and both in a breath
 Whispered, "The Great-Duke Ferdinand."

 That selfsame instant, underneath,
 The Duke rode past in his idle way,
 Empty and fine like a swordless sheath.

⁵ bust on pedestal.

Gay he rode, with a friend as gay,
 Till he threw his head back—"Who is she?"
 —"A bride the Riccardi brings home today."

5 Hair in heaps lay heavily
 Over a pale brow spirit-pure—
 Carved like the heart of the coal-black tree,

 Crisped like a war-steed's encolure¹—
 10 And vainly sought to dissemble her eyes
 Of the blackest black our eyes endure,

 And lo, a blade for a knight's emprise
 Filled the fine empty sheath of a man,—
 15 The Duke grew straightway brave and wise.

 He looked at her, as a lover can;
 She looked at him, as one who awakes:
 The past was a sleep, and her life began.
 20
 Now, love so ordered for both their sakes,
 A feast was held that selfsame night
 In the pile which the mighty shadow makes.
 25 (For Via Larga is three-parts light,
 But the palace overshadows one,
 Because of a crime, which may God requite!

To Florence and God the wrong was done,
 30 Through the first republic's murder there
 By Cosimo and his cursed son.)

 The Duke (with the statue's face in the square)
 Turned in the midst of his multitude
 35 At the bright approach of the bridal pair.

 Face to face the lovers stood
 A single minute and no more,
 While the bridegroom bent as a man sub-
 40 dued—

 Bowed till his bonnet brushed the floor—
 For the Duke on the lady a kiss conferred,
 As the courtly custom was of yore.
 45
 In a minute can lovers exchange a word?
 If a word did pass, which I do not think,
 Only one out of a thousand heard.

50 That was the bridegroom. At day's brink

¹ mane.

ROBERT BROWNING · NARRATIVE POETRY

He and his bride were alone at last
In a bed chamber by a taper's blink.

Calmly he said that her lot was cast,
That the door she had passed was shut on her
Till the final catafalk repassed.

The world meanwhile, its noise and stir,
Through a certain window facing the East
She could watch like a convent's chronicler.

Since passing the door might lead to a feast,
And a feast might lead to so much beside,
He, of many evils, chose the least.

"Freely I choose too," said the bride—
"Your window and its world suffice,"
Replied the tongue, while the heart replied—

"If I spend the night with that devil twice,
May his window serve as my loop of hell
Whence a damned soul looks on paradise!

"I fly to the Duke who loves me well,
Sit by his side and laugh at sorrow
Ere I count another ave-bell.

"'Tis only the coat of a page to borrow,
And tie my hair in a horse-boy's trim,
And I save my soul—but not to-morrow"—

(She checked herself and her eye grew dim)
"My father tarries to bless my state:
I must keep it one day more for him.

"Is one day more so long to wait?
Moreover the Duke rides past, I know;
We shall see each other, sure as fate."

She turned on her side and slept. Just so!
So we resolve on a thing and sleep:
So did the lady, ages ago.

That night the Duke said, "Dear or cheap
As the cost of this cup of bliss may prove
To body or soul, I will drain it deep."

And on the morrow, bold with love,
He beckoned the bridegroom (close on call,
As his duty bade, by the Duke's alcove)

And smiled " 'Twas a very funeral,

Your lady will think, this feast of ours,—
A shame to efface, whate'er befall!

"What if we break from the Arno bowers,
5 And try if Petraja, cool and green,
Core last night's fault with this morning's
flowers?"

The bridegroom, not a thought to be seen
10 On his steady brow and quiet mouth,
Said, "Too much favor for me so mean!

"But, alas! my lady leaves² the South;
Each wind that comes from the Apennine
15 Is a menace to her tender youth:

"Nor a way exists, the wise opine,
If she quits her palace twice this year,
To avert the flower of life's decline."

20 Quoth the Duke, "A sage and a kindly fear.
Moreover Petraja is cold this spring:
Be our feast to-night as usual here!"

25 And then to himself—"Which night shall bring
Thy bride to her lover's embraces, fool—
Or I am the fool, and thou art the king!

"Yet my passion must wait a night, nor cool—
30 For to-night the Envoy arrives from France
Whose heart I unlock with thyself, my tool.

"I need thee still and might miss perchance.
To-day is not wholly lost, beside,
35 With its hope of my lady's countenance:

"For I ride—what should I do but ride?
And passing her palace, if I list,
May glance at its window—well betide!"

40 So said, so done: nor the lady missed
One ray that broke from the ardent brow,
Nor a curl of the lips where the spirit kissed.

45 Be sure that each renewed the vow,
No morrow's sun should arise and set
And leave them then as it left them now.

But next day passed, and next day yet,
50 With still fresh cause to wait one day more
Ere each leaped over the parapet.

² comes from.

NARRATIVE POETRY · ROBERT BROWNING

And still, as love's brief morning wore,
With a gentle start, half smile, half sigh,
They found love not as it seemed before.

They thought it would work infallibly,
But not in despite of heaven and earth:
The rose would blow when the storm passed
by.

Meantime they could profit in winter's dearth 10
By store of fruits that supplant the rose:
The world and its ways have a certain worth:

And to press a point while these oppose
Were simple policy; better wait:
We lose no friends and we gain no foes.

Meantime, worse fates than a lover's fate,
Who daily may ride and pass and look
Where his lady watches behind the grate! 20

And she—she watched the square like a book
Holding one picture and only one,
Which daily to find she undertook:

When the picture was reached the book was
done,
And she turned from the picture at night to
scheme
Of tearing it out for herself next sun.

So weeks grew months, years; gleam by gleam
The glory dropped from their youth and
love,
And both perceived they had dreamed a 35
dream;

Which hovered as dreams do, still above:
But who can take a dream for a truth?
Oh, hide our eyes from the next remove! 40

One day as the lady saw her youth
Depart, and the silver thread that streaked
Her hair, and, worn by the serpent's tooth,

The brow so puckered, the chin so peaked,—
And wondered who the woman was,
Hollow-eyed and haggard-cheeked,

Fronting her silent in the glass—
"Summon here," she suddenly said,
"Before the rest of my old self pass,

"Him, the Carver, a hand to aid,
Who fashions the clay no love will change,
And fixes a beauty never to fade.

5 "Let Robbia's³ craft so apt and strange
Arrest the remains of young and fair,
And rivet them while the seasons range.

"Make me a face on the window there,
10 Waiting as ever, mute the while,
My love to pass below in the square!

"And let me think that it may beguile
Dreary days which the dead must spend
15 Down in their darkness under the aisle,

"To say, 'What matters it at the end?
I did no more while my heart was warm
Than does that image, my pale-faced friend.' 20

"Where is the use of lip's red charm,
The heaven of hair, the pride of the brow,
And the blood that blues the inside arm—

25 "Unless we turn, as the soul knows how,
The earthly gift to an end divine?
A lady of clay is as good, I trow."

But long ere Robbia's cornice, fine,
30 With flowers and fruits which leaves enlase,
Was set where now is the empty shrine—

(And, leaning out of a bright blue space,
As a ghost might lean from a chink of sky,
35 The passionate pale lady's face—

Eying ever, with earnest eye
And quick-turned neck at its breathless stretch,
Some one who ever is passing by—) 40

The Duke had sighed like the simplest wretch
In Florence, "Youth—my dream escapes!
Will its record stay?" And he bade them fetch

45 Some subtle molder of brazen shapes—
"Can the soul, the will, die out of a man
Ere his body find the grave that gapes?

"John of Douay⁴ shall effect my plan,

50 ³ The Della Robbias were a family famous for
terra cotta work.
⁴ sculptor of Bologna.

ROBERT BROWNING · NARRATIVE POETRY

Set me on horseback here aloft,
Alive, as the crafty sculptor can,

"In the very square I have crossed so oft:
That men may admire, when future suns
Shall touch the eyes to a purpose soft,

"While the mouth and the brow stay brave in
bronze—

Admire and say, 'When he was alive
How he would take his pleasure once!'

"And it shall go hard but I contrive
To listen the while, and laugh in my tomb
At idleness which aspires to strive."

So! While these wait the trump of doom,
How do their spirits pass, I wonder,
Nights and days in the narrow room?

Still, I suppose, they sit and ponder
What a gift life was, ages ago,
Six steps out of the chapel yonder.

Only they see not God, I know,
Nor all that chivalry of his,
The soldier-saints who, row on row,

Burn upward each to his point of bliss—
Since, the end of life being manifest,
He had burned his way through the world to
this.

I hear you reproach, "But delay was best,
For their end was a crime."—Oh, a crime will
do
As well, I reply, to serve for a test,

As a virtue golden through and through,
Sufficient to vindicate itself
And prove its worth at a moment's view!

Must a game be played for the sake of pelf?
Where a button goes, 'twere an epigram
To offer the stamp of the very Guelph.⁵

The true has no value beyond the sham:
As well the counter as coin, I submit,

⁵ to offer a real coin with the ruler's mark or face on it.

When your table's a hat, and your prize, a
dram.

Stake your counter as boldly every whit,
5 Venture as warily, use the same skill,
Do your best, whether winning or losing it,

If you choose to play!—is my principle.
Let a man contend to the uttermost
10 For his life's set prize, be it what it will!
The counter our lovers staked was lost
As surely as if it were lawful coin:
And the sin I impute to each frustrate ghost

15 Is—the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin,
Though the end in sight was a vice, I say.
You of the virtue (we issue join)
How strive you? *De te, fabula!*⁶

20

ANDREA DEL SARTO

CALLED "THE FAULTLESS PAINTER"

But do not let us quarrel any more,
25 No, my Lucrezia; bear with me for once:
Sit down and all shall happen as you wish.
You turn your face, but does it bring your
heart?

I'll work then for your friend's friend, never
30 fear,

Treat his own subject after his own way,
Fix his own time, accept too his own price,
And shut the money into this small hand
When next it takes mine. Will it? tenderly?

35 Oh, I'll content him,—but to-morrow, Lovel
I often am much wearier than you think,
This evening more than usual, and it seems
As if—forgive now—should you let me sit
Here by the window with your hand in mine

40 And look a half-hour forth on Fiesole,
Both of one mind, as married people use,
Quietly, quietly the evening through,
I might get up to-morrow to my work
Cheerful and fresh as ever. Let us try.

45 To-morrow, how you shall be glad for this!
Your soft hand is a woman of itself,
And mine the man's bared breast she curls in-
side.

Don't count the time lost, neither; you must
50 serve

⁶ This tale concerns you.

For each of the five pictures we require:
It saves a model. So! keep looking so—
My serpentine beauty, rounds on rounds!
—How could you ever prick those perfect ears,
Even to put the pearl there! oh, so sweet—
My face, my moon, my everybody's moon,
Which everybody looks on and calls his,
And, I suppose, is looked on by in turn,
While she looks—no one's: very dear, no less.
You smile? why, there's my picture ready made,

There's what we painters call our harmony!
A common grayness silvers everything,—
All in a twilight, you and I alike
—You, at the point of your first pride in me
(That's gone you know),—but I, at every
point;
My youth, my hope, my art, being all toned
down

To yonder sober pleasant Fiesole.
There's the bell clinking from the chapel-top;
That length of convent-wall across the way
Holds the trees safer, huddled more inside;
The last monk leaves the garden; days decrease,

And autumn grows, autumn in everything.
Eh? the whole seems to fall into a shape
As if I saw alike my work and self
And all that I was born to be and do,
A twilight-piece. Love, we are in God's hand.
How strange now looks the life he makes us
lead;

So free we seem, so fettered fast we are!
I feel he laid the fetter: let it lie!
This chamber for example—turn your head—
All that's behind us! You don't understand
Nor care to understand about my art,
But you can hear at least when people speak:
And that cartoon, the second from the door
—It is the thing, Love! so such things should
be—

Behold Madonna!—I am bold to say.
I can do with my pencil what I know,
What I see, what at bottom of my heart
I wish for, if I ever wish so deep—
Do easily, too—when I say, perfectly,
I do not boast, perhaps: yourself are judge,
Who listened to the Legate's talk last week,
And just as much they used to say in France.
At any rate 'tis easy, all of it!
No sketches first, no studies, that's long past:
I do what many dream of all their lives,

—Dream? strive to do, and agonize to do,
And fail in doing. I could count twenty such
On twice your fingers, and not leave this town.
Who strive—you don't know how the others
strive

To paint a little thing like that you smeared
Carelessly passing with your robes afloat,—
Yet do much less, so much less, Someone says,
(I know his name, no matter)—so much less!
Well, less is more, Lucrezia: I am judged.
There burns a truer light of God in them,
In their vexed beating stuffed and stopped-up
brain,
Heart, or whate'er else, than goes on to prompt
This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's hand
of mine.

Their works drop groundward, but themselves,
I know,
Reach many a time a heaven that's shut to me.
Enter and take their place there sure enough.
Though they come back and cannot tell the
world.

My works are nearer heaven, but I sit here.
The sudden blood of these men! at a word—
Praise them, it boils, or blame them, it boils
too.

I, painting from myself and to myself,
Know what I do, am unmoved by men's blame
Or their praise either. Somebody remarks
Morello's¹ outline there is wrongly traced,
His hue mistaken; what of that? or else,
Rightly traced and well ordered; what of that?
Speak as they please, what does the mountain
care?

Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a heaven for? All is silver-gray
Placid and perfect with my art: the worse!
I know both what I want and what might gain,
And yet how profitless to know, to sigh
“Had I been two, another and myself,
Our head would have o'erlooked the world!”
No doubt.

Yonder's a work now, of that famous youth
The Urbinate² who died five years ago.
('Tis copied, George Vasari³ sent it me.)
Well, I can fancy how he did it all,
Pouring his soul, with kings and popes to see,
Reaching, that heaven might so replenish him,

¹ mountain in the Apennines.

² Raphael.

³ author of a standard work, biographies of
painters and artisans, source for the poem.

Above and through his art—for it gives way;
That arm is wrongly put—and there again—
A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,
Its body, so to speak: its soul is right,
He means right—that, a child may understand.
Still, what an arm! and I could alter it:
But all the play, the insight and the stretch—
Out of me, out of me! And wherefore out?
Had you enjoined them on me, given me soul,
We might have risen to Rafael, I and you!
Nay, Love, you did give all I asked, I think—
More than I merit, yes, by many times.
But had you—oh, with the same perfect brow,
And perfect eyes, and more than perfect
mouth,
And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird
The fowler's pipe, and follows to the snare—
Had you, with these the same, but brought a
mind!
Some women do so. Had the mouth there
urged
"God and the glory! never care for gain.
The present by the future, what is that?
Live for fame, side by side with Agnolo!⁴
Rafael is waiting: up to God, all three!"
I might have done it for you. So it seems:
Perhaps not. All is as God overrules.
Besides, incentives come from the soul's self;
The rest avail not. Why do I need you?
What wife had Rafael, or has Agnolo?
In this world, who can do a thing, will not;
And who would do it, cannot, I perceive:
Yet the will's somewhat—somewhat, too, the
power—
And thus we half-men struggle. At the end,
God, I conclude, compensates, punishes.
'Tis safer for me, if the award be strict,
That I am something underrated here,
Poor this long while, despised, to speak the
truth.
I dared not, do you know, leave home all day,
For fear of chancing on the Paris lords.
The best is when they pass and look aside;
But they speak sometimes; I must bear it
all.
Well may they speak! That Francis,⁵ that first
time,

⁴ Michelangelo.

⁵ Francis I of France. Andrea is supposed to have left his employ with money to buy him pictures, money which went for building a house for Lucrezia.

And that long festal year at Fontainebleau!
I surely then could sometimes leave the
ground,
Put on the glory, Rafael's daily wear,
In that humane great monarch's golden look,—
One finger in his beard or twisted curl
Over his mouth's good mark that made the
smile,
One arm about my shoulder, round my neck,
The jingle of his gold chain in my ear,
I painting proudly with his breath on me,
All his court round him, seeing with his eyes,
Such frank French eyes, and such a fire of
souls
Profuse, my hand kept plying by those
hearts,—
And, best of all, this, this, this face beyond,
This in the background, waiting on my work,
To crown the issue with a last reward!
A good time, was it not, my kingly days?
And had you not grown restless . . . but I
know—
'Tis done and past; 'twas right, my instinct
said;
Too live the life grew, golden and not gray,
And I'm the weak-eyed bat no sun should
tempt
Out of the grange whose four walls make his
world.
How could it end in any other way?
You called me, and I came home to your heart.
The triumph was—to reach and stay there;
since
I reached it ere the triumph, what is lost?
Let my hands frame your face in your hair's
gold,
You beautiful Lucrezia that are mine!
"Rafael did this, Andrea painted that;
The Roman's is the better when you pray,
But still the other's Virgin was his wife"—
Men will excuse me. I am glad to judge
Both pictures in your presence; clearer grows
My better fortune, I resolve to think.
For, do you know, Lucrezia, as God lives,
Said one day Agnolo, his very self,
To Rafael . . . I have known it all these
years . . .
(When the young man was flaming out his
thoughts

Upon a palace-wall for Rome to see,
Too lifted up in heart because of it)
"Friend, there's a certain sorry little scrub

Goes up and down our Florence, none cares
how,
Who, were he set to plan and execute
As you are, pricked on by your popes and
kings,
Would bring the sweat into that brow of
yours!"
To Rafael's!—And indeed the arm is wrong.
I hardly dare . . . yet, only you to see,
Give the chalk here—quick, thus the line 10
should go!
Ay, but the soul! he's Rafael! rub it out!
Still, all I care for, if he spoke the truth,
(What he? why, who but Michel Agnolo?
Do you forget already words like those?) 15
If really there was such a chance, so lost,—
Is, whether you're—not grateful—but more
pleased.
Well, let me think so. And you smile indeed!
This hour has been an hour! Another smile?
If you would sit thus by me every night
I should work better, do you comprehend?
I mean that I should earn more, give you more.
See, it is settled dusk now; there's a star;
Morello's gone, the watch-lights show the wall, 25
The cue-owls speak the name we call them by.
Come from the window, love,—come in, at
last,
Inside the melancholy little house
We built to be so gay with. God is just.
King Francis may forgive me: oft at nights
When I look up from painting, eyes tired out,
The walls become illumined, brick from brick
Distinct, instead of mortar, fierce bright gold,
That gold of his I did cement them with!
Let us but love each other. Must you go?
That Cousin^a here again? he waits outside?
Must see you—you, and not with me? Those
loans?
More gaming debts to pay? you smiled for 40
that?
Well, let smiles buy me! have you more to
spend?
While hand and eye and something of a heart
Are left me, work's my ware, and what's it 45
worth?
I'll pay my fancy. Only let me sit
The gray remainder of the evening out,
Idle, you call it, and muse perfectly
How I could paint, were I but back in France, 50
One picture, just one more—the Virgin's face,

^a here, lover.

Not yours this time! I want you at my side
To hear them—that is, Michel Agnolo—
Judge all I do and tell you of its worth.
Will you? To-morrow, satisfy your friend.
5 I take the subjects for his corridor,
Finish the portrait out of hand—there, there,
And throw him in another thing or two
If he demurs; the whole should prove enough
To pay for this same Cousin's freak. Beside,
10 What's better and what's all I care about,
Get you the thirteen scudi⁷ for the ruff!
Love, does that please you? Ah, but what does
he,
The Cousin! what does he to please you more?
15 I am grown peaceful as old age to-night.
I regret little, I would change still less.
Since there my past life lies, why alter it?
The very wrong to Francis!—it is true
20 I took his coin, was tempted and complied,
And built this house and sinned, and all is
said.
My father and my mother died of want.
Well, had I riches of my own? you see
25 How one gets rich! Let each one bear his lot.
They were born poor, lived poor, and poor
they died:
And I have labored somewhat in my time
And not been paid profusely. Some good son
30 Paint my two hundred pictures—let him try!
No doubt, there's something strikes a balance.
Yes,
You loved me quite enough, it seems to-night.
This must suffice me here. What would one
35 have?
In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one more
chance—
Four great walls in the New Jerusalem,
Meted on each side by the angel's reed,
40 For Leonard,⁸ Rafael, Agnolo and me
To cover—the three first without a wife,
While I have mine! So—still they overcome
Because there's still Lucrezia,—as I choose.
Again the Cousin's whistle! Go, my Love.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

Rossetti (1828–1882) was a member of an illustrious household which included his gifted sister Christina and his well-known brother

⁷ plural of *scudo*, a coin worth about a dollar.

⁸ Leonardo da Vinci.

artist, William Michael. Interested in both painting and poetry, Rossetti belonged to the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, which derived its name from its desire to use artistic techniques known before Raphael. Millais, Holman Hunt, Morris, and Swinburne were among the famous names in the group, which at one time was criticized for theme and treatment by stodgy Victorians who attached to it the label "Fleshly School"—but without making it stick. Rossetti and his friends actually were second-crop Romantics, with color and imagination in their work, interest in old forms, versatility in the sonnet and ballad, and marked antagonism toward the new machine age. Rossetti's life was "romantic" in another sense as well: after his wife's death he buried his work, had visions, dug it up; suffered from real and imaginary disorders; took to the bottle and the needle. In spite of all this, he left some memorable ballads, an important sonnet sequence, and a standard translation of Dante's Vita Nuova.

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL

The blessed damozel leaned out
From the gold bar of Heaven;
Her eyes were deeper than the depth
Of waters stilled at even;
She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were seven.

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,
No wrought flowers did adorn,
But a white rose of Mary's gift,
For service meetly worn;
Her hair that lay along her back
Was yellow like ripe corn.

Her seemed she scarce had been a day
One of God's choristers;
The wonder was not yet quite gone
From that still look of hers;
Albeit, to them she left, her day
Had counted as ten years.

(To one, it is ten years of years.
—Yet now, and in this place,
Surely she leaned o'er me—her hair
Fell all about my face. . . .
Nothing: the autumn fall of leaves.
The whole year sets apace.)

It was the rampart of God's house
That she was standing on;
By God built over the sheer depth
The which is Space begun.
So high, that looking downward thence
She scarce could see the sun.

It lies in Heaven, across the flood
Of ether, as a bridge.
Beneath, the tides of day and night
With flame and darkness ridge
The void, as low as where this earth
Spins like a fretful midge.

Around her, lovers, newly met
'Mid deathless love's acclaims,
Spoke evermore among themselves
Their heart-remembered names;
And the souls mounting up to God
Went by her like thin flames.

And still she bowed herself and stooped
Out of the circling cham;
Until her bosom must have made
The bar she leaned on warm,
And the lilies lay as if asleep
Along her bended arm.

From the fixed place of Heaven she saw
Time, like a pulse, shake fierce
Through all the worlds. Her gaze still strove
Within the gulf to pierce
Its path; and now she spoke as when
The stars sang in their spheres.

The sun was gone now; the curled moon
Was like a little feather
Fluttering far down the gulf; and now
She spoke through the still weather.
Her voice was like the voice the stars
Had when they sang together.

(Ah sweet! Even now, in that bird's song,
Strove not her accents there,
Fain to be hearkened? When those bells
Possessed the mid-day air,
Strove not her steps to reach my side
Down all the echoing stair?)

"I wish that he were come to me.
For he will come," she said.
"Have I not prayed in Heaven?—on earth,

Lord, Lord, has he not prayed?
Are not two prayers a perfect strength?
And shall I feel afraid?

"When round his head the aureole clings, 5
And he is clothed in white,
I'll take his hand and go with him
To the deep wells of light;
As unto a stream we will step down,
And bathe there in God's sight.

"We two will stand beside that shrine,
Occult, withheld, untrod,
Whose lamps are stirred continually
With prayer sent up to God;
And see our old prayers, granted, melt
Each like a little cloud.

"We two will lie i' the shadow of
That living mystic tree
Within whose secret growth the Dove
Is sometimes felt to be,
While every leaf that His plumes touch
Saith His Name audibly.

"And I myself will teach to him,
I myself, lying so,
The songs I sing here; which his voice
Shall pause in, hushed and slow,
And find some knowledge at each pause,
Or some new thing to know."

(Alas! We two, we two, thou say'st!
Yea, one wast thou with me
That once of old. But shall God lift
To endless unity
The soul whose likeness with thy soul
Was but its love for thee?)

"We two," she said, "will seek the groves
Where the lady Mary is,
With her five handmaidens, whose names
Are five sweet symphonies,
Cecily, Certrude, Magdalen,
Margaret, and Rosalys.

"Circlewise sit they, with bound locks
And foreheads garlanded;
Into the fine cloth, white like flame
Weaving the golden thread,
To fashion the birth-robcs for them
Who are just born, being dead.

"He shall fear, haply, and be dumb:
Then will I lay my cheek
To his, and tell about our love,
Not once abashed or weak;
And the dear Mother will approve
My pride, and let me speak.

"Herself shall bring us, hand in hand,
To Him round Whom all souls
Kneel, the clear-ranged unnumbered heads
Bowed with their aureoles;
And angels meeting us shall sing
To their citherns and citoles.¹

"There will I ask of Christ the Lord
Thus much for him and me:—
Only to live as once on earth
With Love,—only to be,
As then awhile, forever now
Together, I and he."

She gazed and listened and then said,
Less sad of speech than mild,—
"All this is when he comes." She ceased.
The light thrilled towards her, filled
With angels in strong level flight.
Her eyes prayed, and she smiled.

(I saw her smile.) But soon their path
Was vague in distant spheres:
And then she cast her arms along
The golden barriers,
And laid her face between her hands,
And wept. (I heard her tears.)

SISTER HELEN

"Why did you melt your waxen man,¹
Sister Helen?
To-day is the third since you began."
"The time was long, yet the time ran,
Little brother."
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Three days to-day, between Hell and Heaven!)
"But if you have done your work aright,
Sister Helen,
You'll let me play, for you said I might."

¹ stringed instruments.
50 ¹ This poem is based on the superstition that melting an image of a person will bring death to him.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI · NARRATIVE POETRY

- "Be very still in your play to-night,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Third night, to-night, between Hell and
Heaven!)
- "You said it must melt ere vesper-bell,
Sister Helen;
If now it be molten, all is well."
"Even so,—nay, peace! you cannot tell,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
What is this, between Hell and Heaven?)
- "Oh the waxen knave was plump to-day,
Sister Helen;
How like dead folk he has dropped away!"
"Nay now, of the dead what can you say,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
What of the dead, between Hell and Heaven?)
- "See, see, the sunken pile of wood,
Sister Helen,
Shines through the thinned wax red as blood!" 25
"Nay now, when looked you yet on blood,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
How pale she is, between Hell and Heaven!)
- "Now close your eyes, for they're sick and sore,
Sister Helen,
And I'll play without the gallery door."
"Ay, let me rest,—I'll lie on the floor,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
What rest to-night, between Hell and Heaven?)
- "Here high up in the balcony,
Sister Helen,
The moon flies face to face with me."
"Ay, look and say whatever you see,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
What sight to-night, between Hell and 45
Heaven?)
- "Outside it's merry in the wind's wake,
Sister Helen;
In the shaken trees the chill stars shake."
"Hush, heard you a horse-tread as you spake,
Little brother?"
- (*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
What sound to-night, between Hell and
Heaven?)
- 5 "I hear a horse-tread, and I see,
Sister Helen,
Three horsemen that ride terribly."
"Little brother, whence come the three,
Little brother?"
10 (*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Whence should they come, between Hell and
Heaven?)
- "They come by the hill-verge from Boyne Bar,
Sister Helen,
And one draws nigh, but two are afar."
"Look, look, do you know them who they are,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
20 *Who should they be, between Hell and*
Heaven?)
- "Oh, it's Keith of Eastholm rides so fast,
Sister Helen,
For I know the white mane on the blast."
"The hour has come, has come at last,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Her hour at last, between Hell and Heaven!)
- 30 "He has made a sign and called 'Halloo!"
Sister Helen,
And he says that he would speak with you."
"Oh tell him I fear the frozen dew,
Little brother."
35 (*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Why laughs she thus, between Hell and
Heaven!)
- 40 "The wind is loud, but I hear him cry,
Sister Helen,
That Keith of Ewern's like to die."
"And he and thou, and thou and I,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
And they and we, between Hell and Heaven!)
- "Three days ago, on his marriage-morn,
Sister Helen,
He sickened, and lies since then forlorn."
"For bridegroom's side is the bride a thorn,
Little brother?"

NARRATIVE POETRY · DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Cold bridal cheer, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Three days and nights he has lain abed,
Sister Helen,
And he prays in torment to be dead."
"The thing may chance, if he have prayed,
Little brother!"

(O Mother, Mary Mother,
If he have prayed, between Hell and Heaven!)

"But he has not ceased to cry to-day,
Sister Helen,
That you should take your curse away."
"My prayer was heard,—he need but pray,
Little brother!"
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Shall God not hear, between Hell and Heaven?)

"But he says, till you take back your ban,
Sister Helen,
His soul would pass, yet never can."
"Nay then, shall I slay a living man,
Little brother?"
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
A living soul, between Hell and Heaven!)

"But he calls forever on your name,
Sister Helen,
And says that he melts before a flame."
"My heart for his pleasure fared the same,
Little brother."
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Fire at the heart, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Here's Keith of Westholm riding fast,
Sister Helen,
For I know the white plume on the blast."
"The hour, the sweet hour I forecast,
Little brother!"
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Is the hour sweet, between Hell and Heaven?)

"He stops to speak, and he stills his horse,
Sister Helen;
But his words are drowned in the wind's
course."
"Nay hear, nay hear, you must hear perforce,
Little brother!"
(O Mother, Mary Mother,

What word now heard, between Hell and Heaven?)

"Oh he says that Keith of Ewern's cry,
Sister Helen,
Is ever to see you ere he die."
"In all that his soul sees, there am I,
Little brother!"
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
The soul's one sight, between Hell and Heaven!)

"He sends a ring and a broken coin,
Sister Helen,
And bids you mind the banks of Boyne."
"What else he broke will he ever join,
Little brother?"
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
No, never joined, between Hell and Heaven!)

"He yields you these and craves full fain,
Sister Helen,
You pardon him in his mortal pain."
"What else he took will he give again,
Little brother?"
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Not twice to give, between Hell and Heaven!)

"He calls your name in an agony,
Sister Helen,
That even dead Love must weep to see."
"Hate, born of Love, is blind as he,
Little brother!"
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Love turned to hate, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Oh it's Keith of Keith now that rides fast,
Sister Helen,
For I know the white hair on the blast."
"The short, short hour will soon be past,
Little brother!"
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Will soon be past, between Hell and Heaven!)

"He looks at me and he tries to speak,
Sister Helen,
But oh his voice is sad and weak!"
"What here should the mighty Baron seek,
Little brother?"
(O Mother, Mary Mother,
Is this the end, between Hell and Heaven?)

"Oh his son still cries, if you forgive,
Sister Helen,
The body dies, but the soul shall live."
"Fire shall forgive me as I forgive,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
As she forgives, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Oh he prays you, as his heart would rive,
Sister Helen,
To save his dear son's soul alive."
"Fire cannot slay it, it shall thrive,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Alas, alas, between Hell and Heaven!)

"He cries to you, kneeling in the road,
Sister Helen,
To go with him for the love of God!"
"The way is long to his son's abode,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
The way is long, between Hell and Heaven!)

"A lady's here, by a dark steed brought,
Sister Helen,
So darkly clad, I saw her not."
"See her now or never see aught,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
What more to see, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Her hood falls back, and the moon shines fair,
Sister Helen,
On the Lady of Ewern's golden hair."
"Blest hour of my power and her despair,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Hour blest and banned, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Pale, pale her cheeks, that in pride did glow,
Sister Helen,
'Neath the bridal-wreath three days ago."
"One morn for pride and three days for woe,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Three days, three nights, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Her clasped hands stretch from her bending
head,

Sister Helen;
With the loud wind's wail her sobs are wed."
"What wedding-strains hath her bridal-bed,
Little brother?"
5 (*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
What strain but death's, between Hell and Heaven?)

"She may not speak, she sinks in a swoon,
10 Sister Helen,—
She lifts her lips and gasps on the moon."
"Oh! might I but hear her soul's blithe tune,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
15 *Her woe's dumb cry, between Hell and Heaven!*)

"They've caught her to Westholm's saddle-
bow,
20 Sister Helen,
And her moonlit hair gleams white in its flow."
"Let it turn whiter than winter snow,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
25 *Woe-withered gold, between Hell and Heaven!*)

"O Sister Helen, you heard the bell,
Sister Helen;
30 More loud than the vesper-chime it fell."
"No vesper-chime, but a dying knell,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
His dying knell, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Alas! but I fear the heavy sound,
Sister Helen;
Is it in the sky or in the ground?"
"Say, have they turned their horses round,
40 Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
What would she more, between Hell and Heaven?)

"They have raised the old man from his
knee,
Sister Helen,
And they ride in silence hastily."
"More fast the naked soul doth flee,
50 Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
The naked soul, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Flank to flank are the three steeds gone,
Sister Helen,
But the lady's dark steed goes alone."
"And lonely her bridegroom's soul hath flown,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
The lonely ghost, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Oh the wind is sad in the iron chill,
Sister Helen,
And weary sad they look by the hill."
"But he and I are sadder still,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Most sad of all, between Hell and Heaven!) 15

"See, see, the wax has dropped from its place,
Sister Helen,
And the flames are winning up apace!"
"Yet here they burn but for a space,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Here for a space, between Hell and Heaven!)

"Ah! what white thing at the door has crossed, 25
Sister Helen,
Ah! what is this that sighs in the frost?"
"A soul that's lost as mine is lost,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
Lost, lost, all lost, between Hell and Heaven!)

WILLIAM MORRIS

*Coming from a well-to-do family and helped on 35
by an Oxford education, Morris (1834-1896)
developed into the most versatile and vigorous
artisan of his generation. He lent his energies
to the pursuit of religion, art, and architecture.
He labored for the socialist cause. He wrote
poetry, produced furniture, ran his own print-
ing press. Morris had zest for life, a virile
personality, joy in work which led him to make
his own paper and ink when he needed it. His
vigor and adaptability, curiosity and humor, re-
mind one of the American artist, George Bel-
lows—they would have made a great pair. The
student should compare Morris's Arthurian
poetry with Tennyson's, as art and as evidence
of differences in personality.**

* Morris's poems are reprinted by arrangement
with Longmans, Green & Company.

THE DEFENCE OF GUENEVERE

But, knowing now that they would have her
speak,
5 She threw her wet hair backward from her
brow,
Her hand close to her mouth touching her
cheek,
10 As though she had had there a shameful blow,
And feeling it shameful to feel ought but
shame
All through her heart, yet felt her cheek
burned so,
She must a little touch it; like one lame
She walked away from Gauwaine, with her
head
Still lifted up; and on her cheek of flame
20 The tears dried quick; she stopped at last and
said:
"O knights and lords, it seems but little skill
To talk of well-known things past now and
dead.

"God wot I ought to say, I have done ill,
And pray you all forgiveness heartily!
Because you must be right such great lords—
30 still

"Listen, suppose your time were come to die,
And you were quite alone and very weak,
Yea, laid a dying while very mightily

"The wind was ruffling up the narrow streak
Of river through your broad lands running
well:
Suppose a hush should come, then some one
40 speak:

"'One of these cloths is heaven, and one is
hell,
Now choose one cloth for ever, which they be,
45 I will not tell you, you must somehow tell

"'Of your own strength and mightiness; here,
see!
Yea, yea, my Lord, and you to ope your eyes,
50 At foot of your familiar bed to see

"A great God's angel standing, with such dyes,

WILLIAM MORRIS · NARRATIVE POETRY

Not known on earth, on his great wings, and
hands,
Held out two ways, light from the inner skies

"Showing him well, and making his commands 5
Seem to be God's commands, moreover, too,
Holding within his hands the cloths on wands,

"And one of these strange choosing cloths
was blue, 10
Wavy and long, and one cut short and red,
No man could tell the better of the two.

"After a shivering half-hour you said,
'God help! heaven's color, the blue,' and he 15
said, 'hell.'
Perhaps you then would roll upon your bed,

"And cry to all good men that loved you
well, 20
'Ah Christ! if only I had known, known,
known;'
Launcelot went away, then I could tell,

"Like wisest man how all things would be, 25
moan,
And roll and hurt myself, and long to die,
And yet fear much to die for what was sown.

"Nevertheless you, O Sir Gauwaine, lie, 30
Whatever may have happened through these
years,
God knows I speak truth, saying that you lie."

Her voice was low at first, being full of tears, 35
But as it cleared, it grew full loud and shrill,
Growing a windy shriek in all men's ears,

A ringing in their startled brains, until
She said that Gauwaine lied, then her voice 40
sunk,
And her great eyes began again to fill,

Though still she stood right up, and never
shrunk, 45
But spoke on bravely, glorious lady fair!
Whatever tears her full lips may have drunk,

She stood, and seemed to think, and wrung
her hair, 50
Spoke out at last with no more trace of shame,
With passionate twisting of her body there:

"It chanced upon a day that Launcelot came
To dwell at Arthur's court at Christmastime
This happened; when the heralds sung his
name,

"Son of King Ban of Benwick," seemed to
chime
Along with all the bells that rang that day,
O'er the white roofs, with little change of
rhyme.

"Christmas and whitened winter passed away,
And over me the April sunshine came,
Made very awful with black hail-clouds, yea

"And in the Summer I grew white with flame,
And bowed my head down—Autumn, and the
sick
Sure knowledge things would never be the
same,

"However often Spring might be most thick
Of blossoms and buds, smote on me, and I
grew
Careless of most things, let the clock tick, tick,

"To my unhappy pulse, that beat right through
My eager body: while I laughed out loud,
And let my lips curl up at false or true,

"Seemed cold and shallow without any cloud.
Behold my judges, then the cloths were
brought:

While I was dizzied thus, old thoughts would
crowd,

"Belonging to the time ere I was bought
By Arthur's great name and his little love,
Must I give up for ever then, I thought,

"That which I deemed would ever round me
move
Glorifying all things; for a little word,
Scarce ever meant at all, must I now prove

"Stone-cold for ever? Pray you, does the Lord
Will that all folks should be quite happy and
good?

I love God now a little, if this cord

"Were broken, once for all what striving could
Make me love anything in earth or heaven.

NARRATIVE POETRY · WILLIAM MORRIS

So day by day it grew, as if one should

"Slip slowly down some path worn smooth and even,

Down to a cool sea on a summer day;
Yet still in slipping was there some small
leaven

"Of stretched hands catching small stones by
the way,

Until one surely reached the sea at last,
And felt strange new joy as the worn head lay

"Back, with the hair like sea-weed; yea all past
Sweat of the forehead, dryness of the lips,
Washed utterly out by the dear waves o'er-
cast

"In the lone sea, far off from any ships!
Do I not know now of a day in Spring?
No minute of that wild day ever slips

"From out my memory; I hear thrushes sing,
And wheresoever I may be, straightway
Thoughts of it all come up with most fresh
sting;

"I was half mad with beauty on that day,
And went without my ladies all alone,
In a quiet garden walled round every way;

"I was right joyful of that wall of stone,
That shut the flowers and trees up with the
sky,
And trebled all the beauty: to the bone,

"Yea right through to my heart, grown very
shy
With weary thoughts, it pierced, and made
me glad;
Exceedingly glad, and I knew verily,

"A little thing just then had made me mad;
I dared not think, as I was wont to do,
Sometimes, upon my beauty; if I had

"Held out my long hand up against the blue,
And, looking on the tenderly darkened fingers,
Thought that by rights one ought to see quite
through,

"There, see you, where the soft still light yet

lingers,

Round by the edges; what should I have done,
If this had joined with yellow spotted singers,

5 "And startling green drawn upward by the
sun?

But shouting, loosed out, see now! all my
hair,

And trancedly stood watching the west wind
10 run

"With faintest half-heard breathing sound—
why there

I lose my head e'en now in doing this;
15 But shortly listen—In that garden fair

"Came Launcelot walking; this is true, the kiss
Wherewith we kissed in meeting that spring
day,

20 I scarce dare talk of the remembered bliss,

"When both our mouths went wandering in
one way,

And aching sorely, met among the leaves;

25 Our hands being left behind strained far away.

"Never within a yard of my bright sleeves

Had Launcelot come before—and now, so
nigh!

30 After that day why is it Guenevere grieves?

"Nevertheless you, O Sir Gauwaine, lie,

Whatever happened on through all those years,
God knows I speak truth, saying that you lie.

35

"Being such a lady could I weep these tears
If this were true? A great queen such as I
Having sinned this way, straight her conscience
sears;

40

"And afterwards she liveth hatefully,
Slaying and poisoning, certes never weeps,—
Gauwaine be friends now, speak me lovingly.

45

"Do I not see how God's dear pity creeps
All through your frame, and trembles in your
mouth?

Remember in what grave your mother sleeps,

50

"Buried in some place far down in the south,
Men are forgetting as I speak to you;
By her head severed in that awful drouth

WILLIAM MORRIS · NARRATIVE POETRY

- "Of pity that drew Agravaine's fell blow,
I pray your pity! let me not scream out
For ever after, when the shrill winds blow
- "Through half your castle-locks! let me not 5
shout
For ever after in the winter night
When you ride out alone! in battle rout
- "Let not my rusting tears make your sword 10
light!
Ah! God of mercy how he turns away!
So, ever must I dress me to the fight,
- "So—let God's justice work! Gauwaine, I say, 15
See me hew down your proofs: yea all men
know
Even as you said how Mellyagraunce one day,
- "One bitter day in *la Fausse Garde*,¹ for so 20
All good knights held it after, saw—
Yea, sirs, by cursed unknighly outrage, though
- "You, Gauwaine, held his word without a flaw,
This Mellyagraunce saw blood upon my bed— 25
Whose blood then pray you? is there any law
- "To make a queen say why some spots of red
Lie on her coverlet? or will you say,
'Your hands are white, lady, as when you wed, 30
- "Where did you bleed?" and must I stammer
out—"Nay,
I blush indeed, fair lord, only to rend
My sleeve up to my shoulder, where there lay 35
- "A knife-point last night:' so must I defend
The honor of the lady Guenevere?
Not so, fair lords, even if the world should end
- "This very day, and you were judges here
Instead of God. Did you see Mellyagraunce
When Launcelot stood by him? what white
fear
- "Curdled his blood, and how his teeth did
dance,
His side sink in? as my knight cried and said,
'Slayer of unarmed men, here is a chance!
- By God I am so glad to fight with you,
Stripper of ladies, that my hand feels lead
- "For driving weight, hurrah now! draw and
do,
For all my wounds are moving in my breast,
And I am getting mad with waiting so."
- "He struck his hands together o'er the beast,
Who fell down flat, and grovelled at his feet,
And groaned at being slain so young—at least."
- "My knight said, 'Rise you, sir, who are so
fleet
At catching ladies, half-armed will I fight,
My left side all uncovered!' then I weet,
- "Up sprang Sir Mellyagraunce with great de-
light
Upon his knave's face; not until just then
Did I quite hate him, as I saw my knight
- "Along the lists look to my stake and pen
With such a joyous smile, it made me sigh
From agony beneath my waist-chain, when
- "The fight began, and to me they drew nigh;
Ever Sir Launcelot kept him on the right,
And traversed warily, and ever high
- "And fast leapt caitiff's sword, until my knight
Sudden threw up his sword to his left hand,
Caught it, and swung it; that was all the fight.
- "Except a spout of blood on the hot land;
For it was hottest summer; and I know
I wondered how the fire, while I should stand,
- "And burn, against the heat, would quiver so,
Yards above my head; thus these matters went,
Which things were only warnings of the woe
- "That fell on me. Yet Mellyagraunce was
shent,²
45 For Mellyagraunce had fought against the
Lord;
Therefore, my lords, take heed lest you be
blent³
- 50 "With all this wickedness; say no rash word
Against me, being so beautiful; my eyes,

¹ "The false prison."

² disgraced.

³ blinded.

NARRATIVE POETRY · WILLIAM MORRIS

Wept all away to grey, may bring some sword

"To drown you in your blood; see my breast
rise,
Like waves of purple sea, as here I stand;
And how my arms are moved in wonderful
wise,

"Yea also at my full heart's strong command,
See through my long throat how the words
go up
In ripples to my mouth; how in my hand

"The shadow lies like wine within a cup
Of marvellously colored gold; yea now
This little wind is rising, look you up,

"And wonder how the light is falling so
Within my moving tresses; will you dare,
When you have looked a little on my brow,

"To say this thing is vile? or will you care
For any plausible lies of cunning woof,
When you can see my face with no lie there

"For ever? am I not a gracious proof—
'But in your chamber Launcelot was found'—
Is there a good knight then would stand aloof,

"When a queen says with gentle queenly
sound:

'O true as steel come now and talk with me,
I love to see your step upon the ground

"Unwavering, also well I love to see
That gracious smile light up your face, and
hear
Your wonderful words, that all mean verily

"The thing they seem to mean: good friend,
so dear
To me in everything, come here to-night,
Or else the hours will pass most dull and
drear;

"If you come not, I fear this time I might
Get thinking over much of times gone by,
When I was young, and green hope was in
sight;

"For no man cares now to know why I sigh;
And no man comes to sing me pleasant songs,

Nor any brings me the sweet flowers that lie

"So thick in the gardens; therefore one so
long
5 To see you, Launcelot; that we may be
Like children once again, free from all wrong,

"Just for one night.' Did he not come to me?
What thing could keep true Launcelot away
10 If I said 'come'? there was one less than three

"In my quiet room that night, and we were
gay;
Till sudden I rose up, weak, pale, and sick,
15 Because a bawling broke our dream up, yea

"I looked at Launcelot's face and could not
speak,
For he looked helpless too, for a little while,
20 Then I remembered how I tried to shriek,

"And could not, but fell down; from tile to
tile
The stones they threw up rattled o'er my head,
25 And made me dizzier; till within a while

"My maids were all about me, and my head
On Launcelot's breast was being soothed away
From its white chattering, until Launcelot
said—

"By God! I will not tell you more to-day,
Judge any way you will—what matters it?
You know quite well the story of that fray,

"How Launcelot stilled their bawling, the mad
fit
That caught up Gauwaine—all, all, verily,
But just that which would save me; these
things flit.

"Nevertheless you, O Sir Gauwaine, lie,
Whatever may have happened these long
years,

45 God knows I speak truth, saying that you lie!

"All I have said is truth, by Christ's dear tears."
She would not speak another word, but stood
Turned sideways; listening, like a man who
50 hears

His brother's trumpet sounding through the

wood

Of his foes' lances. She leaned eagerly,
And gave a slight spring sometimes, as she
could

At last hear something really, joyfully
Her cheek grew crimson, as the headlong speed
Of the roan charger drew all men to see,
The knight who came was Launcelot at good
need.

THE HAYSTACK IN THE FLOODS¹

Had she come all the way for this,
To part at last without a kiss?
Yea, had she borne the dirt and rain
That her own eyes might see him slam
Beside the haystack in the floods?

Along the dripping leafless woods,
The stirrup touching either shoe,
She rode astride as troopers do;
With kirtle kilted to her knee,
To which the mud splashed wretchedly,
And the wet dripped from every tice
Upon her head and heavy hair,
And on her eyelids broad and fair;
The tears and rain ran down her face.
By fits and starts they rode apace,
And very often was his place
Far off from her; he had to ride
Ahead, to see what might betide
When the roads crossed, and sometimes, when
There rose a murmuring from his men,
Had to turn back with promises,
Ah me! she had but little ease;
And often for pure doubt and dread
She sobbed, made giddy in the head
By the swift riding; while, for cold,
Her slender fingers scarce could hold
The wet reins; yea, and scarcely, too,
She felt the foot within her shoe
Against the stirrup: all for this,
To part at last without a kiss
Besides the haystack in the floods.

For when they neared that old soaked hay,

¹ This poem gives the story of the events which befell Sir Robert de Marny, an English knight, and his sweetheart, after they met Godmar, a French knight who ambushed them. The time is shortly after the battle of Poitiers (1356).

They saw across the only way
That Judas, Godmar, and the three
Red running lions dismally
Gunned from his pennon, under which,
5 In one straight line along the ditch,
They counted thirty heads.

So then,
While Robert turned round to his men,
10 She saw at once the wretched end,
And, stooping down, tried hard to rend
Her cof the wrong way from her head,
And hid her eyes, while Robert said
"Nay, love, 'tis scarcely two to one,
15 At Poitiers where we made them run
So fast—why, sweet my love, good cheer,
The Gascon frontier is so near,
Nought after this."

But, "O," she said,
20 "My God! my God! I have to tread
The long way back without you, then
The court at Paris; those six men,
The gratings of the Chatelet,
25 The swift Seine on some rainy day
Like this, and people standing by,
And laughing, while my weak hands try
To recollect how strong men swim,
All this, or else a life with him,
30 For which I should be damned at last,
Would God that this next hour were past!"

He answered not, but cried his cry,
"St. George for Marny!" cheerily,
35 And laid his hand upon her rein.
Alas! no man of all his train
Gave back that cheery cry again,
And, while for rage his thumb beat fast
Upon his sword-hilts, some one cast
40 About his neck a kerchief long,
And bound him.

Then they went along
To Godmar; who said: "Now, Jehane,
45 Your lover's life is on the wane
So fast, that, if this very hour
You yield not as my paramour,
He will not see the rain leave off—
Nay, keep your tongue from gibe and scoff,
50 Sir Robert, or I slay you now."

She laid her hand upon her brow,

NARRATIVE POETRY · WILLIAM MORRIS

Then gazed upon the palm, as though
 She thought her forehead bled, and—"No."
 She said, and turned her head away,
 As there were nothing else to say,
 And everything were settled: red
 Grew Godmar's face from chin to head:
 "Jehane, on yonder hill there stands
 My castle, guarding well my lands:
 What hinders me from taking you,
 And doing that I list to do
 To your fair wilful body, while
 Your knight lies dead?"

A wicked smile

Wrinkled her face, her lips grew thin,
 A long way out she thrust her chin:
 "You know that I should strangle you
 While you were sleeping, or bite through
 Your throat, by God's help—ah!" she said,
 "Lord Jesus, pity your poor maid!
 For in such wise they hem me in,
 I cannot choose but sin and sin,
 Whatever happens: yet I think
 They could not make me eat or drink,
 And so should I just reach my rest."
 "Nay, if you do not my behest,
 O Jehane! though I love you well,"
 Said Godmar, "would I fail to tell
 All that I know." "Foul lies," she said.
 "Eh? lies my Jehane? by God's head,
 At Paris folks would deem them true!
 Do you know, Jehane, they cry for you,
 'Jehane the brown! Jehane the brown!
 Give us Jehane to burn or drown!—
 Eh—gag me Robert!—sweet my friend,
 This were indeed a piteous end
 For those long fingers, and long feet,
 And long neck, and smooth shoulders sweet;
 An end that few men would forget
 That saw it—So, an hour yet:
 Consider, Jehane, which to take
 Of life or death!"

So, scarce awake,

Dismounting, did she leave that place,
 And totter some yards: with her face
 Turned upward to the sky she lay,

Her head on a wet heap of hay,
 And fell asleep: and while she slept,
 And did not dream, the minutes crept
 Round to the twelve again; but she,
 5 Being waked at last, sighed quietly,
 And strangely childlike came, and said:
 "I will not." Straightway Godmar's head,
 As though it hung on strong wires, turned
 Most sharply round, and his face burned.

10 For Robert—both his eyes were dry,
 He could not weep, but gloomily
 He seemed to watch the rain, yea, too,
 His lips were firm; he tried once more
 15 To touch her lips; she reached out, sore
 And vain desire so tortured them,
 The poor grey lips, and now the hem
 Of his sleeve brushed them.

With a start

20 Up Godmar rose, thrust them apart;
 From Robert's throat he loosed the bands
 Of silk and mail, with empty hands
 Held out, she stood and gazed, and saw,
 25 The long bright blade without a flaw
 Glide out from Godmar's sheath, his hand
 In Robert's hair; she saw him bend
 Back Robert's head; she saw him send
 The thin steel down; the blow told well,
 30 Right backward the knight Robert fell,
 And moaned as dogs do, being half dead,
 Unwitting, as I deem: so then
 Godmar turned grinning to his men,
 Who ran, some five or six, and beat
 35 His head to pieces at their feet.

Then Godmar turned again and said:
 "So Jehane, the first fitte² is read!
 Take note, my lady, that your way
 40 Lies backward to the Chatelet!"
 She shook her head and gazed awhile
 At her cold hands with a rueful smile,
 As though this thing had made her mad.

45 This was the parting that they had
 Beside the haystack in the floods.

² chapter.

TWENTIETH CENTURY

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

Reading the early lives of Maschfield, Sandburg, Lindsay, and other moderns, the student may realize for himself that the popular myth making the poet an exalted person apart is just that, a myth. Who would guess, for example, that the author of one of the most popular long poems of the twentieth century—Tristram—had once been a subway inspector and clerk? With the early encouragement of Theodore Roosevelt, Robinson (1869–1935) went on to become one of the most prolific of the first rank of modern American poets. A frequent winner of the Pulitzer Prize, he developed an original idiom, mastered the art of the short characterization, and also turned out many long allegories in a pessimistic, though not hopeless, vein. Robinson veers toward the intellectual, sometimes grows monotonous in his phrases and rhythms, but is not obscure or over-symbolistic. (See also I, 345.)

RICHARD CORY*

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,
We people on the pavement looked at him: 25
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean favored, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed,
And he was always human when he talked; 30
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
"Good-morning," and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich—yes, richer than a king— 35
And admirably schooled in every grace:
In fine, we thought that he was everything
To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,
And went without the meat, and cursed the

* From *Collected Poems* by Edwin Arlington Robinson; by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons

bread,
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
Went home and put a bullet through his head.

MINIVER CHEEVY*

Miniver Cheevy, child of scorn,
Grew lean while he assailed the seasons;
He wept that he was ever born, 10
And he had reasons.

Miniver loved the days of old
When swords were bright and steeds were prancing, 15
The vision of a warrior bold
Would set him dancing.

Miniver sighed for what was not, 20
And dreamed, and rested from his labors;
He dreamed of Thebes and Camelot,
And Priam's neighbors.

Miniver mourned the ripe renown
That made so many a name so fragrant, 25
He mourned Romance, now on the town,
And Art, a vagrant.

Miniver loved the Medici,
Albeit he had never seen one; 30
He would have sinned incessantly
Could he have been one.

Miniver cursed the commonplace
And eyed a khaki suit with loathing; 35
He missed the medieval grace
Of iron clothing.

Miniver scorned the gold he sought,

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But sore annoyed was he without it;
Miniver thought, and thought, and thought,
And thought about it.

Miniver Cheevy, born too late,
Scratched his head and kept on thinking;
Miniver coughed, and called it fate,
And kept on drinking.

BEN JONSON ENTERTAINS A
MAN FROM STRATFORD*

You are a friend then, as I make it out,
Of our man Shakespeare, who alone of us
Will put an ass's head in Fairyland
As he would add a shilling to more shillings,
All most harmonious—and out of his
Miraculous inviolable increase
Fills Ilion,¹ Rome, or any town you like
Of olden time with timeless Englishmen;
And I must wonder what you think of him—
All you down there where your small Avon
flows
By Stratford, and where you're an Alderman.
Some, for a guess, would have him riding back
To be a farrier there, or say a dyer;
Or maybe one of your adept surveyors;
Or like enough the wizard of all tanners.
Not you—no fear of that; for I discern
In you a kindling of the flame that saves—
The nimble element, the true caloric;
I see it, and was told of it, moreover,
By our discriminate friend himself, no other.
Had you been one of the sad average,
As he would have it—meaning, as I take it,
The sinew and the solvent of our Island,
You'd not be buying beer for this Terpander's²
Approved and estimated friend Ben Jonson;
He'd never foist it as a part of his
Contingent entertainment of a townsman
While he goes off rehearsing, as he must,
If he shall ever be the Duke of Stratford.
And my words are no shadow on your town—
Far from it; for one town's like another
As all are unlike London. Oh, he knows it—

And there's the Stratford in him; he denies it,
And there's the Shakespeare in him. So, God
help him!

5 I tell him he needs Greek; but neither God
Nor Greek will help him. Nothing will help
that man.

You see the fates have given him so much,
He must have all or perish—or look out
10 Of London, where he sees too many lords.
They're part of half what ails him: I suppose
There's nothing fouler down among the
demons

Than what it is he feels when he remembers
15 The dust and sweat and ointment of his calling
With his lords looking on and laughing at him.
King as he is, he can't be king *de facto*,
And that's as well, because he wouldn't like it;
He'd frame a lower rating of men then
20 Than he has now; and after that would come
An abdication or an apoplexy.

He can't be king, not even king of Stratford—
Though half the world, if not the whole of it,
May crown him with a crown that fits no king
25 Save Lord Apollo's homesick emissary:
Not there on Avon, or on any stream
Where Naiads and their white arms are no
more

Shall he find home again. It's all too bad.
30 But there's a comfort, for he'll have that
House—

The best you ever saw; and he'll be there
Anon, as you're an Alderman. Good God!
He makes me lie awake o' nights and laugh.

35 And you have known him from his origin,
You tell me; and a most uncommon urchin
He must have been to the few seeing ones—
A trifle terrifying, I dare say,

40 Discovering a world with his man's eyes,
Quite as another lad might see some finches,
If he looked hard and had an eye for Nature.
But this one had his eyes and their foretelling,
And he had you to fare with, and what else?

45 He must have had a father and a mother—
In fact I've heard him say so—and a dog,
As a boy should, I venture; and the dog,
Most likely, was the only man who knew him.
A dog, for all I know, is what he needs

50 As much as anything right here today,
To counsel him about his disillusion,
Old aches, and parturitions of what's coming—

* From Edwin Arlington Robinson, *Collected Poems*, copyright, 1900. By permission of the Macmillan Company, publishers.

¹ ancient Troy.

² Terpander was the supposed founder of the first Greek school of music.

A dog of orders, an emeritus,
To wag his tail at him when he comes home,
And then to put his paws up on his knees
And say, "For God's sake, what's it all about?"

I don't know whether he needs a dog or not—
Or what he needs. I tell him he needs Greek,
I'll talk of rules and Aristotle with him,
And if his tongue's at home he'll say to that,
"I have your word that Aristotle knows,
And you mine that I don't know Aristotle."
He's all at odds with all the unities,
And what's yet worse, it doesn't seem to matter,
He treads along through Time's old wilderness
As if the tramp of all the centuries
Had left no roads—and there are none, for
him;

He doesn't see them, even with those eyes,—
And that's a pity, or I say it is.
Accordingly we have him as we have him—
Going his way, the way that he goes best,
A pleasant animal with no great noise
Or nonsense anywhere to set him off—
Save only divers and inclement devils
Have made of late his heart their dwelling
place.

A flame half ready to fly out sometimes
At some annoyance may be fanned up in him,
But soon it falls, and when it falls goes out,
He knows how little room there is in there
For crude and futile animosities,
And how much for the joy of being whole,
And how much for long sorrow and old pain.
On our side there are some who may be given
To grow old wondering what he thinks of us
And some above us, who are, in his eyes,
Above himself,—and that's quite right and
English.

Yet here we smile, or disappoint the gods
Who made it so: the gods have always eyes
To see men scratch, and they see one down
here

Who itches, manor-bitten to the bone,
Albeit he knows himself—yes, yes, he knows—
The lord of more than England and of more
Than all the seas of England in all time
Shall ever wash. D'ye wonder that I laugh?
He sees me, and he doesn't seem to care,
And why the devil should he? I can't tell you.

I'll meet him out alone of a bright Sunday,
Trim, rather spruce, and quite the gentleman.

"What ho, my lord!" say I. He doesn't
hear me;

Wherefore I have to pause and look at him.
He's not enormous, but one looks at him

5 A little on the round if you insist,
For now, God save the mark, he's growing old,
He's five and forty, and to hear him talk
These days you'd call him eighty, then you'd
add

10 More years to that. He's old enough to be
The father of a world, and so he is
"Ben, you're a scholar, what's the time of day?"
Says he, and there shines out of him again
An aged light that has no age or station—
15 The mystery that's his—a mischievous
Half-mad serenity that laughs at fame
For being won so easy, and at friends
Who laugh at him for what he wants the
most,

20 And for his dukedom down in Warwick-
shire,—

By which you see we're all a little jealous . . .
Poor Greene!³ I fear the color of his name
Was even as that of his ascending soul,

25 And he was one where there are many
others,—

Some scrivening to the end against their fate,
Their puppets all in ink and all to die there,
And some with hands that once would shade

30 an eye
That scanned Euripides and Æschylus⁴
Will reach by this time for a pot house mop
To slush their first and last of royalties.

Poor devils! and they all play to his hand,
35 For so it was in Athens and old Rome.
But that's not here or there, I've wandered off.
Greene does it, or I'm careful. Where's that
boy?

40 Yes, he'll go back to Stratford. And we'll miss
him?

Dear sir, there'll be no London here without
him.

We'll all be riding, one of these fine days,
45 Down there to see him—and his wife won't
like us;

And then we'll think of what he never said
Of women—which, if taken all in all

50 ³ Robert Greene, contemporary of Shakespeare,
also a playwright, who attacked Shakespeare in
"Groatsworth of Wit."

⁴ Greek tragic dramatists.

With what he did say, would buy many
horses.
Though nowadays he's not so much for
women:
"So few of them," he says, "are worth the
guessing."
But there's a worm at work when he says
that,
And while he says it one feels in the air
A deal of circumambient hocus-pocus.
They've had him dancing till his toes were
tender,
And he can feel 'em now, come chilly rains.
There's no long cry for going into it,
However, and we don't know much about it.
But you in Stratford, like most here in London,
Have more now in the *Sonnets* than you paid
for;
He's put one there with all her poison on,
To make a singing fiction of a shadow
That's in his life a fact, and always will be.
But she's no care of ours, though Time, I fear,
Will have a more reverberant ado
About her than about another one
Who seems to have decoyed him, married
him,
And sent him scuttling on his way to London—
With much already learned, and more to
learn,
And more to follow. Lord! how I see him now,
Pretending, maybe trying, to be like us.
Whatever he may have meant, we never had
him;
He failed us, or escaped, or what you will—
And there was that about him (God knows
what—
We'd flayed another had he tried it on us)
That made as many of us as had wits
More fond of all his easy distances
Than one another's noise and clap-your-
shoulder.
But think you not, my friend, he'd never talk!
Talk? He was eldritch at it; and we listened—
Thereby acquiring much we knew before
About ourselves, and hitherto had held
Irrelevant, or not prime to the purpose.
And there were some, of course, and there be
now,
Disordered and reduced amazedly
To resignation by the mystic seal
Of young finality the gods had laid
On everything that made him a young demon;

And one or two shot looks at him already
As he had been their executioner;
And once or twice he was, not knowing it—
Or knowing, being sorry for poor clay
5 And saying nothing . . . Yet, for all his
engines,
You'll meet a thousand of an afternoon
Who strut and sun themselves and see
around 'em
10 A world made out of more that has a reason
Than his, I swear, that he sees here today;
Though he may scarcely give a Fool an exit
But we mark how he sees in everything
A law that, given that we flout it once too
15 often,
Brings fire and iron down on our naked heads
To me it looks as if the power that made him,
For fear of giving all things to one creature,
Left out the first—faith, innocence, illusion,
20 Whatever 'tis that keeps us out o' Bedlam—
And thereby, for his too consuming vision,
Empowered him out of nature; though to see
him,
You'd never guess what's going on inside him
25 He'll break out some day like a keg of ale
With too much independent frenzy in it;
And all for cellaring what he knows won't
keep,
And what he'd best forget—but that he can't
30 You'll have it, and have more than I'm foretell
ing;
And there'll be such a roaring at the Globe
As never stunned the bleeding gladiators.
He'll have to change the color of its hair
35 A bit, for now he calls it Cleopatra.
Black hair woud never do for Cleopatra.
But you and I are not yet two old women,
And you're a man of office. What he does
Is more to you than how it is he does it—
40 And that's what the Lord God has never told
him.
They worked together, and the Devil
helps 'em;
They do it of a morning, or if not,
45 They do it of a night; in which event
He's peevish of a morning. He seems old;
He's not the proper stomach or the sleep—
And they're two sovran agents to conserve
him
50 Against the fiery art that has no mercy
But what's in that prodigious grand new
House.

I gather something happening in his boyhood
Fulfilled him with a boy's determination
To make all Stratford 'ware of him. Well,
well,

I hope at last he'll have his joy of it,
And all his pigs and sheep and bellowing
beeves,
And frogs and owls and unicorns, moreover,
Be less than hell to his attendant ears
Oh, past a doubt we'll all go down to see him. 10

He may be wise. With London two days off,
Down there some wind of heaven may yet re-
vive him,

But there's no quickening breath from
anywhere
Shall make of him again the young poised faun
From Warwickshire, who'd made, it seems,
already

A legend of himself before I came
To blink before the last of his first lightning.
Whatever there be, there'll be no more of that;
The coming on of his old monster Time
Has made him a still man; and he has dreams
Were fair to think on once, and all found
hollow.

He knows how much of what men paint them-
selves

Would blister in the light of what they are;
He sees how much of what was great now 30
shares

An eminence transformed and ordinary;
He knows too much of what the world has
hushed

In others, to be loud now for himself,
He knows now at what height low enemies
May reach his heart, and high friends let him
fall;

But what not even such as he may know
Bedevils him the worst: his lark may sing
At heaven's gate how he will, and for as long
As joy may listen, but *he* sees no gate,
Save one whereat the spent clay waits a little
Before the churchyard has it, and the worm.

Not long ago, late in an afternoon,
I came on him unseen down Lambeth way,
And on my life I was afraid of him.
He gloomed and mumbled like a soul from
Tophet,
His hands behind him and his head bent
solemn.

"What is it now," said I,—*"another woman?"*
That made him sorry for me, and he smiled
"No, Ben," he mused, "it's Nothing. It's all
Nothing.

5 We come, we go; and when we're done, we're
done."

Spiders and flies—we're mostly one or
t'other—

We come, we go, and when we're done, we're
done, 10

"By God, you sing that song as if you knew it!"
Said I, by way of cheering him, "what ails ye?"
"I think I must have come down here to
think,"

15 Says he to that, and pulls his little beard;

"Your fly will serve as well as anybody,
And what's his hon? He flies, and flies, and
flies,

And in his fly's mind has a brave appearance;

20 And then your spider gets him in her net,

And eats him out, and hangs him up to dry.

That's Nature, the kind mother of us all.

And then your slattern housemaid swings her
broom,

25 And where's your spider? And that's Nature,
also.

It's Nature, and it's Nothing. It's all Nothing.
It's all a world where bugs and emperors
Go singularly back to the same dust,

30 Each in his time; and the old, ordered stave
That sang together, Ben, will sing the same
Old stave to-morrow."

When he talks like that,

35 There's nothing for a human man to do
But lead him to some grateful nook like this
Where we be now, and there to make him
drink.

He'll drink, for love of me, and then be sick,

40 A sad sign always in a man of parts,
And always very ominous. The great
Should be as large in liquor as in love,—
And our great friend is not so large in either;
One disaffects him, and the other fails him;

45 Whatso he drinks that has an antic in it,
He's wondering what's to pay in his insides;
And while his eyes are on the Cyprian⁵
He's fribbling all the time with that damned
House.

50 We laugh here at his thrift, but after all

⁵ here, a wench

NARRATIVE POETRY · ROBERT FROST

It may be thrift that saves him from the devil;
 God gave it, anyhow,—and we'll suppose
 He knew the compound of his handiwork.
 To-day the clouds are with him, but anon
 He'll out of 'em enough to shake the tree
 Of life itself and bring down fruit
 unheard-of,—
 And, throwing in the bruised and whole
 together,
 Prepare a wine to make us drunk with
 wonder;
 And if he live, there'll be a sunset spell
 Thrown over him as over a glassed lake
 That yesterday was all a black wild water.

God send he live to give us, if no more,
 What now's a-rampage in him, and exhibit,
 With a decent half-allegiance to the ages
 An earnest of at least a casual eye
 Turned once on what he owes to Gutenberg,
 And to the fealty of more centuries
 Than are as yet a picture in our vision.
 "There's time enough,—I'll do it when I'm
 old,
 And we're immortal men," he says to that;
 And then he says to me, "Ben, what's
 'immortal'?"

Think you by any force of ordination
 It may be nothing of a sort more noisy
 Than a small oblivion of component ashes
 That of a dream-addicted world was once
 A moving atomy much like your friend here?"

Nothing will help that man. To make him
 laugh,
 I said then he was a mad mountebank,—
 And by the Lord I nearer made him cry.
 I could have eat an eft then, on my knees,
 Tail, claws, and all of him; for I had stung
 The king of men, who had no sting for me,
 And I had hurt him in his memories;
 And I say now, as I shall say again,
 I love the man this side idolatry.
 He'll do it when he's old, he says. I wonder.
 He may not be so ancient as all that.
 For such as he the thing that is to do
 Will do itself—but there's a reckoning;
 The sessions that are now too much his own,
 The roiling inward of a still outside,
 The churning out of all those blood-fed lines, 50
 The nights of many schemes and little sleep,
 The full brain hammered hot with too much

thinking,
 The vexed heart over-worn with too much
 aching—
 This weary jangling of conjoined affairs
 5 Made out of elements that have no end,
 And all confused at once, I understand,
 Is not what makes a man to live forever.
 O, no, not now! He'll not be going now:
 There'll be time yet for God knows what
 10 explosions
 Before he goes. He'll stay awhile. Just wait.
 Just wait a year or two for Cleopatra,
 For she's to be a balsam and a comfort;
 And that's not all a jape of mine now, either.
 15 For granted once the old way of Apollo
 Sings in a man, he may then, if he's able,
 Strike unafraid whatever strings he will
 Upon the last and wildest of new lyres,
 Nor out of his new magic, though it hymn
 20 The shrieks of dungeoned hell, shall he create
 A madness or a gloom to shut quite out
 A cleaving daylight, and a last great calm
 Triumphant over shipwreck and all storms.
 He might have given Aristotle creeps,
 25 But surely would have given him his *katharsis*
 He'll not be going yet. There's too much yet
 Unsung within the man. But when he goes,
 I'd stake ye coin o' the realm his only care
 For a phantom world he sounded and found
 30 wanting
 Will be a portion here, a portion there,
 Of this or that thing or some other thing
 That has a patent and intrinsic
 Equivalence in those egregious shillings.
 35 And yet he knows, God help him! Tell me,
 now,
 If ever there was anything let loose
 On earth by gods or devils heretofore
 Like this mad, careful, proud, indifferent
 40 Shakespeare!
 Where was it, if it ever was? By heaven,
 'Twas never yet in Rhodes or Pergamon—
 In Thebes or Nineveh, a thing like this!
 No thing like this was ever out of England;
 45 And that he knows. I wonder if he cares.
 Perhaps he does. . . . O Lord, that House in
 Stratford!

ROBERT FROST

*Although he was born in San Francisco, Frost
 (1875–) belongs to New England by res-*

idence and poetic citizenship. With the farm, the factory, journalism, and teaching in his background, he developed from the early volume, *A Boy's Will*, to a point at which he was accepted abroad and at home as one of the finest poetic voices in America. Long associated with various colleges as artist-in-residence (he is now Ticknor Fellow in Humanities at Dartmouth), Frost has won countless honors and prizes. He is the poet of the rural scene with no false sentiment or "philosophy" so dear to newspaper scribblers. He has wit, simplicity, and easy grace—few men have been so devoid of pose, so truly natural. Perhaps the most startling fact about Frost's literary fame is that it came relatively late in life. (See also I, 352.)

THE DEATH OF THE HIRED MAN*

Mary sat musing on the lamp-flame at the table 20
Waiting for Warren. When she heard his step,
She ran on tip-toe down the darkened passage
To meet him in the doorway with the news
And put him on his guard. "Silas is back."
She pushed him outward with her through the 25
door

And shut it after her. "Be kind," she said.
She took the market things from Warren's arms
And set them on the porch, then drew him
down

To sit beside her on the wooden steps.
"When was I ever anything but kind to him?
But I'll not have the fellow back," he said

"I told him so last haying, didn't I?
'If he left then,' I said, 'that ended it.'
What good is he? Who else will harbour him
At his age for the little he can do?

What help he is there's no depending on.
Off he goes always when I need him most.

'He thinks he ought to earn a little pay,
Enough at least to buy tobacco with.
So he won't have to beg and be beholden.'

'All right,' I say, 'I can't afford to pay
Any fixed wages, though I wish I could.'
'Someone else can.' 'Then someone else will 45
have to.'

I shouldn't mind his bettering himself
If that was what it was. You can be certain,

When he begins like that, there's someone at
him

Trying to coax him off with pocket money,—
In haying time, when any help is scarce.

5 In winter he comes back to us. I'm done."

"Sh! not so loud—he'll hear you," Mary said.

"I want him to—he'll have to soon or late."

"He's worn out. He's asleep beside the stove.
When I came up from Rowe's I found him
here,

Huddled against the barn-door fast asleep,

15 A miserable sight, and frightening, too—

You needn't smile—I didn't recognise him—
I wasn't looking for him—and he's changed.
Wait till you see."

"Where did you say he'd been?"

"He didn't say. I dragged him to the house,
And gave him tea and tried to make him smoke.
I tried to make him talk about his travels.
25 Nothing would do: he just kept nodding off."

"What did he say? Did he say anything?"

"But little."

30

"Anything? Mary, confess

He said he'd come to ditch the meadow for
me."

35

"Warren!"

"But did he? I just want to know."

"Of course he did. What would you have him
say?

40 Surely you wouldn't grudge the poor old man
Some humble way to save his self-respect.

He added, if you really care to know,

He meant to clear the upper pasture, too.

That sounds like something you have heard
before?

Warren, I wish you could have heard the way

He jumbled everything. I stopped to look

Two or three times—he made me feel so
queer—

50

To see if he was talking in his sleep.

He ran on Harold Wilson—you remember—

* From *Collected Poems of Robert Frost*. Copyright, 1930, 1939, by Henry Holt and Company, Inc. Copyright, 1936, by Robert Frost

NARRATIVE POETRY · ROBERT FROST

The boy you had in haying four years since.
He's finished school, and teaching in his college.

Silas declares you'll have to get him back.
He says they two will make a team for work:
Between them they will lay this farm as smooth!

The way he mixed that in with other things.
He thinks young Wilson a likely lad, though daft

On education—you know how they fought
All through July under the blazing sun,
Silas up on the cart to build the load,
Harold along beside to pitch it on."

"Yes, I took care to keep well out of earshot."

"Well, those days trouble Silas like a dream.
You wouldn't think they would. How some things linger!

Harold's young college boy's assurance piqued him.

After so many years he still keeps finding
Good arguments he sees he might have used.
I sympathize. I know just how it feels
To think of the right thing to say too late.

Harold's associated in his mind with Latin.
He asked me what I thought of Harold's saying
He studied Latin like the violin

Because he liked it—that an argument!
He said he couldn't make the boy believe
He could find water with a hazel prong—
Which showed how much good school had ever done him.

He wanted to go over that. But most of all
He thinks if he could have another chance
To teach him how to build a load of hay—"

"I know, that's Silas' one accomplishment.
He bundles every forkful in its place,
And tags and numbers it for future reference,
So he can find and easily dislodge it
In the unloading. Silas does that well.
He takes it out in bunches like big birds' nests.
You never see him standing on the hay
He's trying to lift, straining to lift himself."

"He thinks if he could teach him that, he'd be
Some good perhaps to someone in the world.
He hates to see a boy the fool of books.
Poor Silas, so concerned for other folk,
And nothing to look backward to with pride,

And nothing to look forward to with hope,
So now and never any different."

Part of a moon was falling down the west,
5 Dragging the whole sky with it to the hills.
Its light poured softly in her lap. She saw
And spread her apron to it. She put out her hand

Among the harp-like morning-glory strings,
10 Taut with the dew from garden bed to eaves,
As if she played unheard the tenderness
That wrought on him beside her in the night
"Warren," she said, "he has come home to die
You needn't be afraid he'll leave you this time

15 "Home," he mocked gently.

"Yes, what else but home
It all depends on what you mean by home.
20 Of course he's nothing to us, any more
Than was the hound that came a stranger to us
Out of the woods, worn out upon the trail."

"Home is the place where, when you have to
25 go there,
They have to take you in."

"I should have called it
Something you somehow haven't to deserve

30 Warren leaned out and took a step or two,
Picked up a little stick, and brought it back
And broke it in his hand and tossed it by.
"Silas has better claim on us, you think,
35 Than on his brother? Thirteen little miles
As the road winds would bring him to his door
Silas has walked that far no doubt today.
Why didn't he go there? His brother's rich,
A somebody—director in the bank."

40 "He never told us that."

"We know it though."

45 "I think his brother ought to help, of course.
I'll see to that if there is need. He ought of right
To take him in, and might be willing to—
He may be better than appearances.
But have some pity on Silas. Do you think
50 If he'd had any pride in claiming kin
Or anything he looked for from his brother,
He'd keep so still about him all this time?"

"I wonder what's between them."

"I can tell you.
Silas is what he is—we wouldn't mind him—
But just the kind that kinfolk can't abide.
He never did a thing so very bad.
He don't know why he isn't quite as good
As anyone. He won't be made ashamed
To please his brother, worthless though he is."

"I can't think Si ever hurt anyone."

"No, but he hurt my heart the way he lay
And rolled his old head on that sharp edged
chair-back.
He wouldn't let me put him on the lounge
You must go in and see what you can do
I made the bed up for him there tonight.
You'll be surprised at him—how much he's
broken.
His working days are done, I'm sure of it."

"I'd not be in a hurry to say that."

"I haven't been. Go, look, see for yourself
But, Warren, please remember how it is.
He's come to help you ditch the meadow.
He has a plan. You mustn't laugh at him.
He may not speak of it, and then he may.
I'll sit and see if that small sailing cloud
Will hit or miss the moon."

It hit the moon.
Then there were three there, making a dim
row,
The moon, the little silver cloud, and she.

Warren returned—too soon, it seemed to her.
Slipped to her side, caught up her hand and
waited.

"Warren?" she questioned.

"Dead," was all he answered

JOHN CROWE RANSOM

Ransom (1888—) grew up in the American South, studied at Vanderbilt and Oxford, and became known as a writer, editor, and professor of English—generally all at once, as at Kenyon, where he has taught and edited the

Review. *In his early days with the Fugitive group, Ransom, along with Warren and Tate, was an outspoken sectionalist, believing in shaping one's life according to the traditions of one's region. There is something of the Waste Land, of decay, of irony in his work, occasionally, allusions are difficult to fathom, but again, there are pleasant satire, freedom with words—a mixture of sweet and sour—which make for rewarding experience. (See also I, 376)*

CAPTAIN CARPENTER*

Captain Carpenter rose up in his prime
Put on his pistols and went riding out
But had got wellnigh nowhere at that time
Till he fell in with ladies in a rout.

It was a pretty lady and all her train
That played with him so sweetly but before
An hour she'd taken a sword with all her main
And twined him of his nose for evermore.

Captain Carpenter mounted up one day
And rode straightway into a stranger rogue
That looked unchristian but be that as may
The Captain did not wait upon prologue.

But drew upon him out of his great heart
The other swung against him with a club
And cracked his two legs at the shanny part
And let him roll and stick like any tub.

Captain Carpenter rode many a time
From male and female took he sundry harms
He met the wife of Satan crying "I'm
The she-wolf bids you shall bear no more
arms."

Their strokes and counters whistled in the wind
I wish he had delivered half his blows
But where she should have made off like a hind
The bitch bit off his arms at the elbows.

And Captain Carpenter parted with his ears
To a black devil that used him in this wise
O Jesus ere his threescore and ten years
Another had plucked out his sweet blue eyes.

* Reprinted from *Selected Poems* by John Crowe Ransom, by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Copyright, 1924, 1945 by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

NARRATIVE POETRY · STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT

Captain Carpenter got up on his roan
And sallied from the gate in hell's despite
I heard him asking in the grimmest tone
If any enemy yet there was to fight?

"To any adversary it is fame
If he risk to be wounded by my tongue
Or burnt in two beneath my red heart's flame
Such are the perils he is cast among.

"But if he can he has a pretty choice
From an anatomy with little to lose
Whether he cut my tongue and take my voice
Or whether it be my round red heart he
choose."

It was the neatest knave that ever was seen
Stepping in perfume from his lady's bower
Who at this word put in his merry men
And fell on Captain Carpenter like a tower.

I would not knock old fellows in the dust
But there lay Captain Carpenter on his back
His weapons were the old heart in his bust
And a blade shook between rotten teeth alack.

The rogue in scarlet and grey soon knew his
mind
He wished to get his trophy and depart
With gentle apology and touch refined
He pierced him and produced the Captain's
heart.

God's mercy rest on Captain Carpenter now
I thought him *Sirs* an honest gentleman
Citizen husband soldier and scholar enow
Let jangling kites eat of him if they can.

But God's deep curses follow after those
That shore him of his goodly nose and ears
His legs and strong arms at the two elbows
And eyes that had not watered seventy years.

The curse of hell upon the sleek upstart
That got the Captain finally on his back
And took the red red vitals of his heart
And made the kites to whet their beaks clack
clack.

STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT

Benét (1898-1943) was brought up at Army posts and educated at Yale, where he broke

into publication early. A member of a writing family, he turned out poems, novels, short stories, and two librettos for operas. His John Brown's Body, which used various verse forms and prose, is a noble attempt to achieve the panoramic sweep of an epic struggle; it won the Pulitzer Prize as well as popular acclaim, and was proof that narrative verse is definitely not dead. In short pieces Benét showed lyric ability, a satirical touch, and ballad technique on various occasions, thus refusing to be typed. His famous short story, The Devil and Daniel Webster, appears on II, 514.

THE BALLAD OF WILLIAM SYCAMORE*

My father, he was a mountaineer,
His fist was a knotty hammer;
He was quick on his feet as a running deer,
And he spoke with a Yankee stammer.

My mother, she was merry and brave,
And so she came to her labor,
With a tall green fir for her doctor grave
And a stream for her comforting neighbor.

And some are wrapped in the linen fine,
And some like a godling's scion;
But I was cradled on twigs of pine
In the skin of a mountain lion.

And some remember a white, starched lap
And a ewer with silver handles;
But I remember a coonskin cap
And the smell of bayberry candles.

The cabin logs with the bark still rough,
And my mother who laughed at trifles,
And the tall, lank visitors, brown as snuff,
With their long, straight squirrel-rifles.

I can hear them dance, like a foggy song,
Through the deepest one of my slumbers,
The fiddle squeaking the boots along
And my father calling the numbers.

The quick feet shaking the puncheon-floor,
And the fiddle squeaking and squealing,

* From *Selected Works of Stephen Vincent Benét*, published by Rinehart & Co., Inc. Copyright, 1922, by Stephen Vincent Benét.

STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT · NARRATIVE POETRY

Till the dried herbs rattled above the door
And the dust went up to the ceiling.

There are children lucky from dawn till dusk,
But never a child so lucky!
For I cut my teeth on "Money Musk"
In the Bloody Ground of Kentucky!

When I grew tall as the Indian corn,
My father had little to lend me,
But he gave me his great, old powder-horn
And his woodsman's skill to befriend me.

With a leather shirt to cover my back,
And a redskin nose to unravel
Each forest sign, I carried my pack
As far as a scout could travel.

Till I lost my boyhood and found my wife,
A girl like a Salem clipper!
A woman straight as a hunting-knife
With eyes as bright as the Dipper!

We cleared our camp where the buffalo feed,
Unheard-of streams were our flagons,
And I sowed my sons like apple-seed
On the trail of the Western wagons.

They were right, tight boys, never sulky or
slow,
A fruitful, a goodly muster.
The eldest died at the Alamo.
The youngest fell with Custer.

The letter that told it burned my hand.
Yet we smiled and said, "So be it!"
But I could not live when they fenced the
land,
For it broke my heart to see it.

I saddled a red, unbroken colt
And rode him into the day there;
And he threw me down like a thunderbolt
And rolled on me as I lay there.

The hunter's whistle hummed in my ear
As the city-men tried to move me,
And I died in my boots like a pioneer
With the whole wide sky above me.

Now I lie in the heart of the fat, black soil,
Like the seed of a prairie-thistle;

It has washed my bones with honey and oil
And picked them clean as a whistle.

And my youth returns, like the rains of Spring,
5 And my sons, like the wild-geese flying,
And I lie and hear the meadow lark sing
And have much content in my dying.

Go play with the towns you have built of blocks
10 The towns where you would have bound me!
I sleep in my earth like a tired fox,
And my buffalo have found me.

15 METROPOLITAN NIGHTMARE*

It rained quite a lot, that spring. You woke in
the morning
And saw the sky still clouded, the streets still
20 wet,
But nobody noticed so much, except the taxis
And the people who parade. You don't, in a
city.
The parks got very green. All the trees were
25 green
Far into July and August, heavy with leaf,
Heavy with leaf and the long roots boring and
spreading,
But nobody noticed that but the city gardeners
30 And they don't talk.

Oh, on Sundays, perhaps, you'd notice
Walking through certain blocks, by the shut,
proud houses
35 With the windows boarded, the people gone
away,
You'd suddenly see the queerest small shoots of
green
Poking through cracks and crevices in the stone
40 And a bird-sown flower, red on a balcony,
But then you made jokes about grass growing
in the streets
And politics and grass-roots—and there were
songs
45 And gags and a musical show called "Hot and
Wet."

It all made a good box for the papers. When
the flamingo
Flew into a meeting of the Board of Estimate,

50 *From *Selected Works of Stephen Vincent Benét*, published by Rinehart & Co., Inc. Copyright, 1933, by Stephen Vincent Benét.

NARRATIVE POETRY · STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT

The new Mayor acted at once and called the
photographers.
When the first green creeper crawled upon
Brooklyn Bridge,
They thought it was ornamental. They let it
stay.

There was the year the termites came to New
York
And they don't do well in cold climates—but 10
listen, Joe,
They're only ants and ants are nothing but in-
sects.
It was funny and yet rather wistful, in a way
(As Heywood Brown pointed out in the *World- 15*
Telegram)
To think of them looking for wood in a steel
city.
It made you feel about life. It was too divine.
There were funny pictures by all the smart, 20
funny artists
And Macy's ran a terribly clever ad:
"The Widow's Termite" or something.

There was no 25
Disturbance. Even the Communists didn't pro-
test
And say they were Morgan hirelings. It was too
hot,
Too hot to protest, too hot to get excited. 30
An even, African heat, lush, fertile and steamy,
That soaked into bone and mind and never
once broke.
The warm rain fell in fierce showers and ceased
and fell. 35
Pretty soon you got used to its always being
that way.

You got used to the changed rhythm, the al-
tered beat, 40
To people walking slower, to the whole bright
Fierce pulse of the city slowing, to men in
shorts,
To the new sun-helmets from Best's and the
cops' white uniforms, 45
And the long noon-rest in the offices, every-
where.
It wasn't a plan or anything. It just happened.
The fingers tapped the keys slower, the office-
boys 50
Dozed on their benches, the bookkeeper
yawned at his desk.

The A. T. & T. was the first to change the
shifts
And establish an official siesta-room,
But they were always efficient. Mostly it just
5 Happened like sleep itself, like a tropic sleep.
Till even the Thirties were deserted at noon
Except for a few tourists and one damp cop.
They ran boats to see the big lilies on the
North River
But it was only the tourists who really noticed 10
The flocks of rose-and-green parrots and par-
akeets
Nesting in the stone crannies of the Cathedral.
The rest of us had forgotten when they first
came. 15
There wasn't any real change, it was just a
heat spell,
A rain spell, a funny summer, a weather-man's
joke,
In spite of the geraniums three feet high 20
In the tin-can gardens of Hester and Des-
brosses.
New York was New York. It couldn't turn in-
side out.
25 When they got the news from Woods Hole
about the Gulf Stream,
The *Times* ran an adequate story.
But nobody reads those stories but science-
cranks.

Until, one day, a somnolent city-editor
Gave a new cub the termite yarn to break his
teeth on.
The cub was just down from Vermont, so he
took the time. 35
He was serious about it. He went around.
He read all about termites in the Public Library
And it made him sore when they fired him.

So, one evening,
Talking with an old watchman, beside the first
Raw girders of the new Planetopolis Build-
ing
(Ten thousand brine-cooled offices, each with
shower) 45
He saw a dark line creeping across the rubble
And turned a flashlight on it.

"Say, buddy," he said,
50 "You better look out for those ants. They eat
wood, you know.
They'll have your shack down in no time."

STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT · NARRATIVE POETRY

The watchman spat.
"Oh, they've quit eating wood," he said, in a
casual voice,
"I thought everybody knew that."

—and, reaching down,
He pried from the insect jaws the bright crumb
of steel.

NIGHTMARE NUMBER THREE*

We had expected everything but revolt
And I kind of wonder myself when they
started thinking—
But there's no dice in that now.

• I've heard fellows say
They must have planned it for years and
maybe they did
Looking back, you can find little incidents here
and there,
Like the concrete-mixer in Jersey eating the
wop
Or the roto press that printed "Fiddle-dee-
dee!"
In a three-color process all over Senator Sloop,
Just as he was making a speech. The thing
about that
Was, how could it walk upstairs? But it was
upstairs,
Clicking and mumbling in the Senate Chamber.
They had to knock out the wall to take it away
And the wrecking-crew said it grinned.

It was only the best
Machines, of course, the superhuman machines,
The ones we'd built to be better than flesh and
bone,
But the cars were in it, of course . . .

and they hunted us
Like rabbits through the cramped streets on
that Bloody Monday,
The Madison Avenue busses leading the
charge.
The busses were pretty bad—but I'll not for-
get
The smash of glass when the Duesenberg left
the show-room

* From *Selected Works of Stephen Vincent Benét*, published by Rinehart & Co., Inc. Copyright, 1935, by Stephen Vincent Benét.

And pinned three brokers to the Racquet Club
steps
Or the long howl of the horns when they saw
men run.
5 When they saw them looking for holes in the
solid ground . . .
I guess they were tired of being hidden in
And stopped and started by pygmies for silly
ends,
10 Of wrapping cheap cigarettes and bad choco-
late bars,
Collecting nickels and waving platinum hair
And letting six million people live in a town.
15 I guess it was that. I guess they got tired of us
And the whole smell of human hands.

But it was a shock
To climb sixteen flights of stairs to Art Zuck-
20 ow's office
(Nobody took the elevators twice)
And find him strangled to death in a nest of
telephones,
The octopus-tendrils waving over his head,
25 And a sort of quiet humming filling the
air. . . .
Do they eat? . . . There was red . . . But I
did not stop to look.
I don't know yet how I got to the roof in time
30 And it's lonely, here on the roof.

For a while, I thought
That window-cleaner would make it, and keep
me company.
35 But they got him with his own hoist at the
sixteenth floor
And dragged him in, with a squeal.
You see, they cooperate. Well, we taught them
that
40 And it's fair enough, I suppose. You see, we
built them.
We taught them to think for themselves.
It was bound to come. You can see that it was
bound to come.
45 And it won't be so bad, in the country. I hate
to think
Of the reapers, running wild in the Kansas
fields,
And the transport planes like hawks on a
chickenyard,
50 But the horses might help. We might make a
deal with the horses.

NARRATIVE POETRY · STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT

At least, you've more chance, out there.

And they need us, too.

They're bound to realize that when they once
calm down.

They'll need oil and spare parts and adjust-
ments and tuning up.

Slaves? Well, in a way, you know, we were
slaves before.

There won't be so much real difference— 10
honest, there won't.

(I wish I hadn't looked into that beauty-parlor
And seen what was happening there.

But those are female machines and a bit high-
strung.)

Oh, we'll settle down. We'll arrange it. We'll
compromise.

It wouldn't make sense to wipe out the whole
human race.

Why, I bet if I went to my old Plymouth now 20

(Of course you'd have to do it the tactful way)
And said, "Look here! Who got you the swell
French horn?"

He wouldn't turn me over to those police cars;
5 At least I don't think he would.

Oh, it's going to be jake.

There won't be so much real difference—
honest, there won't—

10 And I'd go down in a minute and take my
chance—

I'm a good American and I always liked
them—

Except for one small detail that bothers me

15 And that's the food proposition. Because, you
see,

The concrete-mixer may have made a mistake,
And it looks like just high spirits,

But, if it's got so they like the flavor . . .
well . . .

LYRIC POETRY

SIXTEENTH CENTURY

SIR THOMAS WYATT

Living in an age of political intrigue and high adventure, Thomas Wyatt (1503-1542) knew the confines of prison life on at least two occasions. Cambridge-trained, well-traveled, he cut an attractive figure before Anne Boleyn but had to retire before a more formidable adversary, Henry VIII. As a contributor to Tottel's Miscellany, Wyatt was a pioneer in introducing the Italian sonnet to England and in developing the possibilities of native song.

THE LOVER COMPARETH HIS STATE TO A SHIP IN PERILOUS STORM TOSSED ON THE SEA

My galley charged with forgetfulness
Thorough sharp seas, in winter nights doth
pass,
T'ween rock and rock; and eke my foe, alas,
That is my lord, steereth with cruelness, 20
And every hour, a thought in readiness,
As though that death were light in such a case.
An endless wind doth tear the sail apace
Of forced sighs, and trusty fearfulness.
A rain of tears, a cloud of dark disdain 25
Hath done the wearied cords great hinderance,
Wreathed with error, and with ignorance.
The stars be hid that led me to this pain,
Drowned is reason that should be my comfort,
And I remain, despairing of the port. 30

A RENOUNCING OF LOVE

Farewell, Love, and all thy laws for ever!
Thy baited hooks shall tangle me no more:

Sence and Plato call me from thy lore
To perfect wealth my wit for to endeavor
In blind error when I did persevere,
Thy sharp repulse, that pricketh aye so sore
5 Taught me in trifles that I set no store;
But 'scape forth thence, since liberty is lever¹
Therefore, farewell! go trouble younger hearts,
And in me claim no more authority.
With idle youth go use thy property,
10 And thereon spend thy many brittle darts,
For hitherto though I have lost my time,
Me list no longer rotten boughs to climb

15 THE LOVER COMPLAINETH THE UNKINDNESS OF HIS LOVE

My lute, awake, perform the last
Labor that thou and I shall waste,
And end that I have now begun,
And when this song is sung and past,
My lute, be still, for I have done.

As to be heard where ear is none,
As lead to grave¹ in marble stone,
My song may pierce her heart as soon.
Should we then sigh, or sing, or moan?
No, no, my lute, for I have done.

The rocks do not so cruelly
Repulse the waves continually,
As she my suit and affection,
So that I am past remedy,
Whereby my lute and I have done.

35 — — —
¹ more desirable.
¹ carve.

Proud of the spoil that thou hast got
Of simple hearts, through love's shot;
By whom unkind thou hast them won,
Think not he hath his bow forgot,
Although my lute and I have done.

Vengeance shall fall on thy disdain,
That makest but game on earnest pain;
Think not alone under the sun
Unquit to cause thy lovers plam,
Although my lute and I have done.

May chance thee lie withered and old,
In winter nights that are so cold,
Plaining in vain unto the moon;
Thy wishes then dare not be told.
Care then who list, for I have done.

And then may chance thee to repent
The time that thou hast lost and spent
To cause thy lovers sigh and swoon;
Then shalt thou know beauty but lent,
And wish and want as I have done.

Now cease, my lute, this is the last
Labor that thou and I shall waste,
And ended is that we begun.
Now is this song both sung and past,
My lute, be still, for I have done.

HENRY HOWARD, EARL OF SURREY

The name of Surrey (1517–1547) is almost invariably linked with that of Wyatt as a team, although actually he was much younger and was a follower of, occasionally an improver upon, the work of the older man. With a reputation as a prankster, and with a family background studded with royal names, Surrey, that "most foolish" boy, was executed for treason on manufactured evidence. He is significant for developing the sonnet pattern now known as "Shakespearean" and for introducing blank verse to non-dramatic English literature (in a translation of two books of the Aeneid).

DESCRIPTION OF SPRING, WHEREIN EACH THING RENEWS SAVE ONLY THE LOVER

The soote¹ season that bud and bloom forth
brings

¹ sweet.

With green hath clad the hill and eke the vale,
The nightingale with feathers new she sings,
The turtle² to her mate³ hath told her tale.
Summer is come, for every spray now springs.
5 The hart hath hung his old head on the pale,
The buck in brake his winter coat he flings,
The fishes float with new repaired scale,
The adder all her slough away she slings,
The swift swallow pursueth the fly's smale,
10 The busy bee her honey now she mings,⁴—
Winter is worn, that was the flowers' bale:
And thus I see, among these pleasant things
Each care decays—and yet my sorrow springs.

15

[LOVE, THAT DOTTH REIGN]

Love, that doth reign and live within my
thought,
20 And built his seat within my captive breast,
Clad in the arms wherein with me he fought,
Oft in my face he doth his banner rest.
But she that taught me love and suffer pain,
My doubtful hope and eke my hot desire
25 With shamefast look to shadow and refrain,
Her smiling grace converteth straight to ire.
And coward Love, then, to the heart apace
Taketh his flight, where he doth lurk and plain¹
His purpose lost, and dare not show his face.
30 For my lord's guilt thus faultless bide I pain,
Yet from my lord shall not my foot remove.
Sweet is the death that taketh end by love.

35 THE MEANS TO ATTAIN HAPPY LIFE

Martial,¹ the things that do attain
The happy life be these, I find;
The riches left, not got with pain;
40 The fruitful ground, the quiet mind.

The equal friend, no grudge, no strife,
No charge of rule nor governance;
Without disease, the healthful life;
45 The household of continuance.

The mean² diet, no delicate fare;

² turtle dove. ³ mate. ⁴ remembers.

¹ complain.

¹ Roman poet, first century. Surrey's verses translate one of Martial's epigrams.

² moderate.

True wisdom joined with simpleness;
The night discharged of all care,
Where wine the wit may not oppress.

The faithful wife, without debate,
Such sleeps as may beguile the night,
Contented with thine own estate,
Ne wish for death, ne fear his might.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

Sidney (1554–1586) is remembered as the perfect courtier—intelligent, accomplished, virile. Whether or not he actually gave his cup of water to a dying soldier on the field of Zutphen, the legend fits his reputation. His unrequited love for Penelope Devereux produced a memorable sonnet sequence, Astrophel and Stella. In the field of fiction his Arcadia, a pastoral romance, is important in the development of the English novel. And in a third category, criticism, Sidney wrote the monumental Apology for Poetry.

FROM *Astrophel and Stella*

31

With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the
skies!
How silently, and with how wan a face!
What, may it be that even in heavenly place
That busy archer his sharp arrows tries?
Sure, if that long-with-love-acquainted eyes
Can judge of love, thou feel'st a lover's ease.
I read it in thy looks; thy languished grace,
To me that feel the like, thy state describes.
Then, even of fellowship, O Moon, tell me,
Is constant love deemed there but want of wit?
Are beauties there as proud as here they be?
Do they above love to be loved, and yet
Those lovers scorn whom that love doth possess?
Do they call virtue there ungratefulness?

39

Come, Sleep! O Sleep, the certain knot of
peace,
The baiting-place¹ of wit, the balm of woe,
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
The indifferent judge between the high and
low;

¹ resting place.

With shield of proof shield me from out the
press
Of those fierce darts Despair at me doth throw;
Oh make in me those civil wars to cease.
5 I will good tribute pay, if thou do so.
Take thou of me smooth pillows, sweetest bed
A chamber deaf to noise and blind to light,
A rosy garland and a weary head,
And if these things, as being thine by right,
10 Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me,
Livelier than elsewhere, Stella's image see

41

Having this day my horse, my hand, my lance
15 Guided so well that I obtained the prize,
Both by the judgment of the English eyes
And of some sent from that sweet enemy,
France;
Horsemen my skill in horsemanship advance,
20 Town-folks my strength, a dancier judge applies
His praise to sleight which from good use
doth rise;
Some lucky wits impute it but to chance,
25 Others, because of both sides I do take
My blood from them who did excel in this,
Think nature me a man of arms did make.
How far they shot awry! The true cause is,
Stella looked on, and from her heav'nly face
30 Sent forth the beams which made so fair
my race.

[LEAVE ME, O LOVE]

35 Leave me, O Love, which reachest but to dust,
And thou, my mind, aspire to higher things;
Grow rich in that which never taketh rust.
Whatever fades but fading pleasure brings.
40 Draw in thy beams, and humble all thy might
To that sweet yoke where lasting freedoms be,
Which breaks the clouds and opens forth the
light
That doth both shine and give us sight to see
45 Oh take fast hold; let that light be thy guide
In this small course which birth draws out to
death,
And think how evil becometh him to slide
Who seeketh heaven, and comes of heavenly
breath.
Then farewell, world; thy uttermost I see.
Eternal Love, maintain thy life in me.

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

The life of Marlowe (1564–1593) is filled with intrigue and mystery: he was granted a Cambridge degree after an unexplained political mission; he was involved in tavern scuffles; he was tried for atheism; and he was killed in a dispute over an inn bill. Like Keats, Marlowe showed genius and died prematurely; one speculates futilely on what might have happened if the fates had been more kind to both. Although Marlowe showed wit and intelligence in non-dramatic verse, his reputation is based primarily on four powerful dramatic studies of men ruled by passion: Tamburlaine, The Jew of Malta, Edward II, and Dr. Faustus. He was the first to handle English dramatic blank verse with professional ability, thus paving the way for Shakespeare.

THE PASSIONATE SHEPHERD
TO HIS LOVE

Come live with me, and be my love;
And we will all the pleasures prove
That hills and valleys, dales and fields,
Woods, or steepy mountain yields.

And we will sit upon the rocks,
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses,
And a thousand fragrant posies;
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;
Fair-lined slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw and ivy-buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs;
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me, and be my love.

The shepherd-swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May morning;
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me, and be my love.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH

Along with Sidney, Raleigh (1552–1618) was an outstanding courtier of the Elizabethan period. Like his contemporary, he combined ability in the field with grace in the salon and achievement in letters. After many a sea adventure Raleigh was executed for treason in a purely political move. We note, however, in our age of specialization, that this poet was a champion exponent of Renaissance versatility; even in the Tower he found ways and means to cultivate hothouse plants, distill liquors, and begin the writing of a history of the world. Some of Raleigh's verse is unique in its day; along with the usual sweet or conventional lines go such works as The Lie, with its "modern" skepticism and originality so marked as to win from one authority the label "new poetry."

A VISION UPON THIS CONCEIT
OF THE FAIRY QUEEN

Methought I saw the grave where Laura lay,¹
25 Within that temple where the vestal flame
Was wont to burn; and passing by that way
To see that buried dust of living fame,
Whose tomb fair Love and fairer Virtue kept,
All suddenly I saw the Fairy Queen;
30 At whose approach the soul of Petrarch wept,
And from thenceforth those graces were not
seen,
For they this Queen attended; in whose stead
Oblivion laid him down on Laura's hearse.
35 Hereat the hardest stones were seen to bleed.
And groans of buried ghosts the heavens did
pierce;
Where Homer's sprite did tremble all for
grief,
40 And cursed th' access of that celestial thief.

THE NYMPH'S REPLY TO THE
SHEPHERD¹

45 If all the world and love were young,
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,
These pretty pleasures might me move,
To live with thee and be thy love.

¹ sonnet prefixed to *Faerie Queene*; Laura is Petrarch's lady.

¹ See column I, this page.

But time drives flocks from field to fold,
When rivers rage, and rocks grow cold,
And Philomel² becometh dumb;
The rest complains of cares to come.

5

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields
To wayward Winter reckoning yields,
A honey tongue, a heart of gall,
Is fancy's spring, but sorrow's fall.

10

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of roses,
Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies,
Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten,
In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

15

Thy belt of straw and ivy buds,
Thy coral clasps and amber studs,
All these in me no means can move,
To come to thee and be thy love.

20

But could youth last, and love still breed,
Had joys no date, nor age no need,
Then these delights my mind might move,
To live with thee and be thy love.

25

THE LIE

Go, Soul, the body's guest
Upon a thankless arrant,¹
Fear not to touch the best;
The truth shall be thy warrant.
Go, since I needs must die,
And give the world the lie.

30

Say to the court, it glows
And shines like rotten wood;
Say to the church, it shows
What's good, and doth no good
If court and church reply,
Then give them both the lie.

35

Tell potentates, they live
Acting by others' action;
Not loved unless they give,
Not strong but by a faction
If potentates reply,
Give potentates the lie.

45

Tell men of high condition,
That manage the estate,

50

Their purpose is ambition,
Then practice only hate
And if they once reply,
Then give them all the lie

Tell them that brave it most,
They beg for more by spending,
Who, in their greatest cost,
Seek nothing but commending
And if they make reply,
Then give them all the lie.

Tell zeal it wants devotion,
Tell love it is but lust,
Tell time it is but motion,
Tell flesh it is but dust
And wish them not reply,
For thou must give the lie.

Tell age it duly wasteth,
Tell honour how it alters,
Tell beauty how she blasteth;
Tell favour how it falters,
And as they shall reply,
Give every one the lie.

Tell wit how much it wrangles
In tickle² points of niceness;
Tell wisdom she entangles
Herself in over-wisness,
And when they do reply,
Straight give them both the lie.

Tell physic of her boldness;
Tell skill it is pretension,
Tell charity of coldness;
Tell law it is contention:
And as they do reply,
So give them still the lie.

Tell fortune of her blindness;
Tell nature of decay;
Tell friendship of unkindness;
Tell justice of delay.
And if they will reply,
Then give them all the lie.

Tell arts they have no soundness,
But vary by esteeming,
Tell schools they want profoundness,
And stand too much on seeming:

² nightingale.

¹ errand.

² delicate.

If arts and schools reply,
Give arts and schools the lie.

Tell faith it's fled the city;
Tell how the country erreth;
Tell manhood shakes off pity;
Tell virtue least preferreth:
And if they do reply,
Spare not to give the lie.

So when thou hast, as I
Commanded thee, done blabbing,—
Although to give the lie
Deserves no less than stabbing,—
Stab at thee he that will,
No stab the soul can kill.

MICHAEL DRAYTON

Drayton (1563–1631) handled more verse forms ably than any other sixteenth-century poet: lyrics, fantasy, sonnets, odes, map poetry, pastorals, epistles, etc. Unlike most of his contemporaries included in this volume, he cannot show a record of university education, missions abroad, and blue-blood ancestry. Brought up by the Goodere family, he lived largely on the bounty of influential friends. Nevertheless, his reputation, based on Nymphidia, Poly-Olbion, England's Heroical Epistles, etc., is considerable. He was buried in Westminster Abbey.

[AS OTHER MEN, SO I]

As other men, so I myself do muse
Why in this sort I wiest invention so,
And why these giddy metaphors I use,
Leaving the path the greater part do go.
I will resolve you. I am lunatic,
And ever this in madmen you shall find,
What they last thought on when the brain
grew sick
In most distraction keep that still in mind.
Thus talking idly in this bedlam fit,
Reason and I, you must conceive, are twain;
'Tis nine years, now, since first I lost my wit.
Bear with me, then, though troubled be my
brain.
With diet and correction men distraught
(Not too far past) may to their wits be
brought.

[SINCE THERE'S NO HELP]

Since there's no help, come, let us kiss and
part.
5 Nay, I have done; you get no more of me.
And I am glad, yea, glad with all my heart
That thus so cleanly I myself can free.
Shake hands for ever; cancel all our vows;
And when we meet at any time again,
10 Be it not seen in either of our brows
That we one jot of former love retain.
Now at the last gasp of Love's latest breath,
When, his pulse failing, Passion speechless lies,
When Faith is kneeling by his bed of death,
15 And Innocence is closing up his eyes—
Now, if thou wouldst, when all have given
him over,
From death to life thou might'st him yet re-
cover.

ODE

TO THE VIRGINIAN VOYAGE

You brave heroic minds,
Worthy your country's name,
That honor still pursue,
Go, and subdue,
Whilst loitering hinds
Lurk here at home, with shame.

Britons, you stay too long.
Quickly aboard bestow you,
And with a merry gale
Swell your stretched sail,
With vows as strong
As the winds that blow you.

Your course securely steer,
West and by south forth keep.
Rocks, lee-shores, nor shoals,
When Eolus scowls,
You need not fear,
So absolute the deep.

And cheerfully at sea
Success you still entice,
To get the pearl and gold,
And ours to hold
Virginia,
Earth's only paradise.

Where Nature hath in store

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE · LYRIC POETRY

Fowl, venison, and fish,
And the fruitfull'st soil
Without your toil
Three harvests more,
All greater than your wish.

5

Whose reading shall inflame
Men to seek fame,
And much commend
To after-times thy wit.

And the ambitious vine
Crowns with his purple mass
The cedar reaching high
To kiss the sky,
The cypress, pine,
And useful sassafras.

To whom the golden age
Still Nature's laws doth give.
No other cares that tend
But them to defend
From Winter's rage,
That long there doth not live.

When as the luscious smell
Of that delicious land,
Above the seas that flows,
The clear wind throws,
Your hearts to swell
Approaching the dear strand,

In kenning of the shore
(Thanks to God first given)
O you the happiest men,
Be frolic then,
Let cannons roar,
Frightning the wide heaven.

And in regions far
Such heroes bring ye forth
As those from whom we came,
And plant our name
Under that star
Not known unto our north.

And as there plenty grows
Of laurel everywhere,
Apollo's sacred tree,
You may it see
A poet's brows
To crown, that may sing there.

Thy Voyages attend,
Industrious Hakluyt,¹

¹ Elizabethan editor of *Principall Navigations*, etc.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Shakespeare (1564–1616) is known the world over as the greatest dramatist of modern times, if not of all time (see I, 119) for a sketch of his life and work. It is easy to forget, perhaps, that he also wrote miscellaneous verse, two long, erotic, non-dramatic poems, songs (which played functional roles in the plays), and 154 sonnets, some of which appear in the following pages. The best of the songs and sonnets are among the best in the language.

The sonnets are addressed apparently to a young man and, in later stages, to the famous Dark Lady. They likewise seem to tell a story, probably autobiographical, in two parts. They are dedicated to a "Mr. W. H." whose identity, like that of the people in the verse itself, is uncertain; most modern critics relate the dedication to the poet's patron, Southampton. In an age of sonnets, Shakespeare, using for the most part the sonnet form which bears his name (although he did not invent it), reached new heights of expression and technical excellence. The wedding of sound and sense has seldom been accomplished so successfully. The amateur should note the simplicity of the vocabulary (most of it monosyllabic), the effective openings, the use of the final "thrust" couplet, the tight engineering of the whole—and, in another direction, the dignity, drama, passion, lyricism, and high intelligence that exist in various proportions in the poetry itself.

40

SONGS FROM THE PLAYS

FROM *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*

45

Who is Silvia? what is she,
That all our swains commend her?
Holy, fair, and wise is she,
The heaven such grace did lend her,
That she might admired be.

50

Is she kind as she is fair?
For beauty lives with kindness:
Love doth to her eyes repair

If arts and schools reply,
Give arts and schools the lie.

Tell faith it's fled the city;
Tell how the country erreth;
Tell manhood shakes off pity;
Tell virtue least preferreth:
And if they do reply,
Spare not to give the lie.

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Your course securely steer,
West and by south forth keep.
Rocks, lee-shores, nor shoals,
When Eolus scowls,
You need not fear,
So absolute the deep.

And cheerfully at sea
Success you still entice,
To get the pearl and gold,
And ours to hold
Virginia,
Earth's only paradise.

Where Nature hath in store

A great while ago the world begun,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
But that's all one, our play is done,
And we'll strive to please you every
day.

FROM *Measure for Measure*

Take, oh, take those lips away,
That so sweetly were forsworn;
And those eyes, the break of day,
Lights that do mislead the morn.
But my kisses bring again,
Bring again,
Seals of love, but sealed in vain,
Sealed in vain.

FROM *Cymbeline*

Hark, hark! The lark at heaven's gate sings,
And Phoebus gins arise,
His steeds to water at those springs
On chaliced flowers that lies,
And winking Mary-buds begin
To ope their golden eyes.
With every thing that pretty is,
My lady sweet, arise!
Arise, arise!

SONNETS

15

When I consider every thing that grows
Holds in perfection but a little moment,
That this huge stage presenteth naught but
shows
Whereon the stars in secret influence com-
ment;
When I perceive that men as plants increase, 40
Cheered and checked even by the self-same
sky,
Vaunt in their youthful sap, at height decrease,
And wear their brave state out of memory,
Then the conceit¹ of this inconstant stay 45
Sets you most rich in youth, before my sight,
Where wasteful Time debateth with Decay,
To change your day of youth to sullied night;
And, all in war with Time for love of you,
As he takes from you, I engraft² you new.

¹ idea.

² keep alive.

18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
5 Rough winds do shake the darling buds of
May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometimes too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;
10 And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course un-
trimmed;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest³
15 Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his
shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou growest:
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

20

29

When, in disgrace with fortune and men's
eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
25 And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless⁴
cries,
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends pos-
30 sessed,
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee,—and then my state,
35 Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's
gate;
For thy sweet love remembered such wealth
brings
That then I scorn to change my state with
kings.

30

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
45 I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's
waste:
Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,
50 For precious friends hid in death's dateless
night,

³ ownest.

⁴ useless.

LYRIC POETRY · WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

And weep afresh love's long since cancelled
woe,

And moan the expense of many a vanished
sight:

Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,

And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er

The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,

Which I new pay as if not paid before.

But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,

All losses are restored and sorrows end.

55

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments

Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rime;

But you shall shine more bright in these con- 15
tents

Than unswept stone, besmeared with sluttish
time.

When wasteful war shall statues overturn,

And broils root out the work of masonry, 20
Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall
burn

The living record of your memory.

'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity

Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find 25
room

Even in the eyes of all posterity

That wear this world out to the ending doom.

So, till the judgment that yourself arise,

You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

71

No longer mourn for me when I am dead

Than you shall hear the suly sullen bell

Give warning to the world that I am fled

From this vile world, with vilest worms to 35
dwell:

Nay, if you read this line, remember not

The hand that writ it; for I love you so,

That I in your sweet thoughts would be for- 40
got,

If thinking on me then should make you woe.

O, if, I say, you look upon this verse,

When I perhaps compounded am with clay,

Do not so much as my poor name rehearse,

But let your love even with my life decay;

Lest the wise world should look into your
moan

And mock you with me after I am gone.

90

Then hate me when thou wilt; if ever, now;

Now, while the world is bent my deeds to
cross,

Join with the spite of fortune, make me bow.
And do not drop in for an after-loss:

5 Ah, do not, when my heart hath 'scaped this
sorrow,

Come in the rearward of a conquered woe,

Give not a windy night a rainy morrow,

To linger out a purposed overthrow.

10 If thou wilt leave me, do not leave me last,

When other petty griefs have done their spite,

But in the onset come; so shall I taste

At first the very worst of fortune's might;

And other strains of woe, which now seem

woe,

Compared with loss of thee will not seem so.

106

When in the chronicle of wasted time

20 I see descriptions of the fairest wights,⁵

And beauty making beautiful old rime

In praise of ladies dead and lovely knights,

Then, in the blazon of sweet beauty's best,

Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,

25 I see their antique pen would have expressed

Even such a beauty as you master now.

So all their praises are but prophecies

Of this our time, all you prefiguring;

And, for they looked but with divining eyes,

30 They had not skill enough your worth to sing:

For we, which now behold these present
days,

Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to
praise.

116

Let me not to the marriage of true minds

Admit impediments. Love is not love

Which alters when it alteration finds,

Or bends with the remover to remove:

O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark

That looks on tempests and is never shaken;

It is the star to every wandering bark,

Whose worth's unknown, although his height

45 be taken.

Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and
cheeks

Within his bending sickle's compass come;

Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,

50 But bears it out even to the edge of doom.

⁵ creatures.

If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

130

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun, 5
Coral is far more red than her lips' red,
If snow be white, why then her breasts are
dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damasked, red and white, 10
But no such roses see I in her cheeks,
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound, 15
I grant I never saw a goddess go;
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the
ground:
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare. 20

**SONGS FROM THE PLAYS,
ANONYMOUS LYRICS,
LYRICS FROM SONGBOOKS**

16th and early 17th century

Elizabethan England has been called a "nest of singing birds." The professionals and versatile amateurs who wrote sonnets and erotic verse were not the only vocalists—the craftsmen, the tavern croud, and the after-supper guests all sang. Three-man's songs, ains, machi- 30
gals all found their way into the songbooks.

Songs were an important part of sixteenth-century drama. Most of them were sung by 35
one actor with a good voice. Those familiar with the plays of Shakespeare, for example, know how prominent these songs were, and that they fitted the roles and were not "specialty numbers" at all. They could be used for 40
everything from reflecting stage moods to clearing the scene itself. Many of the boy actors were trained singers.

The songs as a group had considerable range as to type and subject matter. Drinking songs, 45
tobacco songs, songs of the trades, lullabies, moralizing ains, love songs, swan songs—they ran the gamut of moods and attitudes. But the main point is that people in this age of
rebirth sang. The Puritan had not yet become 50
politically powerful enough to focus the Englishman's mind once more on the hereafter.

BACK AND SIDE, GO BARE,
GO BARE

FROM *Gammer Gunton's Needle*

Back and side, go bare, go bare,
Both foot and hand go cold,
But, belly, God send thee good ale enough,
Whether it be new or old.

I cannot eat but little meat,
My stomach is not good,
But, sure, I think that I can drink
With him that wears a hood,
Though I go bare, take ye no care,
I am nothing a-cold,
I stuff my skin so full within
Of jolly good ale and old.

Back and side, go bare, go bare, etc.

I love no roast, but a nut-brown toast, 5
And a crab¹ laid in the fire,
A little bread shall do me stead,
Much bread I not desire.
No frost nor snow, no wind, I trow, 25
Can hurt me if I[t] would,
I am so wrapt and thoroughly lapt
Of jolly good ale and old.

Back and side, go bare, go bare, etc.

And Tib, my wife, that as her life
Loveth well good ale to seek,
Full oft drinks she till ye may see
The tears run down her cheek;
Then doth she trowl to me the bowl,
Even as malt-worm should,
And saith, "Sweetheart, I took my part
Of this jolly good ale and old."

Back and side, go bare, go bare, etc.

Now let them drink till they nod and wink,
Even as good fellows should do,
They shall not miss to have the bliss
Good ale doth bring men to.
And all poor souls that have scoured bowls,
Or have them lustily trowled,
God save the lives of them and their wives,
Whether they be young or old.

Back and side, go bare, go bare, etc.

¹ apple.

LYRIC POETRY · SONGS AND LYRICS

APELLES' SONG

FROM *Campaspe* (LYLY)

Cupid and my Campaspe played
At cards for kisses; Cupid paid. 5
He stakes his quiver, bow, and arrows,
His mother's doves and team of sparrows,
Loses them too. Then down he throws
The coral of his lip, the rose
Growing on's cheek (but none knows how); 10
With these, the crystal of his brow,
And then the dimple of his chin;
All these did my Campaspe win.
At last he set her both his eyes;
She won, and Cupid blind did rise. 15
O Love, has she done this to thee?
What shall, alas! become of me?

GOLDEN SLUMBERS KISS
YOUR EYES

FROM *Patient Grissill* (DEKKER)

Golden slumbers kiss your eyes,
Smiles awake you when you rise;
Sleep, pretty wantons, do not cry, 25
And I will sing a lullaby,
Rock them, rock them, lullaby.

Care is heavy, therefore sleep you,
You are care, and care must keep you; 30
Sleep, pretty wantons, do not cry,
And I will sing a lullaby,
Rock them, rock them, lullaby.

DRINKING SONG

FROM *Bloody Brother* (J. FLETCHER)

Drink to-day, and drown all sorrow,
You shall perhaps not do it to-morrow. 40
But, while you have it, use your breath;
There is no drinking after death.

Wine works the heart up, wakes the wit;
There is no cure 'gainst age but it. 45
It helps the headache, cough, and tisie,
And is for all diseases physie.

Then let us swill, boys, for our health;
Who drinks well, loves the commonwealth. 50
And he that will to bed go sober,
Falls with the leaf still in October.

COLD'S THE WIND

FROM *Shoemaker's Holiday* (DEKKER)

Cold's the wind, and wet's the rain,
Saint Hugh be our good speed;
Ill is the weather that bringeth no gain,
Nor helps good hearts in need.

Trowl the bowl, the jolly nut-brown bowl,
And here, kind mate, to thee;
Let's sing a dirge for Saint Hugh's soul,
And down it merrily.

Down-a-down, hey, down-a-down,
Hey derry derry down-a-down, 15
Close with the tenor, boy;
Ho! well done, to me let come,
Ring compass, gentle joy.

Troll the bowl, the nut-brown bowl,
And here, kind, &c. (*As often as there be
men to drink.*)
(*At last, when all have drunk, this
verse.*) 25

Cold's the wind, and wet's the rain,
Saint Hugh be our good speed;
Ill is the weather that bringeth no gain,
Nor helps good hearts in need.

CRABB'ED AGE AND YOUTH

FROM *The Passionate Pilgrim*, 1599

35 Crabb'ed Age and Youth
Cannot live together:
Youth is full of pleasance,
Age is full of care;
Youth like summer morn,
Age like winter weather; 40
Youth like summer brave,
Age like winter bare.
Youth is full of sport,
Age's breath is short;
Youth is nimble, Age is lame; 45
Youth is hot and bold,
Age is weak and cold;
Youth is wild, and Age is tame.
Age, I do abhor thee;
Youth, I do adore thee. 50
O, my Love, my Love is young!
Age, I do defy thee:

SONGS AND LYRICS · LYRIC POETRY

O, sweet shepherd, hie thee!
For methinks thou stay'st too long.

MAIDS AND WIDOWS

If ever I marry, I'll marry a maid,
To marry a widow, I am sore afraid,
For maids they are simple, and never will
grutch,
But widows full oft, as they say, know too
much.

A maid is so sweet, and so gentle of kind,
That a maid is the wife I will choose to my
mind
A widow is froward, and never will yield,
Or if such there be, you will meet them but
seeld.

A maid ne'er complaineth, do what so you will,
But what you mean well, a widow takes ill
A widow will make you a drudge and a slave,
And, cost ne'er so much, she will ever go brave.

A maid is so modest, she seemeth a rose
When it first beginneth the bud to unclose,
But a widow full-blown full often deceives,
And the next wind that bloweth shakes down
all her leaves.

The widows be lovely, I never gainsay,
But too well all their beauty they know to
display;
But a maid hath so great hidden beauty in
store,
She can spare to a widow, yet never be poor.

Then, if ever I marry, give me a fresh maid,
If to marry with any I be not afraid,
But to marry with any, it asketh much care,
And some bachelors hold they are best as they
are.

PHILLIDA FLOUTS ME

Oh! What a pain is love!
How shall I bear it?
She will inconstant prove,
I greatly fear it.
She so torments my mind
That my strength faileth;
And wavers with the wind,

As a ship that saileth,
Please her the best I may,
She looks another way,
Alack and wel-a-day!
Phillida flouts me.

At the fair yesterday,
She did pass by me;
She looked another way,
And would not spy me,
I wooed her for to dnce,
But could not get her,
Will had her to the wine,
He might intreat her,
With Daniel she did dance,
On me she looked askance,
Oh, thence unhappy chancel
Phillida flouts me.

Fair maid, be not so coy,
Do not disdain me,
I am my mother's joy;
Sweet, entertain me!
She'll give me, when she dies,
All that is fitting,
Her poultry and her bees
And her geese sitting,
A pair of mattress beds,
And a bag full of shreds,
And yet for all this goods
Phillida flouts me.

She hath a clout of mine
Wrought with good Coventry,
Which she keeps for a sign
Of my fidelity,
But i' faith, if she flinch,
She shall not wear it,
To Tib, my t'other wench,
I mean to bear it,
And yet it grieves my heart
So soon from her to part,
Death strikes me with his dart!
Phillida flouts me.

Thou shalt eat curds and cream,
All the year lasting;
And drink the crystal stream,
Pleasant in tasting;
Whig and whey whilst thou burst,
And bramble berries,
Pie-lid and pasty crust,

Pears, plums, and cherries.
Thy raiment shall be thin,
Made of a wether's skin—
Yet all's not worth a pin.
Phillida flouts me.

Fair maiden, have a care,
And in time take me.
I can have those as fair,
If you forsake me.
For Doll, the dairymaid,
Laughed on me lately,
And wanton Winifred
Favors me greatly.
One throws milk on my clothes,
T'other plays with my nose,
What wanton signs are those!
Phillida flouts me.

I cannot work and sleep
All at a season;
Love wounds my heart so deep,
Without all reason.
I gin to pine away
With grief and sorrow,
Like to a fatted beast,
Penne'd in a meadow.
I shall be dead, I fear,
Within this thousand year;
And all for very fear,
Phillida flouts me.

[THOUGH AMARYLLIS DANCE]

FROM

WILLIAM BYRD'S *Psalms, Sonnets, and Songs
of Sadness and Piety* (1588)

Though Amaryllis dance in green
Like fairy queen;
And sing full clear
Corinna can, with smiling, cheer.
Yet since their eyes make heart so sore,
Heigh ho, heigh ho, 'chill¹ love no more.

My sheep are lost for want of food,
And I so wood,²
That all the day
I sit and watch a herdmaid gay,

Who laughs to see me sigh so sore,
Heigh ho, heigh ho, 'chill love no more.

Her loving looks, her beauty bright
Is such delight,
That all in vain
I love to like and lose my gain,
For her that thanks me not therefor,
Heigh ho, heigh ho, 'chill love no more.

Ah wanton eyes, my friendly foes,
And cause of woes,
Your sweet desire
Breeds flames of ice and freeze in fire.
Ye scorn to see me weep so sore,
Heigh ho, heigh ho, 'chill love no more.

Love ye who list, I force him not,
Sith, God it wot,
The more I wail,
The less my sighs and tears prevail.
What shall I do but say therefore,
Heigh ho, heigh ho, 'chill love no more.

[ARISE, GET UP, MY
DEAR LOVE]

FROM THOMAS MORLEY'S *Canzonets*, 1593

30 Arise, get up, my dear love, rise, make haste,
begone thee!
Lo, where the bride, fair Daphne bright, still
stays on thee!
Hark! O hark! Yon merry wanton maidens
35 squealing!
Spice cake, sops in wine, spice cakes, are
a-dealing!
Run then, run apace,
Get a bride lace
40 And a gilt rosemary branch while yet there
is catching,
And then hold fast for fear of old snatching.
Alas, my love, why weep ye?
O fear not that, dear love, the next
45 day keep we.
List, hark yon minstrels! How fine they firk it!
And see how the maids jerk it!
With Kate and Will,
Tom and Jill,
50 Hey ho brave,
Now a skip,
There a trip,

¹ I will.

² mad.

THOMAS CAMPION · LYRIC POETRY

Finely set aloft,
On a fine wedding day,
All for fair Daphne's wedding day!

[TOBACCO, TOBACCO]

FROM TOBIAS HUXIF's *Musical Humors*
The first part of Aurs, 1605

Tobacco, tobacco, sing sweetly for tobacco!
Tobacco is like love, oh love it,
For you see, I will prove it,
Love maketh lean the fat men's tumor,
So doth tobacco,
Love still dries up the wanton humor,
So doth tobacco,
Love makes men sail from shore to shore,
So doth tobacco,
'Tis fond love often makes men poor,
So doth tobacco,
Love makes men scorn all coward fears,
So doth tobacco,
Love often sets men by the ears,
So doth tobacco,
Tobacco, tobacco,
Sing sweetly for tobacco,
Tobacco is like love, oh love it;
For you see I have proved it.

[THOUGH MY CARRIAGE]

FROM THOMAS WILKES'S *Airs or Fantastic*
Spirits, 1608

Though my carriage be but careless,
Though my looks be of the sternest,
Yet my passions are compareless,
When I love, I love in earnest.

No, my wits are not so wild,
But a gentle soul may yoke me,
Nor my heart so hard compiled,
But it melts if love provoke me.

THOMAS CAMPION

Campion (1567–1620) is unique in his day as author of both words and music for his delightful songs. A former law student, he found lyrics more to his liking, as various books of airs can testify. He became involved in a battle

of treatises with Samuel Daniel over the question of the relative merits of rhyme and quantitative verse. Curiously enough, Campion, who lost the battle, attacked the very rhyme which he used so effectively. The controversy is all but forgotten, the man is remembered for fertility and variety in the lyric form.

WHEN TO HER LUTE CORINNA SINGS

10 When to her lute Corinna sings,
Her voice revives the leaden strings,
And doth in highest notes appear,
15 As any challenged echo clear,
But when she doth of mourning speak,
Even with her sighs the strings do break.

And as her lute doth live or die,
20 Led by her passion, so must I!
For when of pleasure she doth sing,
My thoughts enjoy a sudden spring,
But if she doth of sorrow speak,
Even from my heart the strings do break.

25

FOLLOW YOUR SAINT

Follow your saint, follow with accents sweet;
Haste you, sad notes, fall at her flying feet.
30 There, wrapped in cloud of sorrow, pity move,
And tell the ravisher of my soul I perish for
her love.
But if she scorns my never-ceasing pain,
Then burst with sighing in her sight and ne'er
35 return again.

All that I sung still to her praise did tend,
Still she was first, still she my songs did end.
Yet she my love and music both doth fly,
40 The music that her echo is and beauty's
sympathy.
Then let my notes pursue her scornful flight:
It shall suffice that they were breathed and
died for her delight.

45

ROSE-CHEEKED LAURA

Rose-cheeked Laura, come,
50 Sing thou smoothly with thy beauty's
Silent music, either other
Sweetly gracing.

Lovely forms do flow
From concent divinely framed;
Heav'n is music, and thy beauty's
Birth is heavenly.

These dull notes we sing
Discords need for helps to grace them;

Only beauty purely loving
Knows no discord,

But still moves delight,
5 Like clear springs renewed by flowing,
Ever perfect, ever in them-
Selves eternal.

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

JOHN DONNE

Donne (1572-1631) has recently been rediscovered by writers and readers alike. (Among the many modern poets who owe something to Donne are Eliot, MacNeice, and Warren.) His life and work are both crowded with interesting details. With the traditional background of Oxford and the Inns of Court, he saw adventure at sea with Essex and adventure ashore with Anne More, whom he married in a stormy affair. Born a Catholic in an age of religious doubts, Donne "turned" and eventually became Dean of St. Paul's, though not without spiritual turmoil which his Holy Sonnets reveal. The student will note that Donne is typical of the turn away from the sweet song of the earlier Elizabethans when he tries for intellectual effects; that he, nevertheless, retains lyrical sweetness at times ("Sweetest love, I do not go"); that he shows high seriousness in his religious verse. His directness, violations of classic rules as to lines and rhythm, and unconventional attitudes toward love are likely to interest many readers. More soberly, however, it should be noted that Donne had tremendous influence on the method and manner of the entire seventeenth-century metaphysical group.

Or who cleft the Devil's foot;
Teach me to hear mermaids singing,
Or to keep off envy's stinging,
And find
5 What wind
Serves to advance an honest mind.

If thou be'st born to strange sights,
Things invisible to see,
10 Ride ten thousand days and nights
Till age snow white hairs on thee;
Thou, when thou return'st wilt tell me
All strange wonders that befell thee,
And swear
15 No where
Lives a woman true and fair.

If thou find'st one let me know,
Such a pilgrimage were sweet;
20 Yet do not, I would not go,
Though at next door we might meet;
Though she were true when you met her,
And last till you write your letter,
Yet she
25 Will be
False, ere I come, to two or three.

SONG

Go and catch a falling star,
Get with child a mandrake¹ root,
Tell me where all past years are,

¹ supposed to look like human body.

THE CANONIZATION

30 For God's sake hold your tongue, and let me
love;
Or chide my palsy, or my gout;
My five gray hairs, or ruined fortune flout;

With wealth your state, your mind with arts
improve;

Take you a course, get you a place,
Observe his Honor, or his Grace,
Or the king's real, or his stamped face
Contemplate, what you will, approve,
So you will let me love.

Alas! alas! who's injured by my love?
What merchant's ships have my sighs
drowned?
Who says my tears have overflowed his
ground?
When did my colds a forward spring remove?¹
When did the heats which my veins fill
Add one more to the plaguy bill?
Soldiers find wars, and lawyers find out still
Litigious men, which quarrels move,
Though she and I do love.

Call us what you will, we are made such by
love;
Call her one, me another fly;
We're tapers too, and at our own cost die,
And we in us find th' eagle and the dove.
The phoenix¹ riddle hath more wit
By us, we two being one, are it,
So, to one neutral thing both sexes fit.
We die and rise the same, and prove
Mysterious by this love.

We can die by it, if not live by love,
And if unfit for tomb or hearse,
Our legend be, it will be fit for verse,
And if no piece of chronicle we prove,
We'll build in sonnets pretty rooms,
As well a well-wrought urn becomes
The greatest ashes, as half-acre tombs,
And by these hymns all shall approve
Us canonized for love;

And thus invoke us: "You, whom reverend
love
Made one another's hermitage,
You, to whom love was peace, that now is
rage;
Who did the whole world's soul contract, and
drove
Into the glasses of your eyes,

So made such mirrors, and such spies,
That they did all to you epitomize,
Countries, towns, courts, beg from above
A pattern of your love."

SONG

Sweetest love, I do not go
10 For weariness of thee,
Nor in hope the world can show
A fitter love for me,
But since that I
Must die at last, 'tis best
15 To use myself in jest,
By feigned deaths to die.

Yesternight the sun went hence,
And yet is here to-day,
20 He hath no desire nor sense,
Nor half so short a way,
Then fear not me,
But believe that I shall make
Speedier journeys, since I take
25 More wings and spurs than he.

O how feeble is man's power,
That, if good fortune fall,
Cannot add another hour,
30 Nor a last hour recall,
But come bad chance,
And we join to it our strength,
And we teach it art and length,
Itself o'er us to advance,
35 When thou sigh'st, thou sigh'st not wind,
But sigh'st my soul away,
When thou weep'st, unkindly kind,
My life's blood doth decay.
40 It cannot be
That thou lovest me as thou say'st,
If in thine my life thou waste,
That art the best of me.

45 Let not thy divining heart
Forethink me any ill;
Destiny may take thy part
And may thy fears fulfil.
But think that we
50 Are but turned aside to sleep:
They who one another keep
Alive, ne'er parted be.

¹ mythical bird which renewed its life in fire every 500 years.

LOVE'S DEITY

I long to talk with some old lover's ghost,
 Who died before the god of love was born.
 I cannot think that he, who then loved most,
 Sunk so low as to love one which did scorn.
 But since this god produced a destiny,
 And that vice-nature, custom, lets it be,
 I must love her that loves not me.

Sure, they which made him god meant not so
 much,

Nor he in his young godhead practiced it;
 But when an even flame two hearts did touch,
 His office was indulgently to fit
 Actives to passives. Correspondency
 Only his subject was; it cannot be
 Love till I love her that loves me.

But every modern god will now extend
 His vast prerogative as far as Jove.
 To rage, to lust, to write to, to commend,
 All is the purlieu of the god of love.
 Oh, were we wakened by this tyranny
 To ungod this child again, it could not be
 I should love her who loves not me.

Rebel and atheist too, why murmur I,
 As though I felt the worst that love
 could do?
 Love might make me leave loving, or might try
 A deeper plague, to make her love me too;
 Which, since she loves before, I am loth to see.
 Falsehood is worse than hate; and that
 must be
 If she whom I love should love me.

[DEATH, BE NOT PROUD]

Death, be not proud, though some have called 40
 thee
 Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
 For those whom thou think'st thou dost over-
 throw
 Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me. 45
 From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
 Much pleasure; then from thee much more
 must flow,
 And soonest our best men with thee do go,
 Rest of their bones, and souls' delivery.
 Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and des-
 perate men,

And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
 And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well
 And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou,
 then?

5 One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
 And Death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt
 die.

10 A HYMN TO GOD THE FATHER

1

Wilt Thou forgive that sin where I begun,
 Which is my sin, though it were done be-
 fore?

15 Wilt Thou forgive those sins, through which I
 run,
 And do run still, though still I do deplore?
 When Thou hast done, Thou hast not

20 done,
 For I have more.

2

Wilt Thou forgive that sin which I have won
 25 Others to sin? and made my sin their door?
 Wilt Thou forgive that sin which I did shun
 A year or two, but wallowed in a score?
 When Thou hast done, Thou hast not
 done,

30 For I have more.

3

I have a sin of fear, that when I have spun
 My last thread, I shall perish on the shore;
 35 But swear by Thyself, that at my death Thy
 Son
 Shall shine as He shines now, and hereto-
 fore;
 And, having done that, Thou hast done,
 I fear no more.

BEN JONSON

*Jonson (1572–1637) rose from bricklayer to ar-
 biter of a literary group known as the "Sons
 of Ben"; they included the Cavalier poets rep-
 resented in this volume. With little formal
 education Jonson lived a life full of army ad-
 venture, brawls, duels, and jail sentences be-
 cause of references in his Works. It was also
 50 full of literary achievement. Jonson developed
 the comedy of humors, produced able tragedy,*

and became the best writer of masques in his day. A classicist who followed Horace and Martial, and who criticized Donne for not keeping meter and accent straight, he was, after Shakespeare, the leading literary figure of the period. 5

ON MY FIRST SON

Farewell, thou child of my right hand, and joy; 1
My sin was too much hope of thee, loved boy.
Seven years thou wert lent to me, and I thee
pay,
Exacted by thy fate, on the just day.
O could I lose all father now! for why 15
Will man lament the state he should envy—
To have so soon 'scaped world's and flesh's
rage,
And, if no other misery, yet age? 20
Rest in soft peace, and asked, say, "Here doth
lie
Ben Jonson his best piece of poetry;
For whose sake henceforth all his vows be
such 25
As what he loves may never like too much."

AN EPITAPH ON S[ALATHIEL]
P[AVY], A CHILD OF Q[UEEN]
EL[IZABETH'S] CHAPEL¹ 30

Weep with me, all you that read
This little story;
And know, for whom a tear you shed 35
Death's self is sorry.
'Twas a child that so did thrive
In grace and feature,
As heaven and nature seemed to strive
Which owned the creature. 40
Years he numbered scarce thirteen
When fates turned cruel,
Yet three filled zodiacs had he been
The stage's jewel;
And did act, what now we moan, 45
Old men so duly,
As, sooth, the Parcae² thought him one.
He played so truly.
So by error, to his fate

¹ Traditional title; S. may stand for Solomon.
² the Fates.

They all consented;
But viewing him since, alas too late,
They have repented,
And have sought, to give new birth,
In baths to steep him;
But being so much too good for earth,
Heaven vows to keep him.

SONG

TO CELIA

Drink to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine;
Or leave a kiss but in the cup,
And I'll not look for wine.
The thirst that from the soul doth rise
Doth ask a drink divine;
But might I of Jove's nectar sup,
I would not change for thine.

I sent thee late a rosy wreath,
Not so much honoring thee
As giving it a hope, that there
It could not withered be.
But thou thereon didst only breathe,
And sent'st it back to me;
Since when it grows, and smells, I swear,
Not of itself but thee.

TO THE MEMORY OF MY
BELOVED, MASTER
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

To draw no envy, Shakespeare, on thy name,
Am I thus ample to thy book and fame;
While I confess thy writings to be such
As neither man, nor muse, can praise too
much. 40
'Tis true, and all men's suffrage. But these
ways
Were not the paths I meant unto thy praise;
For seekest ignorance on these may light,
45 Which, when it sounds at best, but echoes
right;
Or blind affection, which doth ne'er advance
The truth, but gropes, and urgeth all by
chance;
50 Or crafty malice might pretend this praise,
And think to ruin, where it seemed to raise.
These are, as some infamous bawd or whore

LYRIC POETRY · BEN JONSON

Should praise a matron. What could hurt her more?

But thou art proof against them, and, indeed,
Above the ill fortune of them, or the need.
I therefore will begin. Soul of the age!

The applause, delight, the wonder of our stage!

My Shakespeare, rise! I will not lodge thee by
Chaucer, or Spenser, or bid Beaumont lie
A little farther off, to make thee a room:

Thou art a monument without a tomb,
And art alive still while thy book doth live
And we have wits to read and praise to give.

That I not mix thee so, my brain excuses,
I mean with great, but disproportioned Muses;
For if I thought my judgment were of years,
I should commit thee surely with thy peers,
And tell how far thou didst our Lyly outshine,
Or sporting Kyd, or Marlowe's mighty line.

And though thou hadst small Latin and less
Greek,

From thence to honor thee, I would not seek
For names; but call forth thundering Æschy-
lus,

Euripides, and Sophocles to us;¹
Pacuvius, Accius,² him of Cordova³ dead,
To life again, to hear thy buskin tread,
And shake a stage; or, when thy socks were on,
Leave thee alone for the comparison
Of all that insolent Greece or haughty Rome
Sent forth, or since did from their ashes come.

Triumph, my Britain, thou hast one to show
To whom all scenes of Europe homage owe.
He was not of an age, but for all time!

And all the Muses still were in their prime,
When, like Apollo, he came forth to warm
Our ears, or like a Mercury to charm!
Nature herself was proud of his designs,
And joyed to wear the dressing of his lines!
Which were so richly spun, and woven so fit,
As, since, she will vouchsafe no other wit.

The merry Greek, tart Aristophanes,⁴
Neat Terence, witty Plautus,⁵ now not please;
But antiquated and deserted lie,

As they were not of Nature's family.
Yet must I not give Nature all; thy art,
My gentle Shakespeare, must enjoy a part.

For though the poet's matter nature be,
His art doth give the fashion; and, that he
Who casts to write a living line, must sweat,
(Such as thine are) and strike the second
5 heat

Upon the Muses' anvil; turn the same
(And himself with it) that he thinks to frame,
Or, for the laurel, he may gain a scorn;
For a good poet's made, as well as born.

10 And such wert thou! Look how the father's
face

Lives in his issue, even so the race
Of Shakespeare's mind and manners brightly
shines

15 In his well turned, and true filed lines;
In each of which he seems to shake a lance,
As brandished at the eyes of ignorance.
Sweet Swan of Avon! what a sight it were
To see thee in our water yet appear,
20 And make those flights upon the banks of
Thames,

That so did take Eliza, and our James!
But stay, I see thee in the hemisphere
Advanced, and made a constellation there!

25 Shine forth, thou star of poets, and with rage
Or influence, chide or cheer the drooping
stage,

Which, since thy flight from hence, hath
mourned like night,

30 And despairs day, but for thy volume's light.

SONG, TO CELIA

Come, my Celia, let us prove
While we may the sports of love;
Time will not be ours forever,
He at length our good will sever.
Spend not then his gifts in vain;
Suns that set may rise again,
But if once we lose this light,
'Tis with us perpetual night.
Why should we defer our joys?
Fame and rumor are but toys.
Cannot we delude the eyes
Of a few poor household spies?
Or his easier ears beguile,
So removed by our wile?
'Tis no sin love's fruit to steal;
But the sweet theft to reveal,
To be taken, to be seen,
These have crimes accounted been.

¹ three great Greek dramatists.

² minor Roman poets.

³ Seneca, Roman playwright.

⁴ Greek comic dramatist.

⁵ Roman comic dramatists.

SIMPLEX MUNDITIIS

Still to be neat, still to be drest,
As you were going to a feast;
Still to be powdered, still perfumed: 5
Lady, it is to be presumed,
Though art's hid causes are not found,
All is not sweet, all is not sound.
Give me a look, give me a face
That makes simplicity a grace,
Robes loosely flowing, hair as free:
Such sweet neglect more taketh me
Than all th' adulteries of art;
They stuke mine eyes, but not my heart.

ROBERT HERRICK

Herrick (1591-1634) was the ablest disciple of Ben Jonson, whom he praised in many short pieces. Beginning life as a goldsmith's apprentice, he transferred his lightness of touch to the lyric form in poetry, where he easily out-distanced all contemporary competition. As a churchman in Dean Prior, Herrick could well observe the holiday customs and rural superstitions of Devonshire which he was to immortalize in verse. When country life palled, there were always London and the conversations at the Mermaid. To read Herrick is to enjoy life at its best—rich, warm, simple, humorous, colorful, filled with pleasant music.

TO DAFFODILS

Fair daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon:
As yet the early-rising sun
Hast not attained his noon.
Stay, stay,
Until the hasting day
Has run
But to the evensong;
And, having prayed together, we
Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay as you;
We have as short a spring,
As quick a growth to meet decay,
As you or anything.
We die,
As your hours do, and dry

Away

Lake to the summer's rain,
Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
Ne'er to be found again.

CORINNA'S GOING A-MAYING

Get up, get up for shame, the blooming morn
10 Upon her wings presents the god unshorn.
See how Aurora throws her fair
Fresh-quilted colors through the air:
Get up, sweet slug-a-bed, and see
The dew bespangling herb and tree.
15 Each flower has wept and bowed toward the
east
Above an hour since, yet you not dressed;
Nay! not so much as out of bed?
When all the birds have matins said
And sung their thankful hymns, 'tis sin,
Nay, profanation, to keep in,
Whenas a thousand virgins on this day
Spring, sooner than the lark, to fetch in May.

25 Rise, and put on your foliage, and be seen
To come forth, like the spring-time, fresh and
green,
And sweet as Flora. Take no care
For jewels for your gown or hair:
30 Fear not, the leaves will strew
Gems in abundance upon you:
Besides, the childhood of the day has kept,
Against you come, some orient pearls unwept;
Come and receive them while the light
35 Hangs on the dew-locks of the night:
And Titan on the eastern hill
Retires himself, or else stands still
Till you come forth. Wash, dress, be brief in
praying:
40 Few beads are best, when once we go a-May-
ing.

Come, my Corinna, come; and, coming mark
How each field turns a street, each street a
45 park
Made green and trimmed with trees; see
how
Devotion gives each house a bough
Or branch: each porch, each door, ere this,
50 An ark, a tabernacle is,
Made up of white-thorn, neatly interwove;
As if here were those cooler shades of love.

LYRIC POETRY · ROBERT HERRICK

Can such delights be in the street
And open fields and we not see't?
Come, we'll abroad; and let's obey
The proclamation made for May:
And sin no more, as we have done, by staying; 5
But, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying.

There's not a budding boy or girl this day
But is got up, and gone to bring in May.
A deal of youth, ere this, is come 10
Back, and with white-thorn laden home.
Some have despatched their cakes and
cream
Before that we have left to dream;
And some have wept, and wooed, and plighted 15
troth,
And chose their priest, ere we can cast off
sloth:
Many a green-gown has been given;
Many a kiss, both odd and even: 20
Many a glance, too, has been sent
From out the eye, love's firmament;
Many a jest told of the keys betraying
This night, and locks picked, yet we're not
a-Maying. 25

Come, let us go while we are in our prime;
And take the harmless folly of the time!
We shall grow old apace, and die
Before we know our liberty.
Our life is short, and our days run
As fast away as does the sun;
And, as a vapor or a drop of rain,
Once lost, can ne'er be found again:
So when or you or I are made 35
A fable, song, or fleeting shade,
All love, all liking, all delight
Lies drowned with us in endless night.
Then while time serves, and we are but de-
caying,
Come, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying.

DELIGHT IN DISORDER

A sweet disorder in the dress
Kindles in clothes a wantonness:
A lawn about the shoulders thrown
Into a fine distraction;
An erring lace, which here and there
Enthralls the crimson stomacher;
A cuff neglectful, and thereby

Ribbons to flow confusedly;
A winning wave, deserving note,
In the tempestuous petticoat;
A careless shoe-string, in whose tie
I see a wild civility;
Do more bewitch me, than when art
Is too precise in every part.

TO THE VIRGINS, TO MAKE
MUCH OF TIME

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles to-day,
To-morrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,
The higher he's a-getting,
The sooner will his race be run,
And nearer he's to setting.

That age is best which is the first,
When youth and blood are warmer;
But being spent, the worse, and worst
Times, still succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time,
And while ye may, go marry;
For, having lost but once your prime,
You may forever tarry.

THE HOCK CART; OR,
HARVEST HOME

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE MILDMAY,
EARL OF WESTMORELAND

Come, sons of summer, by whose toil,
40 We are the lords of wine and oil;
By whose tough labors and rough hands,
We rip up first, then reap our lands.
Crowned with the ears of corn, now come,
And to the pipe sing harvest home.
45 Come forth, my lord, and see the cart
Dressed up with all the country art.
See, here a malkin, there a sheet,
As spotless pure as it is sweet;
The horses, mares, and frisking fillies,
50 Clad all in linen white as lilies.
The harvest swains and wenches bound
For joy, to see the hock cart crowned.

About the cart, hear how the rout
Of rural younglings raise the shout,
Pressing before, some coming after,
Those with a shout, and these with laughter.
Some bless the cart, some kiss the sheaves,
Some prank them up with oaken leaves,
Some cross the fill-horse, some with great
Devotion stroke the home-borne wheat,
While other rustics, less attent
To prayers than to merriment,
Run after with their breeches rent.
Well, on, brave boys, to your lord's hearth.
Clitt'ring with fire, where, for your mirth,
Ye shall see first the large and chief
Foundation of your feast, fat beef;
With upper stories, mutton, veal,
And bacon, which makes full the meal,
With sev'ral dishes standing by,
As, here a custard, there a pie,
And here all-tempting frumenty.
And for to make the merry cheer,
If smirking wine be wanting here,
There's that which drowns all care, stout beer,
Which freely drink to your lord's health,
Then to the plough (the commonwealth),
Next to your flails, your fans, your vats;
Then to the maids with wheaten hats;
To the rough sickle, and the crook'd scythe,
Drink, frolic boys, till all be blithe.
Feed and grow fat; and as ye eat,
Be mindful that the lab'ring neat,
As you, may have their fill of meat.
And know, besides, ye must revoke
The patient ox unto the yoke,
And all go back unto the plough
And harrow, though they're hanged up now.
And, you must know, your lord's word's true,
Feed him ye must, whose food fills you.
And that this pleasure is like rain,
Not sent ye for to drown your pain,
But for to make it spring again.

A THANKSGIVING TO GOD
FOR HIS HOUSE

Lord, thou hast given me a cell
Wherein to dwell,
A little house, whose humble roof
Is weather-proof;
Under the spars of which I lie
Both soft and dry,

Where thou my chamber for to ward
Hast set a guard
Of harmless thoughts, to watch and keep
Me while I sleep.
5 Low is my porch, as is my fate,
Both void of state;
And yet the threshold of my door
Is worn by th' poor,
Who fluther come and freely get
10 Good words or meat;
Like as my parlor, so my hall
And kitchen's small;
A little buttery, and therein
A little bin
15 Which keeps my little loaf of bread
Unchipped, unlead.
Some brittle sticks of thorn or briar
Make me a fire,
Close by whose living coal I sit,
20 And glow like it.
Lord, I confess, too, when I dine,
The pulse is thine,
And all those other bits that be
There placed by thee:
25 The worts, the purslain, and the mess
Of water-cress,
Which of thy kindness thou hast sent;
And my content
Makes those, and my beloved beet,
30 To be more sweet.
'Tis thou that crown'st my glittering hearth
With guiltless mirth;
And giv'st me wassail bowls to drink,
Spiced to the brink.
35 Lord, 'tis thy plenty-dropping hand
That soils my land,
And giv'st me for my bushel sown
Twice ten for one.
Thou mak'st my teeming hen to lay
40 Her egg each day;
Besides my healthful ewes to bear
Me twins each year,
The while the conduits of my kine
Run cream for wine.
45 All these, and better, thou dost send
Me to this end:
That I should render, for my part,
A thankful heart,
Which, fired with incense, I resign
50 As wholly thine;
But the acceptance, that must be,
My Christ, by thee.

HIS LITANY TO THE
HOLY SPIRIT

In the hour of my distress,
When temptations me oppress,
And when I my sins confess,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When I lie within my bed,
Sick in heart and sick in head,
And with doubts discomfited,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the house doth sigh and weep,
And the world is drowned in sleep,
Yet mine eyes the watch do keep,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the artless doctor sees
No one hope, but of his fees,
And his skill runs on the lees,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When his potion and his pill,
His, or none, or little skill,
Meet for nothing but to kill,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the passing-bell doth toll,
And the furies in a shoal
Come to fright a parting soul,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the tapers now burn blue,
And the comforters are few,
And that number more than true,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the priest his last hath prayed,
And I nod to what is said,
'Cause my speech is now decayed,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When, God knows, I'm tossed about,
Either with despair or doubt,
Yet, before the glass be out,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the tempter me pursu'th
With the sins of all my youth,
And half damns me with untruth,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the flames and hellish cries
Fright mine ears and fright mine eyes,
And all terrors me surprise,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the Judgment is revealed,
And that opened which was sealed,
When to thee I have appealed,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

GEORGE HERBERT

John Donne and George Herbert's mother were friends; thus it is not surprising to find the older poet influencing somewhat the verse of the younger. Herbert (1593-1633) was early consecrated to God's service; at Cambridge he showed a Miltonic seriousness which led him to the Oratorship and eventually the priesthood. While his brother, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, cut a brilliant figure in the circles of high society, George set out to write straightforward verses in praise of God. As a stylist he shows recognizable tags: a fondness for monosyllabic titles; experiments with stanza arrangements which appear as wings, pillars, etc.; a tendency to catalogue various alternatives, with God always the direct and conclusive answer; and an amazing ability to make up rhyme patterns, most of which he used only once.

THE PULLEY

When God at first made man,
Having a glass of blessings standing by,
"Let us," said He, "pour on him all we can.
Let the world's riches, which dispersed lie,
Contract into a span."

So strength first made a way;
Then beauty flowed, then wisdom, honor,
pleasure.

When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that, alone of all His treasure,
Rest in the bottom lay.

"For if I should," said He,
"Bestow this jewel also on my creature,
He would adore my gifts instead of me
And rest in nature, not the God of nature;
So both should losers be.

"Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness.
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to my breast."

THE COLLAR

I struck the board and cried, No more!
I will abroad.
What? Shall I ever sigh and pine?
My lines and life are free, free as the road,
Loose as the wind, as large as store.
Shall I be still in suit?
Have I no harvest but a thorn
To let me blood, and not restore
What I have lost with cordial fruit?
Sure there was wine
Before my sighs did dry it, there was corn
Before my tears did drown it.
Is the year only lost to me?
Have I no bays to crown it?
No flowers, no garlands gay? All blasted?
All wasted?
Not so, my heart! But there is fruit,
And thou hast hands.
Recover all thy sigh-blown age
On double pleasures. Leave thy cold dispute
Of what is fit and not. Forsake thy cage,
Thy rope of sands,
Which petty thoughts have made, and made
to thee
Good cable, to enforce and draw,
And be thy law,
While thou didst wink and wouldst not see.
Away! Take heed!
I will abroad.
Call in thy death's head there. Tie up thy
fears.
He that forbears
To suit and serve his need
Deserves his load.
But as I raved and grew more fierce and wild
At every word,
Me thoughts I heard one calling, Child!
And I replied, My Lord.

THE QUIP

The merry world did on a day
With his train-bands and mates agree

To meet together where I lay,
And all in sport to jeer at me.

First Beauty crept into a rose;
5 Which when I plucked not, "Sir," said she,
"Tell me, I pray, whose hands are those?"
But Thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.

Then Money came, and chinking still,
10 "What tune is this, poor man?" said he;
"I heard in music you had skill."
But Thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.

Then came brave Glory puffing by
15 In silks that whistled, who but he?
He scarce allowed me half an eye.
But Thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.

Then came quick Wit and Conversation,
20 And he would needs a comfort be,
And, to be short, make an oration.
But Thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.

Yet when the hour of Thy design
25 To answer these fine things shall come,
Speak not at large; say I am Thine,
And then they have their answer home.

LOVE

Love bade me welcome, yet my soul drew
back,
Guilty of dust and sin.
35 But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning
If I lacked anything.

40 A guest, I answered, worthy to be here.
Love said, You shall be he.
I, the unkind, the ungrateful? ah, my dear,
I cannot look on thee.
Love took my hand and smiling did reply,
45 Who made the eyes but I?

Truth, Lord, but I have marred them; let my
shame
Go where it doth deserve.
50 And know you not, says Love, who bore the
blame?
My dear, then I will serve.

LYRIC POETRY · THOMAS CAREW

You must sit down, says Love, and taste my
meat.
So I did sit and eat.

VIRTUE

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky!
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night;
For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue, angry and brave,
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye,
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie,
My music shows ye have your closes,
And all must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like seasoned timber, never gives;
But though the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives.

THOMAS CAREW

The early life of Carew (1595?-1639?) is marked by failure in college and the law and by half-performed offices as secretary to English ambassadors on the Continent. He later led a gay life at court and became a great favorite. On the other hand, Carew was also a friend of most of the famous men in literature during the period (Donne, Jonson, Suckling, Davenant); he turned out a few memorable lyrics, some set to music by Henry Lawes; and he distinguished himself among the Sons of Ben for his care in composition—he polished his lines more than the other Cavaliers did. The result is that his best-known songs never acquire the ease of Suckling (who criticized Carew for his “trouble and pain”), but do present a technical perfection which the other was incapable of, or which he scorned to work toward.

SONG

Ask me no more where Jove bestows,
When June is past, the fading rose;

For in your beauty’s orient deep
These flowers, as in their causes, sleep.

Ask me no more whither do stray
The golden atoms of the day;
For, in pure love, heaven did prepare
Those powders to enrich your hair.

Ask me no more whither doth haste
The nightingale when May is past;
For in your sweet dividing throat
She winters and keeps warm her note.

Ask me no more where those stars light
That downwards fall in dead of night;
For in your eyes they sit, and there
Fixed become as in their sphere.

Ask me no more if east or west
The Phoenix builds her spicy nest;
For unto you at last she flies,
And in your fragrant bosom dies.

MEDIOCRITY IN LOVE
REJECTED

Give me more love or more disdain:
The torrid or the frozen zone
Bring equal ease unto my pain,
The temperate affords me none;
Either extreme of love or hate
Is sweeter than a calm estate.

Give me a storm; if it be love,
Like Danaë¹ in that golden shower,
I swim in pleasure; if it prove
Disdain, that torrent will devour
My vulture-hopes; and he’s possessed
Of heaven, that’s but from hell released.
Then crown my joys or cure my pain;
Give me more love or more disdain.

DISDAIN RETURNED

He that loves a rosy cheek,
Or a coral lip admires,
Or from star-like eyes doth seek
Fuel to maintain his fires;
As old time makes these decay,
So his flames must waste away.

¹ Locked in a tower by her father, Danaë was visited by Zeus in a shower of gold.

But a smooth and steadfast mind,
Gentle thoughts and calm desires,
Hearts with equal love combined,
Kindle never-dying fires,
Where these are not, I despise
Lovely cheeks, or lips, or eyes.

No tears, Celia, now shall win
My resolved heart to return;
I have searched thy soul within,
And find nought but pride and scorn;
I have learned thy arts, and now
Can disdain as much as thou.
Some power, in my revenge, convey
That love to her I cast away.

PERSUASIONS TO ENJOY

SONG

If the quick spirits in your eye
Now languish, and anon must die;
If every sweet and every grace
Must fly from that forsaken face;
Then, Celia, let us reap our joys
Ere time such goodly fruit destroys.

Or, if that golden fleece must grow
Forever free from aged snow;
If those bright suns must know no shade,
Nor your fresh beauties ever fade,
Then, fear not, Celia, to bestow
What, still being gathered, still must grow.
Thus, either Time his sickle brings
In vain, or else in vain his wings.

EDMUND WALLER

After beginning his career with the familiar university and law school pattern, Waller (1606–1687) went on to become a Member of Parliament under three kings. His political life was stormy. Possessed of a fortune and good connections, Waller played both sides: he was friendly toward Cromwell and yet engineered “Waller’s Plot” to win London for the Royalists—its discovery cost fellow plotters their heads. But the leader survived by paying a huge fine and accepting banishment to France. His domestic life was likewise active, with three ladies—Anne Bankes, Lady Dorothy Sid-

ney, and Mary Bracey—playing central roles in a legal suit, an unrequited love affair, and exile, respectively. A born diplomat, Waller managed to write in praise of Cromwell after the Restoration that he had been only shamming. Waller, like Suckling, Lovelace, and so many gentlemen-poets, is remembered for only two or three first-rate poems. In these he is not obscure, his lines are clean, and the lyric touch is sure.

SONG

Go, lovely rose!
Tell her that wastes her time and me
That now she knows,
When I resemble her to thee,
How sweet and fair she seems to be.

Tell her that’s young,
And shuns to have her graces spied,
That hadst thou sprung
In deserts, where no men abide,
Thou must have uncommended died.

Small is the worth
Of beauty from the light retired;
Bid her come forth,
Suffer herself to be desired,
And not blush so to be admired.

Then die! that she
The common fate of all things rare
May read in thee;
How small a part of time they share
That are so wondrous sweet and fair!

ON A GIRDLE

That which her slender waist confined,
Shall now my joyful temples bind;
No monarch but would give his crown,
His arms might do what this has done.

It was my heaven’s extremest sphere,
The pale¹ which held that lovely deer;
My joy, my grief, my hope, my love
Did all within this circle move!

¹ enclosure.

A narrow compass! and yet there
Dwelt all that's good and all that's fair;
Give me but what this ribbon bound,
Take all the rest the sun goes round!

JOHN MILTON*

L'ALLEGRO

Hence, loathèd Melancholy,
Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born,
In Stygian cave forlorn,
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and
sights unholy,
Find out some uncouth cell,
Where brooding Darkness spreads his jeal-
ous wings,
And the night-raven sings;
There under ebon shades, and low-browed
rocks,
As ragged as thy locks,
In dark Cimmerian desert¹ ever dwell.
But come, thou Goddess fair and free,
In heaven ycleped Euphrosyne,
And by men, heart-easing Mirth,
Whom lovely Venus at a birth
With two sister Graces more
To ivy-crownèd Bacchus bore;
Or whether (as some sager sing)
The frolic Wind that breathes the spring,
Zephyr with Aurora playing,
As he met her once a-Maying,
There on beds of violets blue,
And fresh-blown roses washed in dew,
Filled her with thee, a daughter fair,
So buxom, blithe, and debonair.
Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee
Jest and youthful Jollity,
Quips, and Cranks,² and wanton Wiles,
Nods, and Becks, and wreathèd Smiles
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek;
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides.
Come, and trip it as ye go,
On the light fantastic toe;
And in thy right hand lead with thee

The mountain Nymph, sweet Liberty;
And, if I give thee honor due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
To live with her, and live with thee,
5 In unreprieved pleasures free;
To hear the lark begin his flight,
And singing startle the dull night,
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled Dawn doth rise;
10 Then to come, in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good-morrow,
Through the sweet-briar or the vine,
Or the twisted eglantine;
While the cock with lively din
15 Scatters the rear of Darkness thin;
And to the stack, or the barn-door,
Stoutly struts his dames before:
Oft listening how the hounds and horn
Cheerly rouse the slumbering Morn,
20 From the side of some hoar hill,
Through the high wood echoing shrill:
Sometime walking, not unseen,
By hedgerow elms, on hillocks green,
Right against the eastern gate,
25 Where the great Sun begins his state,
Robed in flames and amber light,
The clouds in thousand liveries dight;
While the ploughman, near at hand,
Whistles o'er the furrowed land,
30 And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
And the mower whets his scythe,
And every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale.
Straight mine eye hath caught new
35 pleasures,
Whilst the landscape round it measures:
Russet lawns, and fallows gray,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray;
Mountains on whose barren breast
40 The laboring clouds do often rest;
Meadows trim with daisies pied;
Shallow brooks, and rivers wide.
Towers and battlements it sees
Bosomed high in tufted trees,
45 Where perhaps some Beauty lies,
The Cynosure of neighboring eyes.
Hard by, a cottage chimney smokes
From betwixt two aged oaks,
Where Corydon and Thyrsis met
50 Are at their savory dinner set
Of herbs and other country messes,
Which the neat-handed Phillis dresses;

* For introductory sketch and selection from 50
Paradise Lost, see I, 87–100.

¹ allusion to Homeric geography.

² jests.

And then in haste her bower she leaves,
 With Thestylis to bind the sheaves,
 Or, if the earlier season lead,
 To the tanned haycock in the mead.
 Sometimes with secure delight
 The upland hamlets will invite,
 When the merry bells ring round,
 And the jocund rebecks³ sound
 To many a youth and many a maid
 Dancing in the chequered shade,
 And young and old come forth to play
 On a sunshine holiday,
 Till the livelong daylight fail:
 Then to the spicy nut-brown ale,
 With stories told of many a feat,
 How fairy Mab the junkets eat:
 She was pinched and pulled, she said;
 And he, by Friar's lantern⁴ led,
 Tells how the drudging Goblin sweat
 To earn his cream-bowl duly set,
 When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
 His shadowy flail hath threshed the corn
 That ten day-laborers could not end,
 Then lies him down, the lubber⁵ fiend,
 And, stretched out all the chimney's length,
 Basks at the fire his hairy strength,
 And crop-full out of doors he flings,
 Ere the first cock his matin rings.
 Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,
 By whispering winds soon lulled asleep.
 Towered cities please us then,
 And the busy hum of men,
 Where throngs of Knights and Barons bold,
 In weeds of peace, high triumphs hold,
 With store of Ladies, whose bright eyes
 Rain influence, and judge the prize
 Of wit or arms, while both contend
 To win her grace whom all commend.
 There let Hymen oft appear
 In saffron robe, with taper clear,
 And pomp, and feast, and revelry,
 With mask and antique pageantry;
 Such sights as youthful Poets dream
 On summer eves by haunted stream.
 Then to the well-trod stage anon,
 If Jonson's learned sock be on,
 Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
 Warble his native wood-notes wild.
 And ever, against eating cares,
 Lap me in soft Lydian airs,

Married to immortal verse,
 Such as the meeting soul may pierce,
 In notes with many a winding bout
 Of linked sweetness long drawn out
 5 With wanton heed and giddy cunning,
 The melting voice through mazes running,
 Untwisting all the chains that tie
 The hidden soul of harmony;
 That Orpheus' self may heave his head
 10 From golden slumber on a bed
 Of heaped Elysian flowers, and hear
 Such strains as would have won the ear
 Of Pluto to have quite set free
 His half-regained Eurydice.
 15 These delights if thou canst give,
 Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

IL PENSEROSO

20 Hence, vain deluding Joys,
 The brood of Folly without father bred!
 How little you bested,¹
 Or fill the fix'd mind with all your toys!
 25 Dwell in some idle brain,
 And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess
 As thick and numberless
 As the gay motes that people the sunbeams,
 Or likest hovering dreams,
 30 The fickle pensioners of Morpheus' train.
 But, hail! thou Goddess sage and holy!
 Hail, divinest Melancholy!
 Whose saintly visage is too bright
 To hit the sense of human sight,
 35 And therefore to our weaker view
 O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue;
 Black, but such as in esteem
 Prince Memnon's sister² might beseem,
 Or that starred Ethiop Queen³ that strove
 40 To set her beauty's praise above
 The Sea-Nymphs, and their powers offended.
 Yet thou art higher far descended:
 Thee bright-haired Vesta long of yore
 To solitary Saturn bore;
 45 His daughter she; in Saturn's reign
 Such mixture was not held a stain.
 Oft in glimmering bowers and glades
 He met her, and in secret shades
 Of woody Ida's⁴ inmost grove,
 50 -----

³ fiddles.⁴ will o' the wisp.⁵ clumsy.¹ avail.² Cassiopeia.² Hemera (*Odyssey*)⁴ Mount Ida, in Crete

Whilst yet there was no fear of Jove.
 Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure,
 Sober, steadfast, and demure,
 All in a robe of darkest grain,
 Flowing with majestic train,
 And sable stole of cypress lawn
 Over thy decent shoulders drawn.
 Come; but keep thy wonted state,
 With even step, and musing gait,
 And looks commercing with the skies,
 Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes:
 There, held in holy passion still,
 Forget thyself to marble, till
 With a sad leaden downward cast
 Thou fix them on the earth as fast.
 And join with thee calm Peace and Quiet,
 Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,
 And hears the Muses in a ring
 Aye round about Jove's altar sing;
 And add to these retirèd Leisure,
 That in trim gardens takes his pleasure;
 But, first and chiefest, with thee bring
 Him that yon soars on golden wing,
 Guiding the fiery-wheelèd throne,
 The Cherub Contemplation;
 And the mute Silence hist along,
 'Less Philomel will deign a song,
 In her sweetest saddest plight,
 Smoothing the rugged brow of Night,
 While Cynthia checks her dragon yoke
 Gently o'er the accustomed oak.
 Sweet bird, that shunn'st the noise of folly,
 Most musical, most melancholy!
 Thee, Chauntress, oft the woods among
 I woo, to hear thy even-song;
 And, missing thee, I walk unseen
 On the dry smooth-shaven green,
 To behold the wandering Moon,
 Riding near her highest noon,
 Like one that had been led astray
 Through the heaven's wide pathless way,
 And oft, as if her head she bowed,
 Stooping through a fleecy cloud.
 Oft, on a plat of rising ground,
 I hear the far-off curfew sound,
 Over some wide-watered shore,
 Swinging slow with sullen roar;
 Or, if the air will not permit,
 Some still removèd place will fit,
 Where glowing embers through the room
 Teach light to counterfeit a gloom,
 Far from all resort of mirth,

Save the cricket on the hearth,
 Or the Bellman's drowsy charm
 To bless the doors from nightly harm,
 Or let my lamp, at midnight hour,
 5 Be seen in some high lonely tower,
 Where I may oft outwatch the Bear,⁵
 With thrice-great Hermes,⁶ or unsphere
 The spirit of Plato, to unfold
 What worlds or what vast regions hold
 10 The immortal mind that hath forsook
 Her mansion in this fleshly nook;
 And of those demons that are found
 In fire, air, flood, or underground,
 Whose power hath a true consent
 15 With planet or with element.
 Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy
 In sceptred pall come sweeping by,
 Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line,
 Or the tale of Troy divine,
 20 Or what (though rare) of later age
 Ennobled hath the buskined stage.
 But, O sad Virgin! that thy power
 Might raise Musæus⁷ from his bower;
 Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing
 25 Such notes as, warbled to the string,
 Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
 And made Hell grant what Love did seek;
 Or call up him⁸ that left half-told
 The story of Cambuscan bold,
 30 Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
 And who had Canace to wife,
 That owned the virtuous ring and glass,
 And of the wondrous horse of brass
 On which the Tartar King did ride;
 35 And if aught else great Bards beside
 In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
 Of tourneys, and of trophies hung,
 Of forests, and enchantments drear,
 Where more is meant than meets the ear.
 40 Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career,
 Till civil-suited Morn appear,
 Not tricked and frownc'd, as she was wont
 With the Attic boy⁹ to hunt,
 But kerchieft in a comely cloud,
 45 While rocking winds are piping loud,
 Or ushered with a shower still,

⁵ the constellation.

⁶ Hermes Trismegistus, mythical magician.

⁷ mythical Greek poet.

50 ⁸ Chaucer; the following names are from *Squire's Tale*.

⁹ Cephalus, loved by dawn goddess.

When the gust hath blown his fill,
 Ending on the rustling leaves,
 With minute-drops from off the eaves.
 And, when the sun begins to fling
 His flaring beams, me, Goddess, bring
 To archèd walks of twilight groves,
 And shadows brown, that Sylvan¹⁰ loves,
 Of pine, or monumental oak,
 Where the rude axe with heavèd stroke
 Was never heard the Nymphs to daunt,
 Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.
 There, in close covert, by some brook,
 Where no profaner eye may look,
 Hide me from Day's garish eye,
 While the bee with honeyed thigh,
 That at her flowery work doth sing,
 And the waters murmuring,
 With such consort as they keep,
 Entice the dewy-feathered Sleep.
 And let some strange mysterious dream
 Wave at his wings, in airy stream
 Of lively portraiture displayed,
 Softly on my eyelids laid.
 And as I wake, sweet music breathe
 Above, about, or underneath,
 Sent by some Spirit to mortals good,
 Or the unseen Genius of the wood.
 But let my due feet never fail
 To walk the studious cloister's pale,
 And love the high embowèd roof,
 With antique pillars massy proof,
 And storied windows richly dight,
 Casting a dim religious light.
 There let the pealing organ blow,
 To the full voiced Quire below,
 In service high and anthems clear,
 As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
 Dissolve me into ecstasies,
 And bring all Heaven before mine eyes.
 And may at last my weary age
 Find out the peaceful hermitage,
 The hairy gown and mossy cell,
 Where I may sit and rightlly spell
 Of every star that Heaven doth shew,
 And every herb that sips the dew;
 Till old experience do attain
 To something like prophetic strain.
 These pleasures, Melancholy, give,
 And I with thee will choose to live.

¹⁰ Sylvanus, wood god.

ON HIS HAVING ARRIVED TO THE AGE OF TWENTY-THREE

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of
 5 youth,
 Stolen on his wing my three and twentieth
 year!
 My hasting days fly on with full career,
 But my late spring no bud or blossom
 10 shew'th.
 Perhaps my semblance might deceive the
 truth,
 That I to manhood am arrived so near,
 And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
 15 That some more timely-happy spirits
 endu'th.
 Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,
 It shall be still in strictest measure even
 To that same lot, however mean or high,
 20 Toward which Time leads me, and the will of
 Heaven.
 All is, if I have grace to use it so,
 As ever in my great Task-master's eye.

25 LYCIDAS¹

Yet once more, O ye Laurels, and once more,
 Ye Myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,
 I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
 30 And with forced fingers rude
 Shatter your leaves before the mellowing
 year.
 Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear
 Compels me to disturb your season due;
 35 For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
 Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.
 Who would not sing for Lycidas? he knew
 Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.
 He must not float upon his watery bier
 40 Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
 Without the meed of some melodious tear.
 Begin, then, Sisters of the sacred well²
 That from beneath the seat of Jove doth
 spring;
 45 Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.
 Hence with denial vain and coy excuse.
 So may some gentle Muse
 With lucky words favor *my* destined urn,
 And as he passes turn,

¹ written in memory of Edward King, a college friend who was drowned at sea.

² the muses.

And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud!
 For we were nursed upon the self-same hill,
 Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and
 rill;
 Together both, ere the high lawns appeared
 Under the opening eyelids of the Morn,
 We drove a-field, and both together heard
 What time the grey-fly winds her sultry horn,
 Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of
 night,
 Oft till the star that rose at evening bright
 Toward heaven's descent had sloped his
 westering wheel.
 Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute;
 Tempered to the oaten flute
 Rough Satyrs danced, and Fauns with cloven
 heel
 From the glad sound would not be absent
 long;
 And old Damœtas loved to hear our song.
 But, oh! the heavy change, now thou art
 gone,
 Now thou art gone and never must return!
 Thee, Shepherd, thee the woods and desert
 caves,
 With wild thyme and the gadding vine
 o'ergrown,
 And all their echoes, mourn.
 The willows, and the hazel copses green,
 Shall now no more be seen
 Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.
 As killing as the canker to the rose,
 Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that
 graze,
 Or frost to flowers, that their gay wardrobe
 wear,
 When first the white-thorn blows;
 Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear.
 Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorse-
 less deep
 Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?
 For neither were ye playing on the steep
 Where your old Bards, the famous Druids, lie,
 Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,
 Nor yet where Deva spreads her wizard
 stream.
 Ay me! I fondly dream
 "Had ye been there," . . . for what could
 that have done?
 What could the Muse³ herself that Orpheus

³ Calliope.

bore,
 The Muse herself, for her enchanting son,
 Whom universal nature did lament,
 When, by the rout that made the hideous roar,
 5 His gory visage down the stream was sent,
 Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?
 Alas! what boots it with uncessant care
 To tend the homely slighted Shepherd's
 trade,
 10 And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?
 Were it not better done, as others use,
 To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
 Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?
 Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth
 15 raise
 (That last infirmity of noble mind)
 To scorn delights and live laborious days;
 But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
 And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
 20 Comes the blind Fury with the abhorred
 shears,
 And slits the thin-spun life. "But not the
 praise,"
 Phœbus replied, and touched my trembling
 25 ears:
 "Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
 Nor in the glistening foil
 Set off to the world, nor in broad rumor lies,
 But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes
 30 And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;
 As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
 Of so much fame in heaven expect thy
 meed."
 O fountain Arethuse,⁴ and thou
 35 honored flood,
 Smooth-sliding Mincius, crowned with vocal
 reeds,
 That strain I heard was of a higher mood.
 But now my oat proceeds,
 40 And listens to the Herald of the Sea,⁵
 That came in Neptune's plea.
 He asked the waves, and asked the felon
 winds,
 What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle
 45 swain?
 And questioned every gust of rugged wings
 That blows from off each beakèd promontory.
 They knew not of his story;
 And sage Hippotades⁶ their answer brings,

50 ⁴ in Sicily; symbolizes pastoral poetry.

⁵ Triton.

⁶ Aeolus, god of winds.

That not a blast was from his dungeon strayed:
The air was calm, and on the level brine
Sleek Panope⁷ with all her sisters played.
It was that fatal and perfidious bark,
Built in the eclipse, and rigged with curses
dark,

That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.
Next, Camus,⁸ reverend Sire, went footing
slow,

His mantle hairy and his bonnet sedge,
Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge
Like to that sanguine flower inscribed with
woe.

"Ah! who hath reft," quoth he, "my dearest
pledge?"

Last came, and last did go,
The Pilot of the Galilean Lake,⁹
Two massy keys he bore of metals twain
(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain).
He shook his mitred locks, and stern be-
spoke:—

"How well could I have spared for thee,
young swain,
Enow of such as, for their bellies' sake,
Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold!
Of other care they little reckoning make
Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,
And shove away the worthy bidden guest.
Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know
how to hold

A sheep-hook, or have learnt aught else the
least

That to the faithful Herdman's art belongs!
What recks it them? What need they?

They are sped;
And, when they list, their lean and flashy
songs

Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched
straw;

The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
But, swoln with wind and the rank mist they
draw,

Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread;
Besides what the grim Wolf¹⁰ with privy paw
Daily devours apace, and nothing said.
But that two-handed engine¹¹ at the door
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no
more."

Return, Alpheus;¹² the dread voice is past
That shrunk thy streams; return, Sicilian

Muse,

And call the vales, and bid them hither cast
5 Their bells and flowerets of a thousand hues.
Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use
Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing
brooks,

On whose fresh lap the swart star sparely
10 looks,

Throw hither all your quaint enamelled eyes,
That on the green turf suck the honeyed
showers,

And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.

15 Bring the rather¹³ primrose that forsaken dies,
The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,
The white pink, and the pansy freaked with
jet,

The glowing violet,

20 The musk-rose, and the well-attired woodbine,
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive
head,

And every flower that sad embroidery wears;
Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,

25 And daffadillies fill their cups with tears,
To strew the laureate hearse where Lycid lies.
For so, to interpose a little ease,
Let our frail thoughts dally with false
surmise.

30 Ay me! whilst thee the shores and sounding
seas

Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled;
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,
Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide

35 Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world;
Or whether thou, to our moist vows denied,
Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus¹⁴ old,
Where the great Vision of the guarded mount¹⁵
Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold.¹⁶

40 Look homeward, Angel, now, and melt with
ruth:

And, O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth.

Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no
more,

45 For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor.
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,

¹² pastoral figure; Milton is returning to pastoral mood.

¹³ early.

¹⁴ Land's End.

¹⁵ St. Michael's Mount (Cornwall).

¹⁶ in Spain.

⁷ sea nymph.

⁸ personification of river Cam.

⁹ Saint Peter.

¹⁰ Roman Catholic Church.

¹¹ obscure reference.

LYRIC POETRY · SIR JOHN SUCKLING

And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled
ore

Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of Him that walked
the waves,

Where, other groves and other streams along,
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,
And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,
In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.
There entertain him all the Saints above,
In solemn troops, and sweet societies,
That sing, and singing in their glory move,
And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.
Now, Lycidas, the Shepherds weep no more;
Henceforth thou art the Genius of the shore,
In thy large recompense, and shalt be good
To all that wander in that perilous flood.

Thus sang the uncouth¹⁷ Swain to the oaks
and rills,
While the still Morn went out with sandals
grey:
He touched the tender stops of various quills, 25
With eager thought warbling his Doric lay:
And now the sun had stretched out all the
hills,
And now was dropt into the western bay.
At last he rose, and twitched his mantle blue: 30
To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new.

ON HIS BLINDNESS

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul
more bent

To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he returning chide;
"Doth God exact day-labor, light denied?"
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not
need

Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His
state
Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed, 50

¹⁷ rustic, unknown.

And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

SIR JOHN SUCKLING

5 *Cambridge, Inns of Court, travel, military service—these details in the life of Suckling (1609–1642) merely fit the pattern for the moneyed young man of the day, as we have seen. But*
10 *Suckling had his own individuality within the pattern; he was the gay, insouciant sort that could toss away thousands on bright (and impractical!) uniforms for a private troop of horse, gamble away a fortune at dice and cards,*
15 *squander youth on the ladies, and eventually (and typically) throw life itself away after the last spin of the wheel. "Easy, natural Suckling," with his bad plays and good light verse, his banter, his lampooning of the too-serious, was,*
20 *in spite of his own waste and tragedy, one of those who seem designed by Fate, yesterday or today, to make life pleasant for the rest of us. He is the legendary Cavalier come to life, one of the last to cry "Carpe diem" before the gloom of Puritanism descended.*

THE CONSTANT LOVER

Out upon it, I have loved
Three whole days together!
And am like to love three more,
If it prove fair weather.

Time shall moult away his wings,
Ere he shall discover
In the whole wide world again
Such a constant lover.

But the spite on't is, no praise
Is due at all to me:
Love with me had made no stays,
Had it any been but she.

Had it any been but she,
And that very face,
There had been at least ere this
A dozen dozen in her place.

WHY SO PALE AND WAN?

Why so pale and wan, fond lover?
Prithee, why so pale?

Will, when looking well can't move her,
Looking ill prevail?
Prithee, why so pale?

Why so dull and mute, young sinner?
Prithee, why so mute?

Will, when speaking well can't win her,
Saying nothing do't?
Prithee, why so mute?

Quit, quit for shame! This will not move
This cannot take her.
If of herself she will not love,
Nothing can make her:
The devil take her!

SONG

I prithee send me back my heart,
Since I cannot have thine;
For, if from yours you will not part,
Why then shouldst thou have mine?

Yet now I think on it, let it lie;
To find it were in vain,
For thou hast a thief in either eye
Would steal it back again.

Why should two hearts in one breast lie
And yet not lodge together?
O love, where is thy sympathy,
If thus our breasts thou sever?

But love is such a mystery,
I cannot find it out;
For when I think I'm best resolved,
I then am in most doubt.

Then farewell care, and farewell woe,
I will no longer pine,
For I'll believe I have her heart
As much as she hath mine.

RICHARD CRASHAW

Crashaw (1612?-1649), like Donne, went through the pains of religious doubts, but came to an opposite decision. Brought up a Puritan, he eventually became a Catholic priest and, fascinated by the life of St. Theresa, wrote flaming verses, mystical verses, in her honor.

Although disillusioned by practices of certain members of Cardinal Palotta's retinue, Crashaw never recanted; his is the only significant Catholic poetic voice in seventeenth-century England. Influenced by Herbert (but more intense and less clear) and friendly with Couley, Crashaw was capable of producing some of the best and some of the worst similes and metaphors in English. His life was cut short either through heat prostration or (some say) through poisoning by churchmen who had resented his prying criticisms.

15 A HYMN TO THE NAME AND HONOR OF THE ADMIRABLE SAINT TERESA

Foundress of the reformation of the Discalced¹ Carmelites, both men and women. A woman for angelical height of speculation, for masculine courage of performance, more than a woman, who yet a child outran maturity, and durst plot a martyrdom.

25 Love, thou art absolute sole lord
Of life and death. To prove the word,
We'll now appeal to none of all
Those thy old soldiers, great and tall,
Ripe men of martyrdom, that could reach
30 down
With strong arms their triumphant crown,
Such as could with lusty breath
Speak loud into the face of death
Their great Lord's glorious name; to none
35 Of those whose spacious bosoms spread a
throne
For love at large to fill; spare blood and
sweat,

And see him take a private seat,
40 Making his mansion in the mild
And milky soul of a soft child.
Scarce has she learned to lisp the name
Of martyr, yet she thinks it shame
Life should so long play with that breath
45 Which spent can buy so brave a death.
She never undertook to know
What death with love should have to do;
Nor has she e'er yet understood
Why to show love she should shed blood,

50 Yet though she cannot tell you why,

¹ barefoot.

She can love and she can die.

Scarce has she blood enough to make
A guilty sword blush for her sake;
Yet has she a heart dares hope to prove
How much less strong is death than love.

Be love but there, let poor six years
Be posed with the maturest fears
Man trembles at, you straight shall find
Love knows no nonage, nor the mind.
'Tis love, not years or limbs that can
Make the martyr or the man.

Love touched her heart, and lo it beats
High, and burns with such brave heats,
Such thirsts to die, as dares drink up
A thousand cold deaths in one cup.
Good reason, for she breathes all fire;
Her weak breast heaves with strong desire
Of what she may with fruitless wishes
Seek for amongst her mother's kisses.

Since 'tis not to be had at home,
She'll travel to a martyrdom.

No home for hers confesses she
But where she may a martyr be.

She'll to the Moors, and trade with them
For this unvalued diadem.
She'll offer them her dearest breath,
With Christ's name in 't, in change for death
She'll bargain with them, and will give
Them God, teach them how to live
In him; or if they this deny,
For him she'll teach them how to die.
So shall she leave amongst them sown
Her Lord's blood, or at least her own.

Farewell then, all the world, adieu!
Teresa is no more for you.
Farewell, all pleasures, sports, and joys,
Never till now esteemèd toys;
Farewell, whatever dear may be,
Mother's arms, or father's knee;
Farewell house and farewell home,
She's for the Moors and martyrdom!

Sweet, not so fast! lo, thy fair Spouse
Whom thou seek'st with so swift vows
Calls thee back, and bids thee come
To embrace a milder martyrdom.

Blest powers forbid thy tender life
Should bleed upon a barbarous knife,
Or some base hand have power to rase
Thy breast's chaste cabinet, and uncase
A soul kept there so sweet; O no,
Wise Heaven will never have it so:
Thou art Love's victim, and must die

A death more mystical and high.
Into Love's arms thou shalt let fall
A still-surviving funeral.

His is the dart must make the death
5 Whose stroke shall taste thy hallowed breath,
A dart thrice dipped in that rich flame
Which writes thy spouse's radiant name
Upon the roof of heaven, where aye
It shines, and with a sovereign ray
10 Beats bright upon the burning faces
Of souls, which in that name's sweet graces
Find everlasting smiles. So rare,
So spiritual, pure, and fair
Must be the immortal instrument

15 Upon whose choice point shall be sent
A life so loved; and that there be
Fit executioners for thee,
The fairest and first-born sons of fire,
Blest seraphim, shall leave their quire,
20 And turn Love's soldiers, upon thee
To exercise their archery.

O how oft shalt thou complain
Of a sweet and subtle pain;
Of intolerable joys;

25 Of a death in which who dies
Loves his death, and dies again,
And would forever so be slain,
And lives, and dies, and knows not why
To live, but that he thus may never leave to
30 die.

How kindly will thy gentle heart
Kiss the sweetly killing dart,
And close in his embraces keep
Those delicious wounds, that weep
35 Balsam to heal themselves with. Thus
When these thy deaths, so numerous,
Shall all at last die into one,
And melt thy soul's sweet mansion,
Like a soft lump of incense, hasted
40 By too hot a fire, and wasted
Into perfuming clouds, so fast
Shalt thou exhale to heaven at last
In a resolving sigh, and then,—
O what? Ask not the tongues of men.

45 Angels cannot tell; suffice
Thyself shall feel thine own full joys
And hold them fast forever there.
So soon as thou shalt first appear,
The moon of maiden stars, thy white
50 Mistress, attended by such bright
Souls as thy shining self, shall come,
And in her first ranks make thee room;

Where 'mongst her snowy family
Immortal welcomes wait for thee.

O what delight, when revealed Life shall
stand,
And teach thy lips heaven with His hand,
On which thou now may'st to thy wishes
Heap up thy consecrated kisses.
What joys shall seize thy soul when she,
Bending her blessed eyes on thee
(Those second smiles of heaven, shall dart
Her mild rays through thy melting heart!

Angels, thy old friends, there shall greet
thee,
Glad at their own home now to meet thee.

All thy good works which went before
And waited for thee at the door
Shall own thee there, and all in one
Weave a constellation
Of crowns, with which the King, thy Spouse,
Shall build up thy triumphant brows.

All thy old woes shall now smile on thee,
And thy pains sit bright upon thee;
All thy sorrows here shall shine,
All thy sufferings be divine;
Tears shall take comfort and turn gems,
And wrongs repent to diadems.
Even thy deaths shall live, and new
Dress the soul that erst they slew;
Thy wounds shall blush to such bright scars
As keep account of the Lamb's wars.

Those rare works where thou shalt leave writ
Love's noble history, with wit
Taught thee by none but him, while here
They feed our souls, shall clothe thine there.
Each heav'nly word by whose hid flame
Our hard hearts shall strike fire, the same
Shall flourish on thy brows, and be
Both fire to us and flame to thee,
Whose light shall live bright in thy face
By glory, in our hearts by grace.

Thou shalt look round about and see
Thousands of crowned souls throng to be
Themselves thy crown; sons of thy vows,
The virgin-births with which thy sovereign
spouse

Made fruitful thy fair soul, go now
And with them all about thee, bow
To him. Put on, he'll say, put on,
My rosy love, that thy rich zone
Sparkling with the sacred flames
Of thousand souls whose happy names
Heav'n keeps upon thy score. Thy bright

Life brought them first to kiss the light
That kindled them to stars. And so
Thou with the Lamb, thy Lord, shalt go,
And wheresoe'er he sets his white
5 Steps, walk with him those ways of light
Which who in death would live to see
Must learn in life to die like thee.

CHARITAS NIMIA; OR,
THE DEAR BARGAIN

Lord, what is man? why should he cost Thee
So dear? what had his ruin lost Thee?
15 Lord, what is man, that Thou hast over-bought
So much a thing of naught?

Love is too kind, I see, and can
Make but a simple merchant-man.
20 'Twas for such sorry merchandise
Bold painters have put out his eyes.

Alas, sweet Lord! what were't to Thee
If there were no such worms as we?
25 Heav'n ne'er the less still Heav'n would be,
Should mankind dwell
In the deep hell.
What have his woes to do with Thee?

Let him go weep
O'er his own wounds;
Seraphims will not sleep,
Nor spheres let fall their faithful rounds.

35 Still would the youthful spirits sing,
And still Thy spacious palace ring;
Still would those beauteous ministers of light
Burn all as bright,
And bow their flaming heads before Thee;
40 Still thrones and dominations would adore
Thee.

Still would those ever-wakeful sons of fire
Keep warm Thy praise
Both nights and days,
45 And teach Thy loved name to their noble
lyre.

Let froward dust then do its kind,
And give itself for sport to the proud wind.
50 Why should a piece of peevish clay plead
shares
In the eternity of Thy old cares?

LYRIC POETRY · RICHARD LOVELACE

Why shouldst Thou bow Thy awful breast to
see

What mine own madnesses have done with
me?

Should not the king still keep his throne 5
Because some desperate fool's undone?
Or will the world's illustrious eyes
Weep for every worm that dies?

Will the gallant sun 10
E'er the less glorious run?
Will he hang down his golden head,
Or e'er the sooner seek his western bed,
Because some foolish fly
Grows wanton, and will die? 15

If I were lost in misery,
What was it to Thy heaven and Thee?
What was it to Thy precious blood
If my foul heart called for a flood?

What if my faithless soul and I
Would needs fall in
With guilt and sin;
What did the Lamb that he should die? 25
What did the Lamb that He should need,
When the wolf sins, Himself to bleed?

If my base lust
Bargained with death and well-beseeming 30
dust,
Why should the white
Lamb's bosom write
The purple name
Of my sin's shame? 35
Why should His unstained breast make good
My blushes with His own heart-blood?

O my Saviour, make me see
How dearly Thou hast paid for me; 40
That, lost again, my life may prove,
As then in death, so now in love.

A SONG

Lord, when the sense of Thy sweet grace
Sends up my soul to seek Thy face,
Thy blessed eyes breed such desire
I die in love's delicious fire, 50
O love, I am thy sacrifice.
Be still triumphant, blessed eyes;

Still shine on me, fair suns! that I
Still may behold, though still I die.

SECOND PART

Though still I die, I live again,
Still longing so to be still slain;
So gainful is such loss of breath,
I die even in desire of death.
Still live in me this loving strife
Of living death and dying life;
For while Thou sweetly slayest me,
Dead to myself, I live in Thee.

RICHARD LOVELACE

Lovelace (1618-1657) represents the ideal Cavalier: brave, loyal, self-controlled. By comparison with the flamboyant Suckling and the opportunist Carew he seems almost as dainty as his name. Lovelace is the staunch royalist in defeat, for twice he was imprisoned; and in prison he wrote his best-known lyrics. We do not know much about him. He apparently won 20 an Oxford M.A. simply because of "influence" —he had been a student for only two years. His life after prison is obscure. But like his fellows, he has left a slender legacy of verses; unlike some of his contemporaries, he shows that love poetry need not be flip or cynical or sensual to be effective. Lovelace will shock no one; he does not run deep; but for all his grace and decency, he is never anything but virile.

TO LUCASTA, ON GOING TO THE WARS

Tell me not, sweet, I am unkind,
That from the nunnery
Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind
To war and arms I fly.

True, a new mistress now I chase,
The first foe in the field;
And with a stronger faith embrace
A sword, a horse, a shield.

Yet this inconstancy is such
As thou too shalt adore:
I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honor more.

TO ALTHEA, FROM PRISON

When Love with unconfin'd wings
 Hovers within my gates,
 And my divine Althea brings
 To whisper at the grates;
 When I lie tangled in her hair
 And fettered to her eye,
 The gods that wanton in the air
 Know no such liberty.

When flowing cups run swiftly round
 With no allaying Thames,
 Our careless heads with roses bound,
 Our hearts with loyal flames;
 When thirsty grief in wine we steep,
 When healths and draughts go free,
 Fishes that tinkle in the deep
 Know no such liberty.

When, like committed¹ linnets, I
 With shriller throat will sing
 The sweetness, mercy, majesty,
 And glories of my king;
 When I shall voice aloud how good
 He is, how great should be,
 Enlarg'd winds, that curl the flood,
 Know no such liberty.

Stone walls do not a prison make,
 Nor iron bars a cage:
 Minds innocent and quiet take
 That for an hermitage:
 If I have freedom in my love,
 And in my soul am free,
 Angels alone, that soar above,
 Enjoy such liberty.

GRATIANA DANCING AND SINGING

ee! with what constant motion,
 'ven, and glorious, as the sun,
 Gratiana steers that noble frame.
 oft as her breast, sweet as her voice
 hat gave each winding law and poise,
 And swifter than the wings of fame,

he beat the happy pavement,
 y such a star made firmament,

mpri-soned.

Which now no more the roof envies,
 But swells up high with Atlas even,
 Bearing the brighter, nobler heaven,
 And in her, all the deities.

5 Each step trod out a lover's thought,
 And the ambitious hopes he brought
 Chained to her brave feet with such arts,
 Such sweet command, and gentle awe,
 10 As when she ceased, we sighing saw
 The floor lay paved with broken hearts.

So did she move; so did she sing
 Like the harmonious spheres that bring
 15 Unto their rounds their music's aid;¹
 Which she performed such a way,
 As all the enamoured world will say,
 "The Graces danced, and Apollo played."

20

ANDREW MARVELL

Somewhat obscured by the great shadow of Milton, under whom he worked at one time as assistant Latin secretary, Marvell (1621-1678)
 25 *has recently experienced a sort of revival much like John Donne's. Recent scholarship makes much more of him than author of an unpuritanical poem of amatory opportunism, To His Coy Mistress, clever as this is. Before and*
 30 *after Cambridge, Marvell got about a great deal, not always in genteel company. His knowledge of languages was amazing. As tutor to Mary Fairfax and, later, to a ward of John Oxenbridge, the poet found opportunities for*
 35 *composition (the gardens of Nun Appleton House inspiring him in the first instance and the talk about Bermuda from Oxenbridge setting him off in the second). For a long time Marvell was M.P. for Hull. His poetry runs the*
 40 *gamut from conventional persuasions to enjoy life, through simple lyrics or diplomatic occasional poetry, to the metaphysics of The Garden, where now and then a reader may think he is in the early nineteenth century.*

45

THE GARDEN

How vainly men themselves amaze
 To win the palm, the oak, or bays,

50

¹ In the Ptolemaic system, the spheres were supposed to make music as they revolved.

And their incessant labors see
Crowned from some single herb, or tree,
Whose short and narrow-verged shade
Does prudently their toils upbraid;
While all flowers and all trees do close
To weave the garlands of repose!

Fair Quiet, have I found thee here,
And Innocence, thy sister dear?
Mistaken long, I sought you then
In busy companies of men.
Your sacred plants, if here below,
Only among the plants will grow;
Society is all but rude
To this delicious solitude.

No white nor red was ever seen
So amorous as this lovely green.
Fond lovers, cruel as their flame,
Cut in these trees their mistress' name:
Little, alas, they know or heed
How far these beauties hers exceed!
Fair trees, wheresoe'er your barks I wound,
No name shall but your own be found.

When we have run our passion's heat,
Love hither makes his best retreat.
The gods, that mortal beauty chase,
Still in a tree did end their race:
Apollo hunted Daphne so,
Only that she might laurel grow;
And Pan did after Syrinx speed,
Not as a nymph, but for a reed.¹

What wondrous life is this I lead!
Ripe apples drop about my head;
The luscious clusters of the vine
Upon my mouth do crush their wine;
The nectarine and curious peach
Into my hands themselves do reach;
Stumbling on melons, as I pass,
Ensnared with flowers, I fall on grass.

Meanwhile the mind from pleasure less
Withdraws into its happiness;
The mind, that ocean where each kind
Does straight its own resemblance find;
Yet it creates, transcending these,
Far other worlds and other seas,

Annihilating all that's made
To a green thought in a green shade.

5 Here at the fountain's sliding foot,
Or at some fruit-tree's mossy root,
Casting the body's vest aside,
My soul into the boughs does glide:
There, like a bird, it sits and sings,
Then whets and combs its silver wings,
10 And, till prepared for longer flight,
Waves in its plumes the various light.

Such was that happy garden-state,
While man there walked without a mate:
15 After a place so pure and sweet,
What other help could yet be meet!
But 'twas beyond a mortal's share
To wander solitary there:
Two paradises 'twere in one
20 To live in Paradise alone.

How well the skilful gardener drew,
Of flowers and herbs, this dial new;
Where, from above, the milder sun
25 Does through a fragrant zodiac run;
And, as it works, the industrious bee
Computes its time as well as we!
How could such sweet and wholesome hours
Be reckoned but with herbs and flowers?
30

THE DEFINITION OF LOVE

35 My love is of a birth as rare
As 'tis, for object, strange and high;
It was begotten by Despair
Upon Impossibility.

Magnanimous Despair alone
40 Could show me so divine a thing,
Where feeble Hope could ne'er have flown,
But vainly flapped its tinsel wing.

And yet I quickly might arrive
45 Where my extended soul is fixed;
But Fate does iron wedges drive,
And always crowds itself betwixt.

For Fate with jealous eyes does see
50 Two perfect loves, nor lets them close;
Their union would her ruin be,
And her tyrannic power depose.

¹ Both mythological maidens were saved from pursuit by similar metamorphoses.

And therefore her decrees of steel
Us as the distant poles have placed
(Though Love's whole world on us doth
wheel),

Not by themselves to be embraced; 5

Unless the giddy heaven fall,
And earth some new convulsion tear,
And, us to join, the world should all
Be cramped into a planisphere.¹ 10

As lines, so loves, oblique may well
Themselves in every angle greet;
But ours, so truly parallel,
Though infinite, can never meet. 15

Therefore the love which us doth bind,
But Fate so enviously debars,
Is the conjunction of the mind,
And opposition of the stars. 20

TO HIS COY MISTRESS

Had we but world enough, and time,
This coyness, Lady, were no crime. 25
We would sit down, and think which way
To walk, and pass our long love's day.
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side
Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide
Of Humber would complain. I would
Love you ten years before the Flood,
And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews.
My vegetable¹ love should grow
Vaster than empires and more slow; 35
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast,
But thirty thousand to the rest;
An age at least to every part, 40
And the last age should show your heart.
For, Lady, you deserve this state,
Nor would I love at lower rate.

But at my back I always hear
Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near; 45
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.
Thy beauty shall no more be found,
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound

My echoing song; then worms shall try
That long-preserved virginity,
And your quaint honor turn to dust,
And into ashes all my lust:

The grave's a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace.

Now therefore, while the youthful hue
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,
And while thy willing soul transpires
At every pore with instant fires,
Now let us sport us while we may,
And now, like amorous birds of prey,
Rather at once our time devour
Than languish in his slow-chapped power.
Let us roll all our strength and all
Our sweetness up into one ball,
And tear our pleasures with rough strife
Thorough the iron gates of life;
Thus, though we cannot make our sun
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

BERMUDAS

Where the remote Bermudas ride,
In the ocean's bosom unespied, 25
From a small boat that rowed along,
The listening winds received this song:¹

"What should we do but sing His praise,
That led us through the watery maze
Unto an isle so long unknown,
And yet far kinder than our own?
Where He the huge sea-monsters wracks,
That lift the deep upon their backs;
He lands us on a grassy stage,
Safe from the storms, and prelate's rage.
He gave us this eternal spring
Which here enamels everything,
And sends the fowls to us in care,
On daily visits through the air;
He hangs in shades the orange bright,
Like golden lamps in a green night,
And does in the pomegranates close
Jewels more rich than Ormus² shows;
He makes the figs our mouths to meet,
And throws the melons at our feet;
But apples plants of such a price,
No tree could ever bear them twice;

¹ a flat map of the world.

² active.

¹ This song is sung by colonists granted religious freedom in Bermuda.

² See *Paradise Lost*, II, 2.

With cedars, chosen by His hand,
From Lebanon, He stores the land;
And makes the hollow seas, that roar,
Proclaim the ambergris on shore;
He cast (of which we rather boast) 5
The Gospel's pearl upon our coast,
And in these rocks for us did frame
A temple, where to sound His name.
Oh! let our voice His praise exalt,
Till it arrive at heaven's vault, 10
Which, thence (perhaps) rebounding, may
Echo beyond the Mexique Bay."

Thus sung they in the English boat,
An holy and a cheerful note; 15
And all the way, to guide their chime,
With falling oars they kept the time.

HENRY VAUGHAN

Vaughan (1621-1695) left Oxford for the law only to have his studies interrupted by the wars, in which he may have served. He appears again in his native Wales, writing first 25
secular and finally religious poetry, and practicing medicine. Taking the name of *The Silurist*, after the Latin for his area, Vaughan turned out four volumes of verse under the influence of Herbert, but more mystical. Politics 30
and family troubles caused him concern which led to brooding which led to spiritual awakening; Vaughan reached God almost intuitively through Nature. Called the "mystic of light" because of his favorite imagery, he anticipates, 35
in his personal relation with Nature and his interest in children, the work of Wordsworth and the Romantic school.

THE RETREAT

Happy those early days, when I
Shined in my angel infancy;
Before I understood this place
Appointed for my second race, 40
Or taught my soul to fancy aught
But a white, celestial thought;
When yet I had not walked above
A mile or two from my first Love,
And looking back, at that short space, 45
Could see a glimpse of His bright face;
When on some gilded cloud or flower

My gazing soul would dwell an hour,
And in those weaker glories spy
Some shadows of eternity;
Before I taught my tongue to wound
My conscience with a sinful sound,
Or had the black art to dispense
A several sin to every sense,
But felt through all this fleshly dress
Bright shoots of everlastingness.
Oh, how I long to travel back,
And tread again that ancient track!
That I might once more reach that plain
Where first I left my glorious train,
From whence the enlightened spirit sees
That shady city of palm trees.
But, ah! my soul with too much stay
Is drunk, and staggers in the way.
Some men a forward motion love;
But I by backward steps would move,
And when this dust falls to the urn,
In that state I came, return.

CHILDHOOD

I cannot reach it; and my striving eye
Dazzles at it, as at eternity.

Were now that chronicle alive,
Those white designs which children drive,
And the thoughts of each harmless hour,
With their content, too, in my power,
Quickly would I make my path even,
And by mere playing go to heaven.

Why should men love
A wolf more than a lamb or dove?
Or choose hell-fire and brimstone streams
Before bright stars and God's own beams?
Who kisseth thorns will hurt his face,
But flowers do both refresh and grace,
And sweetly living—fie on men!—
Are, when dead, medicinal then;
If seeing much should make staid eyes,
And long experience should make wise,
Since all that age doth teach is ill,
Why should I not love childhood still?
Why, if I see a rock or shelf,
Shall I from thence cast down myself?
Or by complying with the world,
From the same precipice be hurled?
Those observations are but foul
Which make me wise to lose my soul.

And yet the practice worldlings call
Business, and weighty action all,
Checking the poor child for his play,
But gravely cast themselves away.

THE WORLD

I saw eternity the other night
Like a great ring of pure and endless light,
All calm as it was bright;
And round beneath it, time, in hours, days,
years,
Driven by the spheres,
Like a vast shadow moved, in which the 15
world
And all her train were hurled.
The doting lover in his quaintest strain
Did there complain;
Near him, his lute, his fancy, and his flights, 20
Wit's sour delights,
With gloves and knots, the silly snares of pleas-
ure,
Yet his dear treasure,
All scattered lay, while he his eyes did pour 25
Upon a flower.

The darksome statesman, hung with weights
and woe,
Like a thick midnight fog, moved there so slow 30
He did nor stay nor go;
Condemning thoughts, like mad eclipses,
scowl
Upon his soul,
And clouds of crying witnesses without 35
Pursued him with one shout.
Yet digged the mole, and, lest his ways be
found,
Worked under ground,
Where he did clutch his prey. But one did see 40
That policy:
Churches and altars fed him; perjuries
Were gnats and flies;
It rained about him blood and tears; but he
Drank them as free.

The fearful miser on a heap of rust
Sat pining all his life there, did scarce trust
His own hands with the dust;
Yet would not place one piece above, but lives 50
In fear of thieves.
Thousands there were as frantic as himself,

And hugged each one his pelf:
The downright epicure placed heaven in
sense,

And scorned pretense;
5 While others, slipped into a wide excess,
Said little less;
The weaker sort, slight, trivial wares enslave,
Who think them brave;
And poor, despised Truth sat counting by 10
Their victory.

Yet some, who all this while did weep and
sing,

And sing and weep, soared up into the ring;
But most would use no wing.

"O fools!" said I, "thus to prefer dark night
Before true light!

To live in grots and caves, and hate the day
Because it shows the way,

The way which from this dead and dark abode
Leads up to God,

A way where you might tread the sun and be
More bright than he!"

But, as I did their madness so discuss,

One whispered thus:

"This ring the bridegroom did for none pro-
vide,
But for his bride."

DEPARTED FRIENDS

They are all gone into the world of light!
And I alone sit lingering here;

35 Their very memory is fair and bright,
And my sad thoughts doth clear.

It glows and glitters in my cloudy breast,
Like stars upon some gloomy grove,

40 Or those faint beams in which this hill is drest,
After the sun's remove.

I see them walking in an air of glory,
Whose light doth trample on my days;

45 My days, which are at best but dull and hoary,
Mere glimmering and decays.

O holy hope! and high humility,
High as the heavens above!

50 These are your walks, and you have showed
them me,

To kindle my cold love.

Dear, beauteous death! the jewel of the just,
Shining nowhere, but in the dark,
What mysteries do lie beyond thy dust,
Could man outlook that mark!

For none can thee secure
But One who never changes,
Thy God, thy life, thy cure.

5

He that hath found some fledged bird's nest
may know

At first sight if the bird be flown,
But what fair well or grove he sings in now,
That is to him unknown.

And yet, as angels in some brighter dreams
Call to the soul, when man doth sleep,
So some strange thoughts transcend our
wonted themes,
And into glory peep.

If a star were confined into a tomb,
The captive flames must needs burn there;
But when the hand that locked her up gives
room,
She'll shine through all the sphere.

O Father of eternal life, and all
Created glories under Thee,
Resume Thy spirit from this world of thrall
Into true liberty!

Either disperse these mists, which blot and fill
My perspective still as they pass;
Or else remove me hence unto that hill,
Where I shall need no glass.

PEACE

My soul, there is a country
Far beyond the stars,
Where stands a winged sentry
All skilful in the wars.
There, above noise and danger,
Sweet Peace sits crowned with smiles,
And One born in a manger
Commands the beauteous files.
He is thy gracious friend,
And—O my soul, awake!—
Did in pure love descend
To die here for thy sake.
If thou canst get but thither,
There grows the flower of peace,
The rose that cannot wither,
Thy fortress and thy ease.
Leave, then, thy foolish ranges;

JOHN DRYDEN

The name of Dryden (1631–1700) is more significant than the size of the selection from his work may here indicate. He is a difficult subject for an anthologist: much of his fame depends on his criticism or his drama, neither of which belongs in this section of our text. Of his non-dramatic verse, much (especially the satires) is lost on the modern reader; most of it is too long to reprint conveniently. It is now established that Dryden (with a background of Cambridge and the inevitable secretaryships) excelled in four fields—satire, heroic drama, criticism, and lyric poetry—to which we may add a fifth, translation. Poet laureate and one of the great literary arbiters of English literature, Dryden is something of a paradox: he tried Protestantism and Catholicism and wrote poems favoring each; he tried rhyme and blank verse, assailing each on occasion. Whatever may have been his motives, however dull or cold his work may seem to a modern reader, there is, nevertheless, no one else of his versatility and energy in the annals of late seventeenth-century English literature.

A SONG FOR ST. CECILIA'S DAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1687

35

From harmony, from heavenly harmony
This universal frame began;
When Nature underneath a heap
Of jarring atoms lay,
And could not heave her head,
The tuneful voice was heard from high,
"Arise, ye more than dead."

45

Then cold and hot and moist and dry
In order to their stations leap,
And Music's power obey.
From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
This universal frame began:
50 From harmony to harmony
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in Man.

What passion cannot Music raise and quell!
 When Jubal¹ struck the chorded shell,
 His listening brethren stood around,
 And, wondering, on their faces fell
 To worship that celestial sound: 5
 Less than a god they thought there could not
 dwell

Within the hollow of that shell,
 That spoke so sweetly, and so well.
 What passion cannot Music raise and quell! 10

The trumpet's loud clangor
 Excites us to arms
 With shrill notes of anger
 And mortal alarms. 15
 The double, double, double beat
 Of the thundering drum
 Cries, "Hark! the foes come,
 Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat!"

The soft complaining flute
 In dying notes discovers
 The woes of hopeless lovers,
 Whose dirge is whispered by the war-
 bling lute.

Sharp violins proclaim
 Their jealous pangs and desperation,
 Fury, frantic indignation,
 Depth of pains and height of passion, 30
 For the fair, disdainful dame.

But oh! what art can teach,
 What human voice can reach
 The sacred organ's praise? 35
 Notes inspiring holy love,
 Notes that wing their heavenly ways
 To mend the choirs above.

Orpheus could lead the savage race, 40
 And trees unrooted left their place,
 Sequacious of the lyre;
 But bright Cecilia raised the wonder higher;
 When to her organ vocal breath was given,
 An angel heard, and straight appeared, 45
 Mistaking earth for heaven.

GRAND CHORUS

As from the power of sacred lays
 The spheres began to move, 50

And sung that great Creator's praise
 To all the blessed above;
 So, when the last and dreadful hour
 This crumbling pageant shall devour,
 The trumpet shall be heard on high,
 The dead shall live, the living die,
 And Music shall untune the sky.

ALEXANDER'S FEAST: OR, THE
POWER OF MUSIC

A SONG IN HONOR OF ST. CECILIA'S DAY, 1697

'Twas at the royal feast, for Persia won
 By Philip's warlike son:¹ 15
 Aloft in awful state
 The godlike hero sate
 On his imperial throne;
 His valiant peers were placed around;
 20 Their brows with roses and with myrtles
 bound:
 (So should desert in arms be crowned.)
 The lovely Thais, by his side,
 Sate like a blooming Eastern bride,
 25 In flower of youth and beauty's pride.
 Happy, happy, happy pair!
 None but the brave,
 None but the brave,
 None but the brave deserves the fair.

CHORUS

Happy, happy, happy pair!
 None but the brave,
 None but the brave,
 None but the brave deserves the fair.

Timotheus,² placed on high
 Amid the tuneful quire,
 With flying fingers touched the lyre:
 The trembling notes ascend the sky,
 And heavenly joys inspire.
 The song began from Jove,
 Who left his blissful seats above,
 (Such is the power of mighty love).
 A dragon's fiery form belied the god:
 Sublime on radiant spires he rode,
 When he to fair Olympia³ pressed;
 And while he sought her snowy breast,

¹ Alexander.² Alexander's favorite musician.³ Alexander's mother.¹ See Genesis 4:21.

Then round her slender waist he curled,
And stamped an image of himself, a sovereign
of the world.

The listening crowd admire the lofty sound,
"A present deity," they shout around;
"A present deity," the vaulted roofs re-
bound:

With ravished ears
The monarch hears,
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres.

CHORUS

With ravished ears
The monarch hears,
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres.

The praise of Bacchus then the sweet musi-
cian sung,

Of Bacchus ever fair, and ever young.

The jolly god in triumph comes;

Sound the trumpets, beat the drums,

Flushed with a purple grace

He shows his honest face:

Now give the hautboys breath; he comes, he
comes.

Bacchus, ever fair and young,

Drinking joys did first ordain;

Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,

Drinking is the soldier's pleasure;

Rich the treasure,

Sweet the pleasure,

Sweet is pleasure after pain.

CHORUS

Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,

Drinking is the soldier's pleasure;

Rich the treasure,

Sweet the pleasure,

Sweet is pleasure after pain.

Soothed with the sound the king grew vain;

Fought all his battles o'er again,

And thrice he routed all his foes, and thrice
he slew the slain.

The master saw the madness rise,

His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes;

And while he heaven and earth defied,
Changed his hand, and checked his pride.

He chose a mournful Muse,

Soft pity to infuse;

5 He sung Darius great and good,

By too severe a fate,

Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,

Fallen from his high estate,

And weltering in his blood;

10 Deserted at his utmost need

By those his former bounty fed;

On the bare earth exposed he lies,

With not a friend to close his eyes.

15 With downcast looks the joyless victor sate,

Revolving in his altered soul

The various turns of chance below;

And, now and then, a sigh he stole,

And tears began to flow.

CHORUS

Revolving in his altered soul

The various turns of chance below;

And, now and then, a sigh he stole,

And tears began to flow.

The mighty master smiled to see

That love was in the next degree;

'Twas but a kindred sound to move,

For pity melts the mind to love.

30 Softly sweet, in Lydian measures,

Soon he soothed his soul to pleasures.

"War," he sung, "is toil and trouble;

Honor but an empty bubble;

35 Never ending, still beginning,

Fighting still, and still destroying:

If the world be worth thy winning,

Think, O think it worth enjoying:

40 Lovely Thais sits beside thee,

Take the good the gods provide thee."

The many rend the skies with loud applause;

So Love was crowned, but Music won the
cause.

45 The prince, unable to conceal his pain,

Gazed on the fair

Who caused his care,

And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,

Sighed and looked, and sighed again;

50 At length, with love and wine at once op-
pressed,

The vanquished victor sunk upon her breast.

CHORUS

The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
Gazed on the fair
Who caused his care,
And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,
Sighed and looked, and sighed again;
At length, with love and wine at once op-
pressed,
The vanquished victor sunk upon her breast. 10

Now strike the golden lyre again;
A louder yet, and yet a louder strain.
Break his bands of sleep asunder,
And rouse him, like a rattling peal of 15
thunder.
Hark, hark, the horrid sound
Has raised up his head,
As awaked from the dead,
And, amazed, he stares around. 20
"Revenge, revenge!" Timotheus cries;
"See the Furies arise;
See the snakes that they rear,
How they hiss in their hair,
And the sparkles that flash from their 25
eyes?
Behold a ghastly band,
Each a torch in his hand!
Those are Grecian ghosts, that in battle were
slain, 30
And unburied remain
Inglorious on the plain:
Give the vengeance due
To the valiant crew.
Behold how they toss their torches on high, 35
How they point to the Persian abodes,
And glittering temples of their hostile gods!"
The princes applaud with a furious joy,
And the king seized a flambeau with zeal to
destroy; 40
Thais led the way,

To light him to his prey,
And, like another Helen, fired another Troy

CHORUS

5 And the king seized a flambeau with zeal to
destroy;
Thais led the way,
To light him to his prey,
And, like another Helen, fired another Troy.

Thus long ago,
Ere heaving bellows learned to blow,
While organs yet were mute,
Timotheus, to his breathing flute
And sounding lyre,
Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft
desire.
At last divine Cecilia came,
Inventress of the vocal frame; 20
The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store,
Enlarged the former narrow bounds,
And added length to solemn sounds,
With Nature's mother wit, and arts unknown
before.
Let old Timotheus yield the prize,
Or both divide the crown:
He raised a mortal to the skies;
She drew an angel down.

GRAND CHORUS

At last divine Cecilia came,
Inventress of the vocal frame;
The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store
Enlarged the former narrow bounds,
And added length to solemn sounds, 35
With Nature's mother wit, and arts unknown
before.
Let old Timotheus yield the prize,
Or both divide the crown.
He raised a mortal to the skies;
She drew an angel down.

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

ALEXANDER POPE *

AN ESSAY ON MAN

EPISTLE I

OF THE NATURE AND STATE OF MAN, WITH
RESPECT TO THE UNIVERSE

Argument

Of Man in the abstract. I. That we can judge only with regard to our own system, being ignorant of the relations of systems and things, verse 17, etc. II. That Man is not to be deemed imperfect, but a being suited to his place and rank in the creation, agreeable to the general order of things, and conformable to ends and relations to him unknown, verse 35, etc. III. That it is partly upon his ignorance of future events, and partly upon the hope of a future state, that all his happiness in the present depends, verse 77, etc. IV. The pride of aiming at more knowledge, and pretending to more perfection, the cause of Man's error and misery. The impiety of putting himself in the place of God, and judging of the fitness or unfitness, perfection or imperfection, justice or injustice, of his dispensations, verse 113, etc. V. The absurdity of conceiving himself the final cause of the creation, or expecting that perfection in the moral world which is not in the natural, verse 131, etc. VI. The unreasonableness of his complaints against Providence, while, on the one hand, he demands the perfections of the angels, and, on the other, the bodily qualifications of the brutes; though to possess any of the sensitive faculties in a higher degree would render him miserable, verse 173, etc. VII. That throughout the whole visible world a universal order and gradation in the sensual and mental faculties is observed, which causes a subordination of creature to creature, and of all creatures to man. The

gradations of Sense, Instinct, Thought, Reflection, Reason: that Reason alone countervails all the other faculties, verse 207, etc. VIII. How much further this order and subordination of living creatures may extend above and below us; were any part of which broken, not that part only, but the whole connected creation must be destroyed, verse 213, etc. IX. The extravagance, madness, and pride of such a desire, verse 290, etc. X. The consequence of all, the absolute submission due to Providence, both as to our present and future state, verse 281, etc., to the end.

Awake, my Si. JOHN!¹ leave all meaner things
To low ambition and the pride of Kings.
Let us, since life can little more supply
Than just to look about us and to die,
5 Expatiate free o'er all this scene of man;
A mighty maze! but not without a plan;
A wild, where weeds and flowers promiscuous
shoot,
Or garden, tempting with forbidden fruit.
10 Together let us beat this ample field,
Try what the open, what the covert yield;
The latent tracts, the giddy heights, explore
Of all who blindly creep or sightless soar;
Eye Nature's walks, shoot folly as it flies,
15 And catch the manners living as they rise;
Laugh where we must, be candid where we
can,
But vindicate the ways of God to man.
I. Say first, of God above or Man below
20 What can we reason but from what we know?
Of man what see we but his station here,
From which to reason, or to which refer?
Thro' worlds unnumbered tho' the God be
known,
25 'Tis ours to trace him only in our own.

* For introductory sketch see I, 101.

¹ Henry St. John, Lord Bolingbroke, friend of Pope, inspirer of much of the poet's philosophy.

He who thro' vast immensity can pierce,
See worlds on worlds compose one universe,
Observe how system into system runs,
What other planets circle other suns,
What varied being peoples every star,
May tell why Heaven has made us as we are:
But of this frame, the bearings and the ties,
The strong connections, nice dependencies,
Gradations just, has thy pervading soul
Looked thro'; or can a part contain the whole?

Is the great chain that draws all to agree,
And drawn supports, upheld by God or thee?

II. Presumptuous man! the reason wouldst
thou find,

Why formed so weak, so little, and so blind?
First, if thou canst, the harder reason guess
Why formed no weaker, blinder, and no less!
Ask of thy mother earth why oaks are made
Taller or stronger than the weeds they shade!
Or ask of yonder argent fields above
Why Jove's satellites are less than Jove!

Of systems possible, if 'tis confest
That wisdom infinite must form the best,
Where all must fall or not coherent be,
And all that rises rise in due degree;
Then in the scale of reasoning life 'tis plain
There must be, somewhere, such a rank as
Man;

And all the question (wrangle e'er so long)
Is only this,—if God has placed him wrong?

Respecting Man, whatever wrong we call,
May, must be right, as relative to all.
In human works, tho' labored on with pain,
A thousand movements scarce one purpose
gain;

In God's, one single can its end produce,
Yet serve to second too some other use:
So man, who here seems principal alone,
Perhaps acts second to some sphere unknown,
Touches some wheel, or verges to some goal.
'Tis but a part we see, and not a whole.

When the proud steed shall know why man
restrains

His fiery course, or drives him o'er the plains;
When the dull ox, why now he breaks the clod,
Is now a victim, and now Egypt's God;
Then shall man's pride and dulness compre-
hend

His actions', passions', being's, use and end;
Why doing, suffering, checked, impelled; and
why

This hour a Slave, the next a Deity.

Then say not man's imperfect, Heaven in
fault;

Say rather man's as perfect as he ought;
His knowledge measured to his state and
place,

5 His time a moment, and a point his space.
If to be perfect in a certain sphere,
What matter soon or late, or here or there?
The blest to-day is as completely so
10 As who began a thousand years ago.

III. Heaven from all creatures hides the
book of Fate,

All but the page prescribed, their present
state;

15 From brutes what men, from men what spirits
know;

Or who could suffer being here below?
The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,
Had he thy reason would he skip and play?

20 Pleased to the last he crops the flowery food,
And licks the hand just raised to shed his
blood.

O blindness to the future! kindly given,
That each may fill the circle marked by

25 Heaven;

Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero perish or a sparrow fall,
Atoms or systems into ruin hurled,
And now a bubble burst, and now a world.

30 Hope humbly then; with trembling pinions
soar;

Wait the great teacher Death, and God adore.
What future bliss He gives not thee to know,
But gives that hope to be thy blessing now.

35 Hope springs eternal in the human breast:
Man never is, but always to be, blest.

The soul, uneasy and confined from home,
Rests and expatiates in a life to come.

Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutored mind
40 Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;

His soul proud Science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk or milky way;
Yet simple nature to his hope has given,
Behind the cloud-topped hill, an humbler

45 Heaven,

Some safer world in depth of woods embraced,
Some happier island in the watery waste,
Where slaves once more their native land be-
hold,

50 No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for
gold.

To be, contents his natural desire;

He asks no Angel's wing, no Seraph's fire;
But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company.

IV. Go, wiser thou! and in thy scale of sense
Weigh thy opinion against Providence;
Call imperfection what thou fanciest such;
Say, here he gives too little, there too much;
Destroy all creatures for thy sport or gust;²
Yet cry, if man's unhappy, God's unjust;
If man alone engross not Heaven's high care,
Alone made perfect here, immortal there:
Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod,
Rejudge his justice, be the god of God.
In pride, in reasoning pride, our error lies;
All quit their sphere, and rush into the skies!
Pride still is aiming at the blessed abodes,
Men would be Angels, Angels would be Gods.
Aspiring to be Gods if Angels fell,
Aspiring to be Angels men rebel:
And who but wishes to invert the laws
Of order, sins against th' Eternal Cause.

V. Ask for what end the heav'nly bodies
shine,
Earth for whose use,—Pride answers, " 'Tis for
mine:
For me kind Nature wakes her genial power,
Suckles each herb, and spreads out every
flower;
Annual for me the grape, the rose, renew
The juice nectareous and the balmy dew;
For me the mine a thousand treasures brings;
For me health gushes from a thousand springs;
Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise;
My footstool earth, my canopy the skies."

But errs not Nature from this gracious end,
From burning suns when livid deaths descend,
When earthquakes swallow, or when tempests
sweep
Towns to one grave, whole nations to the
deep?
"No," 'tis replied, "the first Almighty Cause
Acts not by partial but by general laws;
Th' exceptions few; some change since all
began;

And what created perfect?"—Why then man?
If the great end be human happiness,
Then Nature deviates; and can man do less?
As much that end a constant course requires
Of showers and sunshine, as of man's desires;
As much eternal springs and cloudless skies,

As men for ever temperate, calm, and wise.
If plagues or earthquakes break not Heaven's
design,

Why then a Borgia or a Catiline?

5 Who knows but He, whose hand the lightning
forms,

Who heaves old ocean, and who wings the
storms;

Pours fierce ambition in a Caesar's mind,

10 Or turns young Ammon³ loose to scourge man-
kind?

From pride, from pride, our very reasoning
springs;

Account for moral as for natural things:

15 Why charge we Heaven in those, in these ac-
quit?

In both, to reason right is to submit.

Better for us, perhaps, it might appear,

Were there all harmony, all virtue here;

20 That never air or ocean felt the wind,

That never passion discomposed the mind:

But all subsists by elemental strife;

And passions are the elements of life.

The general order, since the whole began,

25 Is kept in Nature, and is kept in Man.

VI. What would this Man? Now upward
will he soar,

And little less than Angel, would be more;

30 Now looking downwards, just as grieved ap-
pears

To want the strength of bulls, the fur of bears.

Made for his use all creatures if he call,

Say what their use, had he the powers of all?

Nature to these without profusion kind,

35 The proper organs, proper powers assigned;

Each seeming want compensated of course,

Here with degrees of swiftness, there of force;

All in exact proportion to the state;

Nothing to add, and nothing to abate;

40 Each beast, each insect, happy in its own:

Is Heaven unkind to man, and man alone?

Shall he alone, whom rational we call,

Be pleased with nothing if not blessed with
all?

45 The bliss of man (could pride that blessing
find)

Is not to act or think beyond mankind;

No powers of body or of soul to share,

But what his nature and his state can bear.

50 Why has not man a microscopic eye?

² delight.

³ Alexander the Great.

For this plain reason, man is not a fly.
Say, what the use, were finer optics given,
To inspect a mite, not comprehend the
Heaven?

Or touch, if tremblingly alive all o'er,
To smart and agonize at every pore?
Or quick effluvia darting thro' the brain,
Die of a rose in aromatic pain?
If Nature thundered in his opening ears,
And stunned him with the music of the 10
spheres,

How would he wish that Heaven had left him
still

The whispering zephyr and the purling rill?
Who finds not Providence all good and wise, 15
Alike in what it gives and what denies?

VII. Far as creation's ample range extends,
The scale of sensual, mental powers ascends.
Mark how it mounts to man's imperial race
From the green myriads in the peopled grass: 20
What modes of sight betwixt each wide ex-
treme,

The mole's dim curtain and the lynx's beam:
Of smell, the headlong lioness between
And hound sagacious on the tainted green:
Of hearing, from the life that fills the flood
To that which warbles thro' the vernal wood.
The spider's touch, how exquisitely fine,
Feels at each thread, and lives along the line:
In the nice bee what sense so subtly true,
From poisonous herbs extracts the healing
dew!

How instinct varies in the grovelling swine,
Compared, half-reasoning elephant, with
thinel

'Twixt that and reason what a nice barrier!
For ever separate, yet for ever near!
Remembrance and reflection how allied!
What thin partitions Sense from Thought
divide!

And middle natures how they long to join,
Yet never pass th' insuperable line!
Without this just gradation could they be
Subjected these to those, or all to thee!
The powers of all subdued by thee alone,
Is not thy Reason all these powers in one?

VIII. See thro' this air, this ocean, and this
earth

All matter quick, and bursting into birth:
Above, how high progressive life may go!
Around, how wide! how deep extend below!
Vast chain of being! which from God began;

Natures ethereal, human, angel, man,
Beast, bird, fish, insect, what no eye can see,
No glass can reach; from infinite to thee;
From thee to nothing.—On superior powers
5 Were we to press, inferior might on ours;
Or in the full creation leave a void,
Where, one step broken, the great scale's de-
stroyed:

From Nature's chain whatever link you like,
10 Tenth, or ten thousandth, breaks the chain
alike.

And if each system in gradation roll,
Alike essential to th' amazing Whole,
The least confusion but in one, not all
15 That system only, but the Whole must fall.
Let earth unbalanced from her orbit fly,
Planets and stars run lawless thro' the sky;
Let ruling angels from their spheres be hurled,
Being on being wrecked, and world on world;
20 Heaven's whole foundations to their centre
nod,

And Nature tremble to the throne of God!
All this dread order break—for whom? for
thee?

25 Vile worm!—O madness! pride! impiety!

IX. What if the foot, ordained the dust to
tread,

Or hand to toil, aspired to be the head?
What if the head, the eye, or ear repined
30 To serve mere engines to the ruling mind?
Just as absurd for any part to claim
To be another in this general frame;
Just as absurd to mourn the tasks or pains
The great directing Mind of All ordains.
35 All are but parts of one stupendous Whole.
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul;
That changed thro' all, and yet in all the
same,

Great in the earth as in th' ethereal frame,
40 Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees;
Lives thro' all life, extends thro' all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent;
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
45 As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart;
As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns,
As the rapt Seraph that adores and burns.
To him no high, no low, no great, no small;
He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all!

50 X. Cease, then, nor Order imperfection
name;

Our proper bliss depends on what we blame.

Know thy own point: this kind, this due de-
gree
Of blindness, weakness, Heaven bestows on
thee.
Submit: in this or any other sphere,
Secure to be as blessed as thou canst bear;
Safe in the hand of one disposing Power,
Or in the natal or the mortal hour.
All Nature is but Art unknown to thee;
All Chance, Direction, which thou canst not
see;
All Discord, Harmony not understood;
All partial Evil, universal Good:
And spite of Pride, in erring Reason's spite,
One truth is clear, *Whatever is, is right*

JAMES THOMSON

Thomson (1700–1748) was born in Scotland; his father was a minister, and the young Thomson was destined likewise for the clergy when he entered the University of Edinburgh. In 1725, however, he boldly went to London to seek his fortune as a poet. The Seasons was an early success. By its very length and its subject, Nature, it was an unusual work. In spite of the production of five undistinguished tragedies over the next few years, Thomson showed definite signs of being tired of work; he coasted along, living on royalties and pensions arranged by influential friends. The Castle of Indolence, an imitation of Spenser, was, however, an unusual final work. By his interest in Nature and use of blank verse and Spenserian stanza (thus turning away from the prescribed couplet) Thomson was a pioneer in the new poetry which was one day to blossom forth under the banner of the Romantic Movement.

WINTER (lines 1–321)

FROM *The Seasons*

The subject proposed. Address to the Earl of Wilmington. First approach of Winter. According to the natural course of the season, various storms described. Rain. Wind. Snow. The driving of the snows: a man perishing among them; whence reflections on the wants and miseries of human life. The wolves descending from the Alps and Apennines. A win-

ter evening described; as spent by philosophers; by the country people; in the city. Frost. A view of Winter within the polar circle. A thaw. The whole concluding with moral reflections on a future state.

See, Winter comes, to rule the varied year,
Sullen and sad, with all his rising train—
Vapors, and clouds, and storms. Be these
my theme,
These, that exalt the soul to solemn thought,
And heavenly musing. Welcome, kindred
glooms!
Congenial horrors, hail! with frequent foot,
15 Pleased have I, in my cheerful morn of life,
When nursed by careless solitude I lived,
And sung of Nature with unceasing joy,
Pleased have I wandered through your rough
domain;
20 Trod the pure virgin-snows, myself as pure;
Heard the winds roar, and the big torrent
burst;
Or seen the deep-fermenting tempest brewed,
In the grim evening-sky. Thus passed the
time,
25 Till through the lucid chambers of the south
Looked out the joyous Spring, looked out,
and smiled.
To thee, the patron of this first essay,
30 The Muse, O Wilmington! renews her song.
Since has she rounded the revolving year:
Skimmed the gay Spring; on eagle-pinions
borne,
Attempted through the Summer-blaze to rise;
35 Then swept o'er Autumn with the shadowy
gale;
And now among the Wintry clouds again,
Rolled in the doubling storm, she tries to soar;
To swell her note with all the rushing winds;
40 To suit her sounding cadence to the floods;
As is her theme, her numbers wildly great:
Thrice happy, could she fill thy judging ear
With bold description, and with manly
thought.
45 Nor art thou skilled in awful schemes alone,
And how to make a mighty people thrive;
But equal goodness, sound integrity,
A firm, unshaken, uncorrupted soul
Amid a sliding age, and burning strong,
50 Not vainly blazing, for thy country's weal,
A steady spirit, regularly free—
These, each exalting each, the statesman's light

Into the patriot; these, the public hope
And eye to thee converting, bid the Muse
Record what envy dares not flattery call.

Now when the cheerless empire of the sky
To Capricorn the Centaur-Archer yields,
And fierce Aquarius stains the inverted year;
Hung o'er the farthest verge of heaven, the sun
Scarce spreads o'er ether the dejected day.
Faint are his gleams, and ineffectual shoot
His struggling rays, in horizontal lines,
Through the thick air; as clothed in cloudy
storm,

Weak, wan, and broad, he skirts the southern
sky;

And, soon descending, to the long dark night,
Wide-shading all, the prostrate world resigns.
Nor is the night unwished; while vital heat,
Light, life, and joy the dubious day forsake.
Meantime, in sable cincture, shadows vast,
Deep tinged and damp, and congregated
clouds,

And all the vapory turbulence of heaven,
Involve the face of things. Thus Winter falls,
A heavy gloom oppressive o'er the world,
Through Nature shedding influence malign,
And rouses up the seeds of dark disease.
The soul of man dies in him, loathing life,
And black with more than melancholy views.
The cattle droop; and o'er the furrowed land,
Fresh from the plough, the dun discolored
flocks,

Untended spreading, crop the wholesome root.
Along the woods, along the moorish fens,
Sighs the sad genius of the coming storm;
And up among the loose disjointed cliffs,
And fractured mountains wild, the brawling
brook,

And cave, presageful, send a hollow moan,
Resounding long in listening fancy's ear.

Then comes the father of the tempest forth,
Wrapt in black glooms. First, joyless rains
obscure

Drive through the mingling skies with vapor
foul,

Dash on the mountain's brow, and shake the
woods,

That grumbling wave below. The unsightly
plain

Lies a brown deluge; as the low-bent clouds
Pour flood on flood, yet unexhausted still
Combine, and deepening into night, shut up
The day's fair face. The wanderers of heaven,

Each to his home, retire; save those that love
To take their pastime in the troubled an,
Or skimming flutter round the dimple pool.
The cattle from the untasted fields return,

5 And ask, with meaning low, their wonted
stalls,

Or ruminant in the contiguous shade.
Thither the household feathery people crowd,
The crested cock, with all his female train,

10 Pensive, and dripping, while the cottage-hind
Hangs o'er th' enlivening blaze, and taleful
there

Recounts his simple frolic: much he talks,
And much he laughs, nor recks the storm
that blows

Without, and rattles on his humble roof.

Wide o'er the brim, with many a torrent
swelled,

And the mixed ruin of its banks o'erspread,

20 At last the roused-up river pouts along:
Resistless, roaring, dreadful, down it comes,
From the rude mountain and the mossy wild,
Tumbling through rocks abrupt, and sounding
far;

25 Then o'er the sanded valley floating spreads,
Calm, sluggish, silent; till again, constrained
Between two meeting hills, it bursts away,
Where rocks and woods o'erhang the turbid
stream;

30 There gathering triple force, rapid and deep,
It boils, and wheels, and foams, and thunders
through.

Nature! great parent! whose unceasing hand
Rolls round the seasons of the changeful year,

35 How mighty, how majestic, are thy works!
With what a pleasing dread they swell the
soul,

That sees astonished! and astonished sings!
Ye too, ye winds! that now begin to blow

40 With boisterous sweep, I raise my voice to you.
Where are your stores, ye powerful beings!
say,

Where your aerial magazines reserved,
To swell the brooding terrors of the storm?

45 In what far-distant region of the sky,
Hushed in deep silence, sleep ye when 'tis
calm?

When from the pallid sky the Sun descends,
With many a spot, that o'er his glaring orb

50 Uncertain wanders, stained; red fiery streaks
Begin to flush around. The reeling clouds
Stagger with dizzy poise, as doubting yet

Which master to obey; while, rising slow,
Blank in the leaden-colored east, the moon
Wears a wan circle round her blunted horns.
Seen through the turbid, fluctuating air,
The stars obtuse emit a shivering ray;
Or frequent seem to shoot athwart the gloom,
And long behind them trail the whitening
 blaze.
Snatched in short eddies, plays the withered
 leaf;
And on the flood the dancing feather floats.
With broadened nostrils to the sky upturned,
The conscious heifer snuffs the stormy gale.
E'en as the matron, at her nightly task,
With pensive labor draws the flaxen thread,
The wasted taper and the crackling flame
Foretell the blast. But chief the plummy race,
The tenants of the sky, its changes speak.
Retiring from the downs, where all day long
They picked their scanty fare, a blackening
 train
Of clamorous rooks thick-urge their weary
 flight,
And seek the closing shelter of the grove;
Assiduons, in his bower, the wailing owl
Plies his sad song. The cormorant on high
Wheels from the deep, and screams along the
 land.
Loud shrieks the soaring hern; and with wild
 wing
The circling sea-fowl cleave the flaky clouds.
Ocean, unequal pressed, with broken tide
And blind commotion heaves; while from the
 shore,
Eat into caverns by the restless wave,
And forest-rustling mountains, comes a voice
That, solemn sounding, bids the world
 prepare.
Then issues forth the storm with sudden
 burst,
And hurls the whole precipitated air
Down in a torrent. On the passive main
Descends the ethereal force, and with strong
 gust
Turns from its bottom the discolored deep.
Through the black night that sits immense
 around,
Lashed into foam, the fierce conflicting brine
Seems o'er a thousand raging waves to burn:
Meantime the mountain-billows, to the clouds
In dreadful tumult swelled, surge above surge,
Burst into chaos with tremendous roar,

And anchored navies from their stations drive,
Wild as the winds, across the howling waste
Of mighty waters: now the inflated wave
Straining they scale, and now impetuous shoot
5 Into the secret chambers of the deep,
The wintry Baltic thundering o'er their head.
Emerging thence again, before the breath
Of full-exerted heaven they wing their course,
And dart on distant coasts—if some sharp
10 rock,
Or shoal insidious, break not their career,
And in loose fragments fling them floating
 round.
Nor less at hand the loosened tempest
15 reigns:
The mountain thunders; and its sturdy sons
Stoop to the bottom of the rocks they shed.
Lone on the midnight steep, and all aghast,
The dark wayfaring stranger breathless toils,
20 And, often falling, climbs against the blast.
Low waves the rooted forest, vexed, and sheds
What of its tarnished honors yet remain—
Dashed down, and scattered by the tearing
 wind's
25 Assiduons fury, its gigantic limbs.
Thus struggling through the dissipated grove,
The whirling tempest raves along the plain;
And, on the cottage thatched, or lordly roof,
Keen-fastening, shakes them to the solid base.
30 Sleep frightened flies; and round the rocking
 dome,
For entrance eager, howls the savage blast.
Then too, they say, through all the burthened
 air,
35 Long groans are heard, shrill sounds, and
distant sighs,
That uttered by the demon of the night,
Warned the devoted¹ wretch of woe and
 death.
40 Huge uproar lords it wide. The clouds
commixed
With stars swift-gliding, sweep along the sky.
All Nature reels: till Nature's King, who oft
Amid tempestuous darkness dwells along,
45 And on the wings of the careering wind
Walks dreadfully serene, commands a calm:
Then straight air, sea, and earth, are hushed at
 once.
As yet 'tis midnight deep. The weary
50 clouds,
Slow-meeting, mingle into solid gloom.
—¹ doomed.

Now, while the drowsy world lies lost in sleep,

Let me associate with the serious Night,
And Contemplation, her sedate compeer;
Let me shake off the intrusive cares of day,
And lay the meddling senses all aside.

Where now, ye lying vanities of life!
Ye ever-tempting, ever-cheating train!
Where are you now? and what is your amount?
Vexation, disappointment, and remorse.
Sad, sickening thought! And yet, deluded man,

A scene of crude disjointed visions past,
And broken slumbers, rises still resolved,
With new-flushed hopes, to run the giddy round.

Father of light and life! thou Good
Supreme!

O teach me what is good! teach me Thyself!
Save me from folly, vanity, and vice,
From every low pursuit; and feed my soul
With knowledge, conscious peace, and virtue pure—

Sacred, substantial, never-fading bliss!

The keener tempests come: and fuming dun
From all the livid east, or piercing north,
Thick clouds ascend: in whose capacious womb

A vapory deluge lies, to snow congealed.
Heavy they roll their fleecy world along;
And the sky saddens with the gathered storm.
Through the hushed air the whitening shower descends,

At first thin-wavering; till at last the flakes
Fall broad and wide and fast, drumming the day,

With a continual flow. The cherished fields
Put on their winter-robe of purest white.
'Tis brightness all; save where the new snow melts

Along the mazy current. Low the woods
Bow their hoar head; and, ere the languid sun
Faint from the west emits his evening ray,
Earth's universal face, deep-hid, and chill,
Is one wild dazzling waste, that buries wide
The works of man. Drooping, the laborer-ox
Stands covered o'er with snow, and then demands

The fruit of all his toil. The fowls of heaven,
Tamed by the cruel season, crowd around
The winning store, and claim the little boon

Which Providence assigns them. One alone,
The redbreast, sacred to the household gods,
Wisely regardful of the embroiling sky,

In joyless fields, and thorny thickets, leaves
5 His shivering mates, and pays to trusted man
His annual visit. Haif afraid, he first
Against the window beats; then brisk alights
On the warm hearth; then, hopping o'er the floor,

10 Eyes all the smiling family askance,
And pecks, and starts, and wonders where he is—

Till, more familiar grown, the table-crums
Attract his slender feet. The foodless wilds
15 Pour forth their brown inhabitants. The hare,
Though timorous of heart, and hard beset
By death in various forms, dark snares, and dogs,

And more unpitied men, the garden seeks,
20 Urged on by fearless want. The bleating kind
Eye the bleak heaven, and next the glistening earth,

With looks of dumb despair; then, sad dispersed,

25 Dig for the withered herb through heaps of snow.
Now, shepherds, to your helpless charge be kind:

Baffle the raging year, and fill their pens

30 With food at will; lodge them below the storm,

And watch them strict; for from the bellowing east,

In this dire season, oft the whirlwind's wing
35 Sweeps up the burden of whole wintry plains
In one wide waft, and o'er the hapless flocks,
Hid in the hollow of two neighboring hills,
The billowy tempest whelms; till, upward urged,

40 The valley to a shining mountain swells,
Tipped with a wreath high-curling in the sky.

As thus the snows arise, and, foul and fierce,

All Winter drives along the darkened air,

45 In his own loose-revolving fields, the swain
Disastered stands: sees other hills ascend,
Of unknown joyless brow; and other scenes,
Of horrid prospect, shag the trackless plain:
Nor finds the river nor the forest, hid

50 Beneath the formless wild: but wanders on
From hill to dale, still more and more astray—
Impatient flouncing through the drifted heaps,

LYRIC POETRY · THOMAS GRAY

Stung with the thoughts of home; the thoughts
of home

Rush on his nerves, and call their vigor forth
In many a vain attempt. How sinks his soul
What black despair, what horror fills his heart,
When, for the dusky spot which fancy feigned
His tufted cottage rising through the snow,
He meets the roughness of the middle waste,
Far from the track and blest abode of man;
While round him night resistless closes fast,
And every tempest, howling o'er his head,
Renders the savage wilderness more wild.
Then throng the busy shapes into his mind,
Of covered pits, unfathomably deep,
A dire descent! beyond the power of frost;
Of faithless bogs; of precipices huge,
Smoothed up with snow; and, what is land,
unknown,
What water, of the still unfrozen spring,
In the loose marsh or solitary lake,
Where the fresh fountain from the bottom
boils.

These check his fearful steps; and down he
sinks

Beneath the shelter of the shapeless drift,
Thinking o'er all the bitterness of death,
Mixed with the tender anguish nature shoots
Through the wrung bosom of the dying man—
His wife, his children, and his friends unseen.
In vain for him the officious wife prepares
The fire fair-blazing, and the vestment warm,
In vain his little children, peeping out
Into the mingling storm, demand their sire,
With tears of artless innocence. Alas!
Nor wife, nor children, more shall he behold;
Nor friends, nor sacred home. On every
nerve

The deadly Winter seizes, shuts up sense,
And, o'er his inmost vitals creeping cold,
Lays him along the snows, a stiffened corse!
Stretched out and bleaching in the northern
blast

THOMAS GRAY

When Gray (1716–1771) wrote odes to spring or adversity he wrote like a classicist. When he penned his famous Elegy he managed to introduce a note of personal curiosity and melancholy which was not wholly in the classical pattern. When he wrote The Bard he created a romantic scene which Scott could not have

done better. Thus Gray, for all his slender sheaf, is interesting to study in the classroom from a technical point of view. For the modern reader, most of the human charm of this old Etonian and Cantabrigian, professor and antiquarian, lies in his letters or in the Journal. A student perplexed by the rush of twentieth-century living might learn something from this quiet scholar who once refused the laureate-ship; here was one man who had worked out a personal answer to the problem of intelligent living.

ELEGY

WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary
way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the
sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning
flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower,
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such, as wandering near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's
shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering
heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
The swallow twittering from the straw-
built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly
bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall
burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care:

No children run to hsp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the the envied kiss to
share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has
broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy
stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er
gave,
Awaits alike th' inevitable hour:
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,
If Memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where thro' the long-drawn aisle and fretted
vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of
praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honor's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flattery soothe the dull cold ear of
Death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial
fire;
Hands, that the rod of empire might have
swayed,
Or waked to extasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er un-
roll;
Chill Penury repressed their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear: 50
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village-Hampden,¹ that with dauntless
breast

The little tyrant of his fields withstood,
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
5 Some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's
blood.

Th' applause of listening senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
10 To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbad: not circumscribed alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes con-
fined,
15 Forbad to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind;

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to
hide,
20 To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;
Along the cool sequestered vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

30 Yet even these bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture
decked,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

35 Their name, their years, spelt by th' unlettered
muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply:
And many a holy text around she strews,
40 That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
45 Nor cast one longing lingering look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
Even from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
Even in our ashes live their wonted fires.

¹ John Hampden (1594–1643), patriot who op-
posed unjust taxes.

For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonored dead,
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance, by lonely contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,—

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
"Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he
stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Muttering his wayward fancies he would
rove;
Now drooping, woeful wan, like one forlorn,
Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless
love.

"One morn I missed him on the customed hill,
Along the heath and near his favorite tree;
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

"The next, with dirges due in sad array
Slow thro' the church-way path we saw him
borne;—
Approach and read (for thou can'st read) the
lay,
Graved on the stone beneath yon aged
thorn."

THE EPITAPH

*Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth,
A Youth, to Fortune and to Fame unknown:
Fair Science frowned not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy marked him for her own.*

*Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heaven did a recompence as largely send:
He gave to Misery all he had, a tear,
He gained from Heaven ('twas all he
wished) a friend.*

*No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose,)
The bosom of his Father and his God.*

THE BARD

A PINDARIC ODE¹

I. 1

5 "Ruin seize thee, ruthless King!
Confusion on thy banners wait,
Tho' fanned by conquest's crimson wing
They mock the air with idle state.
10 Helm, nor hauberk's twisted mail,
Nor e'en thy virtues, Tyrant, shall avail
To save thy secret soul from nightly fears,
From Cambria's² curse, from Cambria's tears!"
Such were the sounds that o'er the crested
15 pride
Of the first Edward scattered wild dismay,
As down the steep of Snowdon's shaggy side
He wound with toilsome march his long array.
Stout Glos'ter stood aghast in speechless
20 trance:
To arms! cried Mortimer, and couched his
quivering lance.

I. 2

On a rock, whose haughty brow
Frowns o'er old Conway's foaming flood,
Robed in the sable garb of woe,
With haggard eyes the Poet stood;
(Loose his beard, and hoary hair
30 Streamed, like a meteor, to the troubled air)
And with a master's hand, and prophet's fire,
Struck the deep sorrows of his lyre.
"Hark, how each giant-oak, and desert cave,
Sighs to the torrent's awful voice beneath!
35 O'er thee, oh King! their hundred arms they
wave,
Revenge on thee in hoarser murmurs breathe;
Vocal no more, since Cambria's fatal day,
To high-born Hoel's harp, or soft Llewellyn's
40 lay.

I. 3

"Cold is Cadwallo's tongue,
That hushed the stormy main:
45 Brave Urien sleeps upon his craggy bed;
Mountains, ye mourn in vain
Modred, whose magic song

¹ Gray based this ode on a tradition that Edward I, after conquering Wales, ordered all bards to be killed.

² Wales.

Made huge Plinlimmon³ bow his cloud-topped head.

On dreary Arvon's shore they lie,
Smeared with gore, and ghastly pale;
Far, far aloof th' affrighted ravens sail;
The famished eagle screams, and passes by.
Dear lost companions of my tuneful art,
Dear, as the light that visits these sad eyes,
Dear, as the ruddy drops that warm my heart,
Ye died amidst your dying country's cries—
No more I weep. They do not sleep.
On yonder cliffs, a grisly band,
I see them sit, they linger yet,
Avengers of their native land:
With me in dreadful harmony they join,
And weave with bloody hands the tissue of
thy line.

II. 1

"Weave the warp, and weave the woof,
The winding-sheet of Edward's race.
Give ample room, and verge enough
The characters of hell to trace.
Mark the year, and mark the night,
When Severn shall re-echo with affright
The shrieks of death, thro' Berkley's roof that
ring,
Shrieks of an agonizing King!⁴
She-wolf of France, with unrelenting fangs,⁵
That tear'st the bowels of thy mangled mate,
From thee be born, who o'er thy country
hangs,
The scourge of Heaven. What terrors round
him wait!
Amazement in his van, with Flight combined, 35
And Sorrow's faded form, and Solitude be-
hind.

II. 2

"Mighty Victor, mighty Lord,
Low on his funeral couch he lies!
No pitying heart, no eye, afford
A tear to grace his obsequies.
Is the sable Warrior fled?⁶
Thy son is gone. He rests among the dead.
The swarm that in thy noon-tide beam were
born?

³ mountain in Wales. ⁴ Edward II.

⁵ Isabella, wife of Edward II, an adulteress and
plotter.

⁶ the Black Prince.

Gone to salute the rising morn.
Fair laughs the morn, and soft the zephyr
blows,

While proudly riding o'er the azure realm
5 In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes,
Youth on the prow, and Pleasure at the helm,
Regardless of the sweeping whirlwind's sway,
That, hushed in grim repose, expects his eve-
ning prey.

II. 3

"Fill high the sparkling bowl,
The rich repast prepare,
Reft of a crown, he yet may share the feast
15 Close by the regal chair
Fell Thirst and Famine scowl
A baleful smile upon their baffled guest.
Heard ye the din of battle bray,
Lance to lance, and horse to horse?
20 Long years of havoc urge their destined
course,
And thro' the kindred squadrons mow their
way.
Ye towers of Julius, London's lasting shame,
25 With many a foul and midnight murder fed,
Revere his consort's⁷ faith, his father's⁸ fame,
And spare the meek usurper's holy head."
Above, below, the rose of snow,
Twined with her blushing foe, we spread:
30 The bristled boar in infant gore
Wallows beneath the thorny shade.
Now, brothers, bending o'er th' accursèd loom,
Stamp we our vengeance deep, and ratify his
doom.

III. 1

"Edward, lo! to sudden fate
(Weave we the woof. The thread is spun.)
Half of thy heart we consecrate.
40 (The web is wove. The work is done.)"
"Stay, oh stay! nor thus forlorn
Leave me unblest, unpitied, here to mourn:
In yon bright track, that fires the western skies,
They melt, they vanish from my eyes.
45 But oh! what solemn scenes on Snowdon's
height
Descending slow their glittering skirts unroll?
Visions of glory, spare my aching sight,

⁷ Margaret of Anjou.

⁸ Henry V.

⁹ Henry VI.

Ye unborn ages, crowd not on my soul
No more our long-lost Arthur we bewail.
All hail, ye genuine Kings, Britannia's issue,
hail.

III. 2

"Girt with many a Baron bold
Sublime their starry fronts they rear;
And gorgeous dames, and statesmen old
In bearded majesty, appear.
In the midst a form divine!
Her eye proclaims her of the Briton-line;
Her lion-port, her awe-commanding face.
Attemper'd sweet to virgin-grace.
What strings symphonious tremble in the air,
What strains of vocal transport round her play!
Hear from the grave, great Taliessin,¹⁰ hear;
They breathe a soul to animate thy clay.
Bright Rapture calls, and soaring, as she sings,
Waves in the eye of Heaven her many-colored
wings.

III. 3

"The verse adorn again
Fierce War, and faithful Love,
And Truth severe, by fairy fiction drest.¹¹
In buskined measures move¹²
Pale Grief, and pleasing Pain,
With Horror, tyrant of the throbbing breast.
A voice as of the cherub-choir,¹³
Gales from blooming Eden bear;
And distant warblings lessen on my ear,
That lost in long futurity expire.
Fond impious Man, think'st thou yon sanguine
cloud,
Raised by thy breath, has quenched the orb of
day?
To-morrow he repairs the golden flood,
And warms the nations with redoubled ray.
Enough for me: with joy I see
The different doom our fates assign.
Be thine Despair, and scepter'd Care,
To triumph, and to die, are mine."
He spoke, and headlong from the mountain's
height
Deep in the roaring tide he plunged to endless
night.

¹⁰ famous sixth-century bard.

¹¹ Spenser.

¹² Shakespeare.

¹³ Milton.

WILLIAM COLLINS

Collins (1721–1759) continues to appear in collections of poetry partly because a faithful, though small, group of adherents keeps his name alive; and partly because his small volume of work is so typical of the best and worst of eighteenth-century neo-classicism that it offers excellent material for comparative reading and discussion. Let the student compare an ode by Collins with one by Wordsworth or Keats, for example, to see how various authors treat a recognized form. We do not know much about this poet. He had a small output and a short life. He did hack work. He was mad at one time. He knew respectable poverty. And yet somehow he managed to chisel out a classical ode in professional manner, with knowledge, intelligence, and decorum. Now and then, without knowing it, he handled patriotic or supernatural themes with just a touch of the romanticism that lurked around the distant turn of the century.

25 ODE TO EVENING

If aught of oaten stop,¹ or pastoral song,
May hope, chaste Eve, to soothe thy modest
ear,

30 Like thy own solemn springs,
Thy springs, and dying gales;

O nymph reserved, while now the bright-
haired sun

35 Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts,
With brede² ethereal wove,
O'erhang his wavy bed:

Now air is hushed, save where the weak-eyed
bat,

40 With short shrill shriek, flits by on leathern
wing;

Or where the beetle winds
His small but sullen horn,

45 As oft he rises 'midst the twilight path,
Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum:
Now teach me, maid composed,
To breathe some softened strain,

¹ anything played on a shepherd's pipe.

² embroidery.

Whose numbers, stealing through thy darken-
ing vale,

May not unseemly with its stillness suit;
As, musing slow, I hail
Thy genial loved return!

For when thy folding-star arising shows
His paly circlet, at his warning lamp
The fragrant Hours, and elves
Who slept in flowers the day,

And many a nymph who wreathes her brows
with sedge,
And sheds the freshening dew, and, lovelier
still,
The pensive Pleasures sweet,
Prepare thy shadowy car.

Then lead, calm votaress, where some sheety
lake
Cheers the lone heath, or some time-hallowed
pile,
Or upland fallows grey,
Reflect its last cool gleam.

But when chill blustering winds, or driving
rain,
Forbid my willing feet, be mine the hut,
That from the mountain's side,
Views wilds, and swelling floods.

And hamlets brown, and dim-discovered
spires,
And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
Thy dewy fingers draw
The gradual dusky veil.

While Spring shall pour his showers, as oft he
wont,
And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest Eve!
While Summer loves to sport
Beneath thy lingering light,

While sallow Autumn fills thy lap with leaves,
Or Winter, yelling through the troublous air,
Affrights thy shrinking train,
And rudely rends thy robes.

So long, sure-found beneath the sylvan shed,
Shall Fancy, Friendship, Science, rose-lipped
Health,
Thy gentlest influence own,
And hymn thy favorite name!

ODE

WRITTEN IN THE BEGINNING OF THE
YEAR 1746

How sleep the brave, who sink to rest,
By all their country's wishes blest!
When Spring, with dewy fingers cold,
Returns to deck their hallowed mold,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod
Than Fancy's feet have ever trod.

By fairy hands their knell is rung;
By forms unseen their dirge is sung;
There Honor comes, a pilgrim gray,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay;
And Freedom shall a while repair,
To dwell a weeping hermit there!

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

Boswell relates that Goldsmith (1728-1774) tried too hard to "shine," but the epitaph on his monument in Westminster Abbey says that he touched nothing which he did not adorn. He seems to have been a bundle of opposing traits, he died before he could integrate them on a grand scale. Goldsmith's early life was marked by failure at college in his native Ireland, vagabonding on the Continent (where he presumably picked up a medical degree), starving in London as a doctor, ruining himself at hack writing, and so on. Dr. Johnson befriended Goldsmith, who was a charter member of "The Club." His later successes included a novel, The Vicar of Wakefield, a play, She Stoops to Conquer, and many sketches, essays (see II, 52), and poems. "The Deserted Village" (see below) may not be the best piece Goldsmith ever wrote, but it is a minor classic in the century, along with Gray's "Elegy" and Burns's "Cotter." The curious student who likes to study variations on a theme might look up George Crabbe's "The Village" for contrast.

THE DESERTED VILLAGE

Sweet Auburn! loveliest village of the plain,
Where health and plenty cheered the laboring
swain,
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting summer's lingering blooms de-
layed:

LYRIC POETRY · OLIVER GOLDSMITH

Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
 Seats of my youth, when every sport could
 please;
 How often have I loitered o'er thy green,
 Where humble happiness endeared each 5
 scene!
 How often have I paused on every charm,
 The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm,
 The never failing brook, the busy mill,
 The decent church that topt the neighboring 10
 hill,
 The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the
 shade,
 For talking age and whispering lovers made!
 How often have I blest the coming day,
 When toil remitting lent its turn to play,
 And all the village train, from labor free,
 Led up their sports beneath the spreading
 tree;
 While many a pastime circled in the shade, 20
 The young contending as the old surveyed;
 And many a gambol frolicked o'er the ground,
 And sleights of art and feats of strength went
 round.
 And still, as each repeated pleasure tired,
 Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspired;
 The dancing pair that simply sought renown,
 By holding out to tire each other down;
 The swain, mistrustless of his smutted face,
 While secret laughter tittered round the place; 30
 The bashful virgin's sidelong looks of love,
 The matron's glance that would those looks re-
 prove.
 These were thy charms, sweet village! sports
 like these,
 With sweet succession taught even toil to
 please;
 These round thy bowers their cheerful influ-
 ence shed,
 These were thy charms—but all these charms 40
 are fled.
 Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,
 Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms with-
 drawn;
 Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen, 45
 And desolation saddens all thy green:
 One only master grasps the whole domain,
 And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain;
 No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
 But choked with sedges works its weedy way; 50
 Along thy glades, a solitary guest,
 The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest;
 Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies,
 And tires their echoes with unvaried cries.
 Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,
 And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering
 wall;
 And, trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's
 hand,
 Far, far away thy children leave the land.
 Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
 Where wealth accumulates, and men decay;
 Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;
 A breath can make them, as a breath has
 made:
 But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
 15 When once destroyed, can never be supplied.
 A time there was, ere England's griefs be-
 gan,
 When every rood of ground maintained its
 man;
 20 For him light labor spread her wholesome
 store,
 Just gave what life required, but gave no
 more:
 His best companions, innocence and health,
 25 And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.
 But times are altered; trade's unfeeling train
 Usurp the land, and dispossess the swain;
 Along the lawn, where scattered hamlets
 rose,
 30 Unwieldy wealth, and cumbrous pomp repose;
 And every want to opulence allied,
 And every pang that folly pays to pride.
 Those gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,
 Those calm desires that asked but little room,
 35 Those healthful sports that graced the peace-
 ful scene,
 Lived in each look, and brightened all the
 green;
 These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,
 And rural mirth and manners are no more.
 Sweet Auburn! parent of the blissful hour,
 Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.
 Here, as I take my solitary rounds,
 Amidst thy tangling walks and ruined
 grounds, 45
 And, many a year elapsed, return to view
 Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn
 grew,
 Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,
 Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.
 In all my wanderings round this world of
 care,

In all my griefs—and God has given my
share—

I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown,
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down,
To husband out life's taper at the close,
And keep the flame from wasting by repose:
I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,
Amidst the swains to show my book-learned
skill,

Around my fire an evening group to draw,
And tell of all I felt, and all I saw,
And as a hare, whom hounds and horns pur-
sue,
Pants to the place from whence at first she
flew,

I still had hopes, my long vexations past.
Here to return—and die at home at last.

O blest retirement, friend to life's decline,
Retreats from care, that never must be mine,
How happy he who crowns, in shades like
these,

A youth of labor with an age of ease;
Who quits a world where strong temptations
try,

And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly!
For him no wretches, born to work and weep,
Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous
deep;

No surly porter stands, in guilty state,
To spurn imploring famine from the gate;
But on he moves to meet his latter end,
Angels around befriending Virtue's friend;
Sinks to the grave with unperceived decay,
While Resignation gently slopes the way,
And, all his prospects brightening to the last,
His Heaven commences ere the world be past.

Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's
close

Up yonder hill the village murmur rose;
There, as I past with careless steps and slow,
The mingling notes came softened from be-
low;

The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung,
The sober herd that lowed to meet their
young;

The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
The playful children just let loose from school,
The watch-dog's voice that bayed the whisper-
ing wind,

And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant
mind;

These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,

And filled each pause the nightingale had
made.

But now the sounds of population fail,
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,

5 No busy steps the grass-grown footway tread,
But all the bloomy flush of life is fled;

All but yon widowed solitary thing,
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring,

10 She, wretched matron, forced, in age, for
bread,

To strip the brook with mantling cresses
spread,

To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn,
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn;

15 She only left of all the harmless train,
The sad historian of the pensive plain.

Near yonder copse, where once the garden
smiled,

20 And still where many a garden flower grows
wild,

There, where a few torn shrubs the place dis-
close,

The village preacher's modest mansion rose.
A man he was to all the country dear,

25 And passing rich with forty pounds a year;
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change

his place,

Unpractised he to fawn, or seek for power,
30 By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour;

For other aims his heart had learned to prize,
More skilled to raise the wretched than to
rise.

His house was known to all the vagrant train,
He chid their wanderings, but relieved their
pain;

35 The long remembered beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending swept his aged
breast;

40 The ruined spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claimed kindred there, and had his claims al-
lowed;

The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
Sat by his fire, and talked the night away;

45 Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,
Shouldered his crutch, and shewed how fields
were won.

Pleased with his guests, the good man learned
to glow,

50 And quite forgot their vices in their woe;
Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.

LYRIC POETRY · OLIVER GOLDSMITH

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And e'en his failings leaned to Virtue's side;
But in his duty prompt, at every call,
He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for
all:

And, as a bird each fond endearment tries,
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.

Beside the bed where parting life was laid, 10
And sorrow, guilt, and pain, by turns dis-
mayed,

The reverend champion stood. At his control
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to 15
raise,

And his last faltering accents whispered praise.

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorned the venerable place;
Truth from his lips prevailed with double 20
sway,

And fools, who came to scoff, remained to
pray.

The service past, around the pious man,
With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran: 25
E'en children followed, with endearing wile,
And plucked his gown, to share the good man's
smile.

His ready smile a parent's warmth exprest,
Their welfare pleased him, and their cares dis- 30
trest;

To them his heart, his love, his griefs were
given,

But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.
As some tall cliff, that lifts its awful form, 35
Swell from the vale, and midway leaves the
storm,

Though round its breast the rolling clouds are
spread,

Eternal sunshine settles on its head.
Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the
way

With blossomed furze, unprofitably gay,
There, in his noisy mansion, skilled to rule,
The village master taught his little school: 45
A man severe he was, and stern to view,

I knew him well, and every truant knew;
Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face;

Full well they laughed with counterfeited glee 50
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;
Full well the busy whisper, circling round,

Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned;
Yet he was kind, or if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault;
The village all declared how much he knew,

5 'Twas certain he could write, and cipher too;
Lands he could measure, terms and tides
presage,

And even the story ran that he could gauge:
In arguing too, the parson owned his skill,

10 For even though vanquished, he could argue
still;

While words of learned length and thundering
sound

Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around;
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew
That one small head could carry all he knew.

But past is all his fame. The very spot,
Where many a time he triumphed, is forgot.

Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high, 20
Where once the sign-post caught the passing
eye,

Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts
inspired,

Where gray-beard mirth and smiling toil re- 25
tired,

Where village statesmen talked with looks pro-
found,

And news much older than their ale went
round.

30 Imagination fondly stoops to trace
The parlor splendors of that festive place;
The whitewashed wall, the nicely sanded floor,
The varnished clock that clicked behind the
door:

35 The chest contrived a double debt to pay,
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day;
The pictures placed for ornament and use,
The twelve good rules, the royal game of
goose;

40 The hearth, except when winter chilled the
day,

With aspen boughs, and flowers, and fennel
gay;

While broken teacups, wisely kept for show, 45
Ranged o'er the chimney, glistened in a row.

Vain transitory splendors! could not all
Reprieve the tottering mansion from its fall?
Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart
An hour's importance to the poor man's heart;

50 Thither no more the peasant shall repair
To sweet oblivion of his daily care;
No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,

No more the woodman's ballad shall prevail;
No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear,
Relax his ponderous strength, and lean to hear;
The host himself no longer shall be found
Careful to see the mantling bliss go round,
Nor the coy maid, half willing to be prest,
Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest.

Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
These simple blessings of the lowly train,
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art,
Spontaneous joys, where Nature has its play,
The soul adopts, and owns their first-born

sway;
Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
Unenvied, unmolested, unconfined,
But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,
With all the freaks of wanton wealth arrayed,
In these, ere triflers half then wish obtain,
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain,
And, even while fashion's brightest arts decoy,
The heart distrusting asks, if this be joy?

Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen, who survey
The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay,
'Tis yours to judge how wide the limits stand
Between a splendid and a happy land
Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted

ore,
And shouting Folly hails them from her shore,
Hoards e'en beyond the miser's wish abound,
And rich men flock from all the world around
Yet count our gains. This wealth is but a name,
That leaves our useful products still the same,
Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride
Takes up a space that many poor supplied;
Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,
Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds,
The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth
Has robbed the neighboring fields of half their
growth;

His seat, where solitary sports are seen,
Indignant spurns the cottage from the green,
Around the world each needful product flies,
For all the luxuries the world supplies;
While thus the land, adorned for pleasure all,
In barren splendor feebly waits the fall.

As some fair female, unadorned and plain,
Secure to please while youth confirms her

reign,
Slights every borrowed charm that dress sup-
plies,

Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes,
But when those charms are past, for charms
are frail,

When time advances, and when lovers fail,

5 She then shines forth, solicitous to bless,
In all the glaring impotence of dress;

Thus fares the land, by luxury betrayed,

In nature's simplest charms at first arrayed;

But verging to decline, its splendors rise,

10 Its vistas strike, its palaces surprise,

While, scourged by famine, from the smiling
land,

The mournful peasant leads his humble band;
And while he sinks, without one arm to save,

15 The country blooms—a garden and a grave.

Where then, ah! where shall poverty reside,

To 'scape the pressure of contiguous pride?

If to some common's fenceless limits strayed,

He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,

20 Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth di-
vide,

And even the bare-worn common is denied.

If to the city sped—What waits him there?

To see profusion that he must not share;

25 To see ten thousand baneful arts combined

To pamper luxury, and thin mankind;

To see those joys the sons of pleasure know,

Extorted from his fellow-creatures' woe,

Here, while the courtier glitters in brocade,

30 There the pale artist plies the sickly trade,

Here, while the proud their long-drawn pomp
display,

There the black gibbet glooms beside the way;

The dome where Pleasure holds her midnight
reign,

35 Here, richly decked, admits the gorgeous train;
Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing
square,

The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.

40 Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy!

Sure these denote one universal joy!

Are these thy serious thoughts?—Ah, turn
thine eyes

Where the poor houseless shivering female
lies:

45 She once, perhaps, in village plenty blest,

Has wept at tales of innocence distress;

Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,

Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the
thorn;

50 Now lost to all; her friends, her virtue fled,

Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,

And, pinched with cold, and shrinking from
the shower,
With heavy heart, deplores that luckless hour,
When idly first, ambitious of the town,
She left her wheel and robes of country brown.
Do thine, sweet Auburn, thine, the loveliest
train,
Do thy fair tribes participate her pain?
Even now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,
At proud men's doors they ask a little bread! 10
Ah, no. To distant climes, a dreary scene,
Where half the convex world intrudes be-
tween,
Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they
go,
Where wild Altama¹ murmurs to their woe.
Far different there from all that charmed be-
fore,
The various terrors of that horrid shore;
Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray, 20
And fiercely shed intolerable day;
Those matted woods where birds forget to
sing,
But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling;
Those poisonous fields with rank luxuriance
crowned,
Where the dark scorpion gathers death
around:
Where at each step the stranger fears to wake
The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake; 30
Where crouching tigers wait their hapless
prey,
And savage men more murderous still than
they:
While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,
Mingling the ravaged landscape with the skies.
Far different these from every former scene,
The cooling brook, the grassy vested green,
The breezy covert of the warbling grove,
That only sheltered thefts of harmless love. 40
Good Heaven! what sorrows gloomed that
parting day,
That called them from their native walks
away;
When the poor exiles, every pleasure past, 45
Hung round the bowers, and fondly looked
their last,
And took a long farewell, and wished in vain
For seats like these beyond the western main;
And, shuddering still to face the distant deep, 50
Returned and wept, and still returned to weep.
The good old sire the first prepared to go,
To new-found worlds, and wept for others'
woe;
5 But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,
He only wished for worlds beyond the grave.
His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears,
The fond companion of his helpless years,
Silent went next, neglectful of her charms, 10
And left a lover's for a father's arms.
With louder plaints the mother spoke her
woes,
And blest the cot where every pleasure rose;
And kissed her thoughtless babes with many 15
a tear,
And clasped them close, in sorrow doubly
dear;
Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief
In all the silent manliness of grief. 20
O Luxury! thou curst by Heaven's decree,
How ill exchanged are things like these for
thee!
How do thy potions, with insidious joy,
Diffuse their pleasures only to destroy! 25
Kingdoms by thee, to sickly greatness grown,
Boast of a florid vigor not their own:
At every draught more large and large they
grow,
A bloated mass of rank unwieldy woe;
30 Till sapped their strength, and every part un-
sound,
Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin
round.
Even now the devastation is begun,
35 And half the business of destruction done;
Even now, methinks, as pondering here I
stand,
I see the rural Virtues leave the land.
Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads the
sail, 40
That idly waiting flaps with every gale,
Downward they move, a melancholy band,
Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand.
Contented toil, and hospitable care, 45
And kind connubial tenderness are there;
And piety with wishes placed above,
And steady loyalty, and faithful love.
And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid,
Still first to fly where sensual joys invade; 50
Unfit in these degenerate times of shame,
To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame;
Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried,

¹ river in Georgia.

My shame in crowds, my solitary pride;
Thou source of all my bliss, and all my woe,
That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me
so;

Thou guide, by which the nobler arts excel, 5
Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well,
Farewell! and O! where'er thy voice be tried,
On Torno's cliffs,² or Pambamarca's³ side,
Whether where equinoctial fervors glow,
Or winter wraps the polar world in snow, 10
Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,
Redress the rigors of the inclement clime,
Aid slighted truth with thy persuasive strain,
Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain,
Teach him, that states of native strength 15
possest,
Though very poor, may still be very blest,
That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,
As ocean sweeps the labored mole away; 20
While self-dependent power can time defy,
As rocks resist the billows and the sky.

WILLIAM BLAKE

25
If Blake (1757–1827) had had larger circulation (by commercial processes instead of random handing-around of hand-made books), he might have been the first name in the Romantic Movement, for he wrote "romantically" fifteen years before Wordsworth's pronouncements to the world. Blake, like Morris later, was a craftsman, a virtuoso—he wrote, illustrated, engraved, colored. A mystic whose longer pieces often defy explanation, at least 35 for most of us, Blake indicated his course when, at the age of four, he "saw God through a window." Nevertheless, in the shorter pieces, the poet is anything but obscure, musically, simply, but always with an other-worldly 40 touch, he sings the songs of innocence and experience, pitying poor chimney-sweepers, extending a hand to the Negro, limning the beauties of external Nature, the creation of God. This was a new touch in eighteenth-century England—odes to evening or flat photographs of country scenes were pale things beside Blake's color and imagery, the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling" began right here; the record, however, will say 1798 or 50

² in Sweden.

³ in Ecuador.

1802, for convenience, because those dates appeared on well-publicized volumes of the *Lyrical Ballads*.

FROM *Songs of Innocence*

INTRODUCTION

Piping down the valleys wild,
Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he laughing said to me:

"Pipe a song about a Lamb!"
So I piped with merry cheer.
"Piper, pipe that song again,"
So I piped, he wept to hear.

"Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe;
Sing thy songs of happy cheer!"
So I sang the same again,
While he wept with joy to hear.

"Piper, sit thee down and write
In a book, that all may read."
So he vanished from my sight,
And I plucked a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,
And I stained the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs
Every child may joy to hear.

THE LAMB

Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed,
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little Lamb, I'll tell thee,
Little Lamb, I'll tell thee:
He is called by thy name,
For He calls Himself a Lamb,
He is meek, and He is mild;
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,

We are callèd by His name.
 Little Lamb, God bless thee!
 Little Lamb, God bless thee!

HOLY THURSDAY

'Twas on a Holy Thursday, their innocent faces
 clean,
 The children walking two and two, in red and
 blue and green, 10
 Grey-headed beards walk'd before, with
 wands as white as snow,
 Till into the high dome of Paul's they like
 Thames' waters flow. 15
 O what a multitude they seem'd, these flowers
 of London town!
 Seated in companies they sit with radiance all
 their own.
 The hum of multitudes was there, but multi- 20
 tudes of lambs,
 Thousands of little boys and girls raising their
 innocent hands.

Now like a mighty wind they raise to Heaven 25
 the voice of song,
 Or like harmonious thunderings the seats of
 Heaven among.
 Beneath them sit the aged men, wise guardians
 of the poor; 30
 Then cherish pity, lest you drive an angel from
 your door.

FROM *Songs of Experience* 35

THE CHIMNEY-SWEEPER

A little black thing among the snow,
 Crying "weep! weep!" in notes of woe!
 "Where are thy father and mother? Say!"— 40
 "They are both gone up to church to pray.

"Because I was happy upon the heath,
 And smiled among the winter's snow,
 They clothed me in the clothes of death, 45
 And taught me to sing the notes of woe.

"And because I am happy, and dance and sing,
 They think they have done me no injury,
 And are gone to praise God and His priest and 50
 king,
 Who make up a heaven of our misery."

THE CLOD AND THE PEBBLE

"Love seeketh not itself to please,
 Nor for itself hath any care,
 But for another gives its ease,
 And builds a Heaven in Hell's despair."

So sung a little Clod of Clay,
 Trodden with the cattle's feet,
 But a Pebble of the brook
 Warbled out these metres meet:

"Love seeketh only Self to please,
 To bind another to Its delight,
 Joys in another's loss of ease,
 And builds a Hell in Heaven's despite."

THE TIGER

Tiger! Tiger! burning bright
 In the forests of the night,
 What immortal hand or eye
 Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
 Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
 On what wings dare he aspire?
 What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, and what art,
 Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
 And when thy heart began to beat,
 What dread hand and what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?
 In what furnace was thy brain?
 What the anvil? what dread grasp
 Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
 And watered heaven with their tears,
 Did He smile his work to see?
 Did He who made the Lamb make thee?

Tiger! Tiger! burning bright
 In the forests of the night,
 What immortal hand or eye
 Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

LONDON

I wander through each chartered street,
 Near where the chartered Thames does flow,

And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every man,
In every infant's cry of fear,
In every voice, in every ban,
The mind-forged manacles I hear:

How the chimney-sweeper's cry
Every blackening church appalls,
And the hapless soldier's sigh
Runs in blood down palace walls.

But most, through midnight streets I hear
How the youthful harlot's curse
Blasts the new-born infant's tear,
And blights with plagues the marriage hearse

ROBERT BURNS*

MARY MORISON

1

O Mary, at thy window be!
It is the wished, the trusted hour.
Those smiles and glances let me see,
That make the miser's treasure poor.
How blythely wad I bide the stour,¹
A weary slave frae sun to sun,
Could I the rich reward secure—
The lovely Mary Morison!

2

Yestreen, when to the trembling string
The dance gaed thro' the lighted ha',
To thee my fancy took its wing,
I sat, but neither heard or saw:
Tho' this was fair, and that was braw,
And yon the toast of a' the town,
I sighed and said amang them a':—
"Ye are na Mary Morison!"

3

O Mary, canst thou wreck his peace
Wha for thy sake wad gladly die?
Or canst thou break that heart of his
Whase only faut is loving thee?
If love for love thou wilt na gie,
At least be pity to me shown:

* For introductory sketch see I, 105.

¹ endure the struggle.

A thought ungente canna be
The thought o' Mary Morison.

5

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY
NIGHT

INSCRIBED TO R. AIKEN, ESQ

10

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure,
Nor Grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor
GRAY

15

My loved, my honored, much respected friend!
No mercenary bard his homage pays,
With honest pride, I scorn each selfish end,
My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and
praise.

20

To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
The lowly train in life's sequestered scene,
The native feelings strong, the guileless
ways;

25

What Aiken in a cottage would have been,
Ah! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there
I ween!

30

November chill blows loud wi' angry sigh;
The short'ning winter-day is near a close;
The mny beasts retreating frae the plough,
The black'ning trains o' crows to their re-
pose

35

The toil-worn Cotter frae his labor goes—
This night his weekly moil is at an end,
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his
hoes,
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does
homeward bend.

40

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree,
Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin, stacher¹
through

45

To meet their dad, wi' flichterin² noise and
glee.

His wee bit ingle,³ blinkin bonilie,
His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wifie's smile,
The lisping infant, prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary kiahgh⁴ and care beguile,

¹ stagger.

³ fire.

² fluttering.

⁴ anxiety.

LYRIC POETRY · ROBERT BURNS

And makes him quite forget his labor and his
toil.

Belyve,⁵ the elder bairns come drapping in,
At service out, among the farmers roun';
Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie⁶
rin
A cannie errand to a neebor town:
Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman
grown,
In youthfu' bloom, love sparkling in her e'e,
Comes hame: perhaps, to shew a braw new
gown,
Or deposit her sair-won penny-fee,
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship ¹⁵
be.

With joy unfeigned, brothers and sisters meet,
And each for other's weelfare kindly spiers;⁷
The social hours, swift-winged, unnoticed ²⁰
fleet;
Each tells the uncoss⁸ that he sees or hears.
The parents partial eye their hopeful years;
Anticipation forward points the view;
The mother, wi' her needle and her sheers, ²⁵
Cars⁹ auld claes look amaist as weel's the new;
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

Their master's and their mistress's command
The younkens a' are warn'd to obey; ³⁰
And mind their labors wi' an eydent¹⁰ hand,
And ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk or play:
"And O! be sure to fear the Lord alway,
And mind your duty, duly, morn and night;
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray, ³⁵
Implore His counsel and assisting might:
They never sought in vain that sought the
Lord aright."

But hark! a rap comes gently to the door;
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neebor lad came o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek; ⁴⁵
With heart-struck anxious care, enquires his
name,
While Jenny haffins is afraid to speak;

Weel-pleased the mother hears, it's nae wild,
worthless rake.

With kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben;¹¹
⁵ A strappin' youth, he takes the mother's eye;
Blythe Jenny sees the visit's no ill taen;
The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and
kye.
The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi'
joy, ¹⁰
But blate and laithfu',¹² scarce can weel be-
have;
The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy
What makes the youth sae bashfu' and sae
grave; ¹⁵
Weel-pleased to think her bairn's respected
like the lave.¹³

O happy love! where love like this is found;
O heart-felt raptures! bliss beyond com-
pare!
I've paced much this weary, mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare:—
"If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure
spare, ²⁵
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair,
In other's arms, breathe out the tender tale
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the
ev'ning gale." ³⁰

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart,
A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth!
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth? ³⁵
Curse on his perjured arts! dissembling,
smooth!
Are honor, virtue, conscience, all exiled?
Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
⁴⁰ Points to the parents fondling o'er their child?
Then paints the ruined maid, and their distrac-
tion wild?

But now the supper crowns their simple board,
The healsome parritch, chief o' Scotia's
food;
The soupe their only hawkie¹⁴ does afford,
That 'yont the hallan¹⁵ snugly chows her
cood;

⁵ soon.

⁷ asks.

⁹ makes.

⁶ watchful.

⁸ unusual news.

¹⁰ diligent.

¹¹ inside.

¹³ the rest.

¹⁵ partition.

¹² shy and bashful.

¹⁴ cow.

The dame brings forth, in complimental mood,
To grace the lad, her weel-hained kebbuck,¹⁶
fell;¹⁷

And aft he's prest, and aft he ca's it guid,
The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell,
How 'twas a towmond¹⁸ auld, sin' lint was i'
the bell.¹⁹

The chearfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide,
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big ha'-Bible, ance his father's pride
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets²⁰ wearing thin and bare,
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion
glide,
He wales²¹ a portion with judicious care,
And "Let us worship God!" he says, with sol-
emn air.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise,
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest
aim;
Perhaps *Dundee's* wild-warbling measures rise, 25
Or plaintive *Martyns*, worthy of the name,
Or noble *Elgin* beats the heaven-ward
flame,
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays:
Compared with these, Italian trills are tame, 30
The tickled ears no heart-felt raptures raise,
Nae unison hae they, with our Creator's praise

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
How Abram was the friend of God on hugh, 35
Or, Moses bade eternal warfare wage
With Amalek's ungracious progeny;
Or, how the royal Bard²² did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry; 40
Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire,
Or other holy Seers that tune the sacred lyre.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme:
How guiltless blood for guilty man was 45
shed;
How He, who bore in Heaven the second
name,

¹⁶ well-saved cheese.

¹⁸ twelve-month.

²⁰ gray temples.

²² David.

¹⁷ strong.

¹⁹ flax was in blossom.

²¹ chooses.

Had not on earth whereon to lay His head,
How His first followers and servants sped
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land.
How he, who lone in Patmos banished,²³
5 Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand,
And heard great Babylon's doom pronounced
by Heaven's command.

Then kneeling down to Heaven's Eternal King,
10 The saint, the father, and the husband
prays:
Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing,"²⁴
That thus they all shall meet in future days,
There, ever bask in uncreated rays,
15 No more to sigh or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear,
While circling Time moves round in an eternal
sphere.

20 Compared with this, how poor Religion's
pride,
In all the pomp of method, and of art;
When men display to congregations wide
Devotion's ev'ry grace, except the heart, 25
The Power, incensed, the pageant will de-
sert,
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;
But haply, in some cottage far apart,
May hear, well-pleased, the language of the
soul,
And in His Book of Life the inmates poor
enroll.

35 Then homeward all take off their sev'ral way;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest:
The parent-pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to Heaven the warm request,
That He who stills the raven's clam'rous
nest, 40
And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
Would, in the way His wisdom sees the
best,
For them and for their little ones provide;
But, chiefly, in their hearts with Grace Divine
preside.

From scenes like these, old Scotia's grandeur
springs,

²³ St. John.

²⁴ Pope's "Windsor Forest."

That makes her loved at home, revered
abroad:
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
"An honest man's the noblest work of
God";²⁵ 5
And certes, in fair Virtue's heavenly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind,
What is a lordling's pomp? a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
Studied in arts of Hell, in wickedness refined! 10

O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is
sent!
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil 15
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet
content!
And O! may Heaven their simple lives pre-
vent
From Luxury's contagion, weak and vile! 20
Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-
loved Isle. 25

O Thou! who poured the patriotic tide,
That streamed thro' Wallace's undaunted
heart,
Who dared to, nobly, stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die, the second glorious part: 30
(The patriot's God, peculiarly Thou art,
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!)
O never, never Scotia's realm desert;
But still the patriot, and the patriot-bard
In bright succession raise, her ornament and 35
guard!

TO A MOUSE

ON TURNING HER UP IN HER NEST WITH THE 40
PLOUGH, NOVEMBER, 1785

Wee, sleekit,¹ cowlin, tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty
Wi' bickering brattle!² 45
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,
Wi' murdering pattle!³

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion
Which makes thee startle
At me, thy poor, earth-born companion
An' fellow mortal!

I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
A daimen icker in a thrave⁴
'S a sma' request;
I'll get a blessin wi' the lave,
An' never miss 't!

Thy wee-bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin!
An' naething, now, to big a new ane,
O' foggage green!
An' bleak December's win's ensuin,
Baith suell⁵ an' keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
An' weary winter comin fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell,
Till crash! the cruel coulter past
Out thro' thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,
Hast cost thee monie a weary nibble!
Now thou's turned out, for a' thy trouble
But house or hald,⁶
To thole the winter's sleety dribble,
An' cranreuch⁷ cauld!

But Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft agley,⁸
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,
For promised joy!

Still thou art blest, compared wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But och! I backward cast my e'e,
On prospects drear!
An' forward, tho' I canna see,
I guess an' fear!

²⁵ Pope's *Essay on Man*.

¹ sleek.

² sudden scamper.

³ stick.

⁴ occasional ear in twenty-four sheaves.

⁵ sharp.

⁶ Without house or abode.

⁷ hoar-frost.

⁸ astray.

AULD LANG SYNE

CHORUS

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne!¹

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang syne!

And surely ye'll be your pint-stowp,²
And surely I'll be mine,
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne!

We two hae run about the braes,³
And pou'd the gowans⁴ fine,
But we've wandered monie a weary fit⁵
Sin' auld lang syne.

We twa hae paidled in the burn⁶
Frae morning sun till dune,
But seas between us braid hae roared
Sin' auld lang syne.

And there's a hand, my trusty fiere,⁷
And gie's a hand o' thine,
And we'll tak a right gud-wille waught⁸
For auld lang syne!

CHORUS

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne!

JOHN ANDERSON MY JO

John Anderson my jo,¹ John,
When we were first acquent,
Your locks were like the raven,
Your bonie brow was brent,²
But now your brow is beld, John,

Your locks are like the snaw,
But blessings on your frosty pow,³
John Anderson my jo!

5 John Anderson my jo, John,
We clamb the hill thegither,
And monie a cantie⁴ day, John,
We've had wi' ane anther.
Now we maun totter down, John,
10 And hand in hand we'll go,
And sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson my jo!

A RED, RED ROSE

O, my luvie is like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June.
O, my luvie is like the melodie,
That's sweetly played in tune.

20 As fair art thou, my bonie lass,
So deep in luvie am I,
And I will luvie thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun!
And I will luvie thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

30 And fare thee weel, my only luvie,
And fare thee weel a while!
And I will come again, my luvie,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile!

35

A MAN'S A MAN FOR A' THAT

Is there, for honest poverty,
That hings his head, an' a' that?
40 The coward slave, we pass him by,
We dare be poor for a' that!

For a' that, an' a' that,
Our toils obscure, an' a' that;
45 The rank is but the guinea's stamp;
The man's the gowd for a' that.

What though on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hodden-gray, an' a' that;
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
50 A man's a man for a' that.

³ head.

⁴ happy.

¹ good old days.

² you'll pay for your pint.

³ hillsides.

⁴ daisies.

⁵ foot.

⁶ brook.

⁷ friend.

⁸ swig.

¹ sweetheart.

² smooth.

For a' that, an' a' that,
 Their tinsel show, an' a' that;
 The honest man, though e'er sae poor,
 Is king o' men for a' that.

Ye see yon birkie, ca'd a lord,
 Wha struts, an' stares, an' a' that;
 Though hundreds worship at his word,
 He's but a coof¹ for a' that.
 For a' that, an' a' that,
 His riband, star, an' a' that,
 The man o' independent mind,
 He looks and laughs at a' that.

A prince can mak a belted knight,
 A marquis, duke, an' a' that;
 But an honest man's aboon² his might,
 Guid faith he mauna fa' that!
 For a' that, an' a' that,
 Their dignities, an' a' that,
 The pith o' sense, an' pride o' worth,
 Are higher rank than a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may,
 As come it will for a' that,
 That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,
 May bear the gree, an' a' that.
 For a' that, an' a' that,
 It's coming yet, for a' that,
 That man to man, the world o'er,
 Shall brothers be for a' that.

ADDRESS TO THE UNCO GUID;
 OR, THE RIGIDLY RIGHTEOUS

My Son, these maxims make a rule,
 An' lump them ay thegither:
 The Rigid Righteous is a fool,
 The Rigid Wise anither;
 The cleanest corn that e'er was dight
 May hae some pyles o' caff in;
 So ne'er a fellow-creature slight
 For random fits o' daffin.

SOLOMON.—*Eccles.*, 7:16.

O ye who are sae guid yoursel,
 Sae pious and sae holy,
 Ye've nought to do but mark and tell
 Your neebors' fauts and folly;
 Whase life is like a weel-gaun mill,

Supplied wi' store o' water;
 The heaped hopper's¹ ebbing still,
 An' still the clap plays clatter!

5 Hear me, ye venerable core,²
 As counsel for poor mortals
 That frequent pass douce³ Wisdom's door
 For glaikit⁴ Folly's portals;
 I, for their thoughtless, careless sakes,
 10 Would here propone defences—
 Their donsie tricks, their black mistakes,
 Their failings and mischances.

Ye see your state wi' theirs compared,
 15 And shudder at the niffer;⁵
 But cast a moment's fair regard,
 What makes the mighty differ?
 Discount what scant occasion gave,
 That purity ye pride in,
 20 And (what's aft mair than a' the lave)
 Your better art o' hidin.

Think, when your castigated pulse
 Gies now and then a wallop,
 25 What ragings must his veins convulse,
 That still eternal gallop!
 Wi' wind and tide fair i' your tail,
 Right on ye scud your sea-way;
 But in the teeth o' baith to sail,
 30 It makes an unco lee-way.

See Social-life and Glee sit down,
 All joyous and unthinking,
 Till, quite transmogrify'd, they're grown
 35 Debauchery and Drinking:
 O, would they stay to calculate
 Th' eternal consequences,
 Or—your more dreadful hell to state—
 Damnation of expenses!

40 Ye high, exalted, virtuous dames,
 Tied up in godly laces,
 Before ye gie poor Frailty names,
 Suppose a change o' cases;
 45 A dear-lov'd lad, convenience snug,
 A treach'rous inclination—
 But, let me whisper i' your lug,⁶
 Ye're aiblins' nae temptation.

50 ¹ heaped-up hopper. ² crew.
³ grave. ⁴ giddy.
⁵ exchange. ⁶ ear.
⁷ perhaps.

¹ fool.

² above.

Then gently scan your brother man,
 Still gentler sister woman;
 Tho' they may gang a kennin^a wrang,
 To step aside is human:
 One point must still be greatly dark,
 The moving *Why* they do it;
 And just as lamely can ye mark,
 How far perhaps they rue it.

^a a little bit.

Who made the heart, 't is He alone
 Decidedly can try us,
 He knows each chord, its various tone,
 Each spring, its various bias.
 5 Then at the balance, let's be mute,
 We never can adjust it,
 What's *done* we partly can compute,
 But know not what's *resisted*

NINETEENTH CENTURY

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH*

LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING

I heard a thousand blended notes
 While in a grove I sate reclined,
 In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
 Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link
 The human soul that through me ran;
 And much it grieved my heart to think
 What Man has made of Man.

Through primrose tufts, in that sweet bower,
 The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;
 And 'tis my faith that every flower
 Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played,
 Their thoughts I cannot measure,—
 But the least motion which they made,
 It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan
 To catch the breezy air;
 And I must think, do all I can,
 That there was pleasure there.

* For introductory sketch see I, 108.

If this belief from heaven be sent,
 If such be Nature's holy plan,
 Have I not reason to lament
 What Man has made of Man?

LINES

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN
 10 ABBEY, ON REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE WYE
 DURING A TOUR JULY 13, 1798

Five years have past; five summers, with the
 length
 Of five long winters! and again I hear
 15 These waters, rolling from their mountain-
 springs
 With a soft inland murmur.—Once again
 Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
 That on a wild, secluded scene impress
 20 Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
 The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
 The day is come when I again repose
 Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
 These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-
 25 tufts,
 Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
 Are clad in one green hue, and lose them-
 selves
 'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see

These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little
lines
Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral
farms,

Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
With some uncertain notice, as might seem
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire
The Hermit sits alone.

These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration:—feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood
In which the burden of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,—
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.

If this
Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft—
In darkness and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer thro' the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee!

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished
thought,
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again:

While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing
thoughts

That in this moment there is life and food
5 For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was
when first

I came among these hills; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
10 Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led: more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads, than
one

Who sought the thing he loved. For nature
15 then

(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all.—I cannot paint

What then I was. The sounding cataract
20 Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy
wood,

Their colors and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love,

25 That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this

30 Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompense. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes

35 The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime

40 Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit, that impels

45 All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I
still

A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
50 From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye, and ear,—both what they half create,
And what perceive; well pleased to recognize

In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.

Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
For thou art with me here upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend,
My dear, dear Friend,¹ and in thy voice I 10
catch

The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once, 15
My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make,
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her, 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so inform 20
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all 25
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk; 30
And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee: and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms, 35
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing
thoughts 40

Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance—
If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these
gleams 45
Of past existence—wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service: rather say 50

With warmer love—oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
5 And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy
sake!

*SHE DWELT AMONG THE
UNTRODDEN WAYS*

She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love;

A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye!
Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be,
But she is in her grave, and, oh!
The difference to me!

*A SLUMBER DID MY SPIRIT
SEAL*

A slumber did my spirit seal,
I had no human fears—
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;
She neither hears nor sees;
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
With rocks, and stones, and trees.

MY HEART LEAPS UP

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began,
So is it now I am a man,
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man:
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

¹ his sister, Dorothy.

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER
BRIDGE, SEPTEMBER 3, 1802

Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning: silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky,—
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendor valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

LONDON, 1802

Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men:
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the
sea,
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free;
So didst thou travel on life's common way
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

I WANDERED LONELY
AS A CLOUD

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils,
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay;
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee—
A poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company.
5 I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought.

For oft when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
10 They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude,
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

15 ODE: INTIMATIONS OF IMMOR-
TALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS
OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

There was a time when meadow, grove, and
20 stream,

The earth, and every common sight
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.

25 It is not now as it hath been of yore;—

Turn wheresoe'er I may,

By night or day,

The things which I have seen I now can see
no more.

The rainbow comes and goes,

And lovely is the rose;

The Moon doth with delight

Look round her when the heavens are
bare;

35 Waters on a starry night

Are beautiful and fair;

The sunshine is a glorious birth;

But yet I know, where'er I go,

That there hath past away a glory from the
40 earth.

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,

And while the young lambs bound

As to the tabor's sound,

45 To me alone there came a thought of grief:

A timely utterance gave that thought relief,

And I again am strong.

The cataracts blow their trumpets from the
steep;—

50 No more shall grief of mine the season wrong:

I hear the echoes through the mountains
throng,

The winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
 And all the earth is gay,
 Land and sea
 Give themselves up to jollity,
 And with the heart of May
 Doth every beast keep holiday,—
 Thou child of joy,
 Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou
 happy
 Shepherd-boy!

Ye blessèd Creatures, I have heard the call
 Ye to each other make, I see
 The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
 My heart is at your festival,
 My head hath its coronal,
 The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
 Oh evil day! if I were sullen
 While Earth herself is adorning
 This sweet May-morning,
 And the children are culling
 On every side
 In a thousand valleys far and wide,
 Fresh flowers; while the sun shines
 warm,
 And the babe leaps up on his mother's arm,—
 I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!
 —But there's a tree, of many, one,
 A single field which I have looked upon,
 Both of them speak of something that is gone: 30
 The pansy at my feet
 Doth the same tale repeat:
 Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
 Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting,
 The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
 Hath had elsewhere its setting,
 And cometh from afar;
 Not in entire forgetfulness,
 And not in utter nakedness,
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come
 From God, who is our home:
 Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
 Shades of the prison-house begin to close
 Upon the growing Boy,
 But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
 He sees it in his joy;
 The Youth, who daily farther from the east
 Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
 And by the vision splendid
 Is on his way attended;

At length the Man perceives it die away,
 And fade into the light of common day.

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
 5 Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
 And, even with something of a mother's mind
 And no unworthy aim,
 The homely nurse doth all she can
 To make her foster-child, her inmate, Man,
 10 Forget the glories he hath
 known,
 And that imperial palace whence he came.

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
 15 A six years' darling of a pigmy size!
 See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
 Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
 With light upon him from his father's eyes!
 See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
 20 Some fragment from his dream of human life,
 Shaped by himself with newly-learnèd art;
 A wedding or a festival,
 A mourning or a funeral,
 And this hath now his heart,
 25 And unto this he frames his song:
 Then will he fit his tongue
 To dialogues of business, love, or strife;
 But it will not be long
 Ere this be thrown aside,
 30 And with new joy and pride
 The little actor cons another part;
 Filling from time to time his "humorous
 stage"
 With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
 35 That life brings with her in her equipage;
 As if his whole vocation
 Were endless imitation.

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
 40 Thy soul's immensity,
 Thou best philosopher, who yet dost keep
 Thy heritage, thou eye among the blind,
 That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
 Haunted for ever by the eternal Mind,—
 45 Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
 On whom those truths do rest
 Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
 In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
 Thou, over whom thy Immortality
 50 Broods like the day, a master o'er a slave,
 A Presence which is not to be put by;
 Thou little child, yet glorious in the might

LYRIC POETRY · WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's
height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou pro-
voke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
Full soon thy soul shall have her earthly
freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

O joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That Nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!

The thought of our past years in me doth
breed
Perpetual benediction: not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest,
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his
breast:—
—Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise;

But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a creature
Moving about in worlds not realized,
High instincts, before which our mortal nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised:

But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,
Are yet a master-light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to
make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,
To perish never;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavor,
Nor man nor boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!

Hence, in a season of calm weather
Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither;
Can in a moment travel thither—

And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling ever-
more.

5 Then, sing ye birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
And let the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound!
We, in thought, will join your throng,
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
10 Ye that through your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May!
What though the radiance which was once
so bright
Be now for ever taken from my sight,
15 Though nothing can bring back the
hour
Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains be-
hind;
20 In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever
be;
In the soothing thoughts that
spring
Out of human suffering;
In the faith that looks through
death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

30 And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and
Groves,
Forbode not any severing of our loves!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
35 I only have relinquished one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway:
I love the brooks which down their channels
fret
Even more than when I tripped lightly as
40 they;
The innocent brightness of a new-born day
Is lovely yet;
The clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober coloring from an eye
45 That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
Another race hath been, and other palms are
won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
50 To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH
WITH US

The world is too much with us, late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our 5
powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid
boon!
The Sea that bares her bosom to the moon; 10
The winds that will be howling at all hours
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flow-
ers;
For this, for every thing, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be 15
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less for-
lorn;
Have sight of Proteus¹ rising from the sea, 20
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON* 25

SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies; 30
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes.
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies. 35
One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face, 40
Where thoughts serenely sweet express
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.
And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent, 45
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

WHEN WE TWO PARTED

When we two parted
In silence and tears,
Half broken-hearted
To sever for years,
Pale grew thy cheek and cold,
Colder thy kiss,
Truly that hour foretold
Sorrow to this.

The dew of the morning
Sunk chill on my brow—
It felt like the warning
Of what I feel now.
Thy vows are all broken,
And light is thy fame;
I hear thy name spoken,
And share in its shame.

They name thee before me,
A knell to mine ear,
A shudder comes o'er me—
Why wert thou so dear?
They know not I knew thee,
Who knew thee too well.—
Long, long shall I rue thee,
Too deeply to tell.

In secret we met—
In silence I grieve
That thy heart could forget,
Thy spirit deceive.
If I should meet thee
After long years,
How should I greet thee?—
With silence and tears.

THE DESTRUCTION OF
SENNACHERIB¹

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the
fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and
45 gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars
on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep
Galilee.

¹ Proteus and Triton, sea gods.

* For introductory sketch see I, 123.

¹ See II Kings 19.

LYRIC POETRY · PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and forever grew still!

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride;
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail:
And the tents were all silent—the banners alone—
The lances unlifted—the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmeared by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

Then the few whose spirits float above the wreck of happiness
Are driven o'er the shoals of guilt or ocean of excess:
The magnet of their course is gone, or only points in vain
The shore to which their shivered sail shall never stretch again.

Then the mortal coldness of the soul like death itself comes down;
It cannot feel for others' woes, it dare not dream its own;
That heavy chill has frozen o'er the fountain of our tears,
And though the eye may sparkle still, 'tis where the ice appears.

Though wit may flash from fluent lips, and mirth distract the breast,
Through midnight hours that yield no more their former hope of rest;
'Tis but as ivy-leaves around the ruined turret wreath,
All green and wildly fresh without, but worn and grey beneath.

Oh, could I feel as I have felt,—or be what I have been,
Or weep as I could once have wept, o'er many a vanished scene;
As springs, in deserts found, seem sweet, all brackish though they be,
So, midst the withered waste of life, those tears would flow to me.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

STANZAS FOR MUSIC

There's not a joy the world can give like that it takes away,
When the glow of early thought declines in feeling's dull decay;
'Tis not on youth's smooth cheek the blush alone, which fades so fast,
But the tender bloom of heart is gone, ere youth itself be past.

Shelley (1792–1822) early acquired the nickname "Mad" when he distinguished himself at school by blowing up trees, wearing strange costumes, concocting chemical brews, and so on. He was expelled from Oxford for writing "The Necessity of Atheism," a treatise which was less wicked than its title. After an elopement with Harriet Westbrook, Shelley, full of Godwin and French materialism, conceived the idea of saving the Irish from the English by writing and lecturing on political reform (years later he was to try a reform program on the English themselves); as a reformer Shelley

was socialistic in principle but conservative in method—he hated prelates, lawyers, tyrants, and in both poetry and prose attacked them. On returning to England Shelley had financial trouble, family trouble, wife trouble—Harriet eventually drowned herself after the poet had run off with Mary Godwin, who later became his second wife. Lawsuits, social ostracism, legal separation from his children sent Shelley into exile for the rest of his life. There were other episodes with women, strange experiences with imaginary assailants, repeated domestic illnesses and deaths—and yet the poetry, which had realized itself early in Queen Mab, had gone on and on. Some of it is political. Some of it is obscure or dull, especially parts of Rosalind and Helen or Revolt of Islam. But when Shelley wrote in his most personal vein—as a lyricist singing with a bursting throat—he revealed a new voice, an incomparable soaring power. Apart from his sex life Shelley, like many other artists, led a life of kindness to friends, hard work, interest in the common man, and, in general, ironic as it may sound, of functional Christianity. An untimely sailing accident ended abruptly a poetic career still in the developing stage.

HYMN TO INTELLECTUAL
BEAUTY

1

The awful shadow of some unseen Power
Floats though unseen among us, visiting
This various world with its inconstant wing
As summer winds that creep from flower to
flower;
Like moonbeams that behind some piny
mountain shower,
It visits with inconstant glance
Each human heart and countenance;
Like hues and harmonies of evening,
Like clouds in starlight widely spread,
Like memory of music fled,
Like aught that for its grace may be
Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.

2

Spirit of BEAUTY, that dost consecrate
With thine own hues all thou dost shine
upon

Of human thought or form, where art thou
gone?
Why dost thou pass away, and leave our state,
This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and deso-
late?
Ask why the sunlight not forever
Weaves rainbows o'er yon mountain
river;
Why aught should fail and fade that once is
shown;
Why fear and dream and death and birth
Cast on the daylight of this earth
Such gloom, why man has such a scope
For love and hate, despondency and hope.

3

No voice from some sublimer world hath ever
To sage or poet these responses given;
Therefore the names of Demon, Ghost and
Heaven,
Remain the records of their vain endeavor,
Frail spells, whose uttered charm might not
avail to sever,
From all we hear and all we see,
Doubt, chance, and mutability.
Thy light alone, like mist o'er mountains
driven,
Or music by the night wind sent
Through strings of some still instrument,
Or moonlight on a midnight stream,
Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream.

4

Love, Hope, and Self-esteem, like clouds, de-
part
And come, for some uncertain moments lent.
Man were immortal and omnipotent,
Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,
Keep with thy glorious train firm state within
his heart.
Thou messenger of sympathies
That wax and wane in lovers' eyes!
Thou, that to human thought art nourishment,
Like darkness to a dying flame,
Depart not as thy shadow came,
Depart not, lest the grave should be,
Like life and fear, a dark reality!

5

50 While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped
Through many a listening chamber, cave
and ruin,

And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing
Hopes of high talk with the departed dead;
I called on poisonous names with which our youth is fed.

I was not heard—I saw them not—
When, musing deeply on the lot
Of life, at that sweet time when winds are wooing

All vital things that wake to bring
News of birds and blossoming,—
Sudden, thy shadow fell on me;
I shrieked, and clasped my hands in ecstasy!

6

I vowed that I would dedicate my powers
To thee and thine—have I not kept the vow?

With beating heart and streaming eyes,
even now

I call the phantoms of a thousand hours
Each from his voiceless grave: they have in visioned bowers

Of studious zeal or love's delight
Outwatched with me the envious night—

They know that never joy illumed my brow
Unlinked with hope that thou wouldst free

This world from its dark slavery,
That thou, O awful LOVELINESS,
Wouldst give whate'er these words cannot express.

The day becomes more solemn and serene
When noon is past; there is a harmony
In autumn, and a luster in its sky,
Which through the summer is not heard or seen,

As if it could not be, as if it had not been!
Thus let thy power, which like the truth
Of nature on my passive youth

Descended, to my onward life supply
Its calm,—to one who worships thee,
And every form containing thee,
Whom, SPIRIT fair, thy spells did bind
To fear himself, and love all humankind.

OZYMANDIAS

I met a traveler from an antique land
Who said: "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone

Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,

And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,

Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,

The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed:

And on the pedestal these words appear:
'My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away."

SONG TO THE MEN OF ENGLAND

Men of England, wherefore plow
For the lords who lay ye low?
Wherefore weave with toil and care
The rich robes your tyrants wear?

Wherefore feed, and clothe, and save,
From the cradle to the grave,
Those ungrateful drones who would
Drain your sweat—nay, drink your blood?

Wherefore, bees of England, forge
Many a weapon, chain, and scourge,
That these stingless drones may spoil
The forced produce of your toil?

Have ye leisure, comfort, calm,
Shelter, food, love's gentle balm?
Or what is it ye buy so dear
With your pain and with your fear?

The seed ye sow, another reaps;
The wealth ye find, another keeps;
The robes ye weave, another wears;
The arms ye forge, another bears.

Sow seed—but let no tyrant reap;
Find wealth—let no impostor heap;
Weave robes—let not the idle wear;
Forge arms—in your defense to bear.

Shrink to your cellars, holes, and cells;
In halls ye deck another dwells.

Why shake the chains ye wrought? Ye see
The steel ye tempered glance on ye.

With plow and spade, and hoe and loom,
Trace your grave, and build your tomb,
And weave your winding-sheet, till fair
England be your sepulcher.

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

1

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's
being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves 15
dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter
fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes! O thou
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and
low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in an) 30
With living hues and odors plain and hill.

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and Preserver, hear, oh hear!

2

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's
commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are
shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of heaven and
ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning! there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Mænad,¹ even from the dim
verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,

The locks of the approaching storm. Thou
dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
5 Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapors, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail, will burst: Oh
10 hear!

3

Thou who didst waken from his summer-
dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's² bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
20 Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss, and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them!
Thou
25 For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far be-
low

The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which
30 wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear
And tremble and despoil themselves: Oh hear!

35

4

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

40

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than Thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

45 The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skyey speed
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have
striven

50 As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.

¹ bacchante.

² seaport near Naples.

LYRIC POETRY · PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Oh! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee—tameless, and swift, and proud.

5

Make me thy lyre, ev'n as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce, 15
My spirit! be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe,
Like withered leaves, to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse, 20

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

THE CLOUD

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noonday dreams.

From my wings are shaken the dews that 35
waken

The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about the sun.

I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast;
And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
Sublime on the towers of my skyey bowers,
Lightning my pilot sits;
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,
It struggles and howls at fits;

Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
This pilot is guiding me,
Lured by the love of the genii that move
In the depths of the purple sea;
5 Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,
Over the lakes and the plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
The Spirit he loves remains;
And I all the while bask in Heaven's blue
10 smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine Sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
15 Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning star shines dead;
As on the jag of a mountain crag,
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
20 In the light of its golden wings.
And when Sunset may breathe, from the lit sea
beneath,
Its ardors of rest and of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
25 From the depth of Heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orb'd maiden with white fire laden,
30 Whom mortals call the Moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,
35 May have broken the woof of my tent's thin
roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
40 When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on
high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

45 I bind the Sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the Moon's with a girdle of pearl;
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and
swim
50 When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,

Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,— The mountains its columns be. The triumphal arch, through which I march, With hurricane, fire, and snow. When the Powers of the air are chained to my chair, Is the million-colored bow, The sphere-fire above its soft colors wove, While the moist Earth was laughing below.	Thou art unseen,—but yet I hear thy shrill delight, Keen as are the arrows Of that silver sphere, Whose intense lamp narrows In the white dawn clear Until we hardly see—we feel that it is there,
I am the daughter of Earth and Water, And the nursling of the Sky, I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores, I change, but I cannot die. For after the rain when with never a stain The pavilion of Heaven is bare, And the winds and sunbeams with their con- vex gleams Build up the blue dome of air, I silently laugh at my own cenotaph, And out of the caverns of rain, Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb, I arise and unbuild it again.	10 All the earth and air With thy voice is loud, As, when night is bare, From one lonely cloud The moon rains out her beams, and Heaven is overflowed. 15 What thou art we know not; What is most like thee? From rainbow clouds there flow not Drops so bright to see As from thy presence showers a rain of melody 20 Like a Poet hidden In the light of thought, Singing hymns unbidden, Till the world is wrought To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not;

TO A SKYLARK

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit! Bird thou never wert, That from Heaven, or near it, Pourest thy full heart In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.	30 Like a high-born maiden In a palace-tower, Soothing her love-laden Soul in secret hour With music sweet as love,—which overflows her bower;
Higher still and higher From the earth thou springest Like a cloud of fire, The blue deep thou wingest, And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.	35 Like a glowworm golden In a dell of dew, Scattering unbeholden Its aerial hue Among the flowers and grass which screen it from the view;
In the golden lightning Of the sunken sun, O'er which clouds are bright'ning, Thou dost float and run; Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.	45 Like a rose embowered In its own green leaves, By warm winds deflowered, Till the scent it gives Makes faint with too much sweet those heavy winged thieves.
The pale purple even Melts around thy flight; Like a star of Heaven, In the broad daylight	50 Sound of vernal showers On the twinkling grass,

LYRIC POETRY · JOHN KEATS

Rain-awakened flowers, All that ever was Joyous and clear and fresh, thy music doth surpass.		Better than all measures Of delightful sound, Better than all treasures That in books are found, 5 Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!
Teach us, Sprite or Bird, What sweet thoughts are thine; I have never heard Praise of love or wine That panted forth a flood of rapture so di- 10 vine.		Teach me half the gladness That thy brain must know, Such harmonious madness From my lips would flow The world should listen then—as I am listen- ing now.
Chorus Hymeneal, Or triumphal chant, Matched with thine, would be all 15 But an empty vaunt, A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.		TO —
What objects are the fountains 20 Of thy happy strain? What fields or waves or mountains? What shapes of sky or plain? What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain? 25		Music, when soft voices die, Vibrates in the memory— Odors, when sweet violets sicken, Live within the sense they quicken, Rose leaves, when the rose is dead, Are heaped for the beloved's bed; And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone Love itself shall slumber on.
With thy clear keen joyance Languor cannot be; Shadow of annoyance Never came near thee; 30 Thou lovest—but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.		JOHN KEATS*
Waking or asleep, Thou of death must deem Things more true and deep 35 Than we mortals dream— Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?		SONNET
We look before and after, And pine for what is not; Our sincerest laughter With some pain is fraught; Our sweetest songs are those that tell of sad- dest thought.		ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER
Yet if we could scorn Hate, and pride, and fear; If we were things born Not to shed a tear, 50 I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.		Much have I travelled in the realms of gold, And many goodly states and kingdoms seen; 35 Round many western islands have I been Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold. Oft of one wide expanse had I been told That deep-browed Homer ruled as his de- mesne: 40 Yet did I never breathe its pure serene Till I heard Chapman ¹ speak out loud and bold: Then felt I like some watcher of the skies When a new planet swims into his ken; 45 Or like stout Cortez ² when with eagle eyes He stared at the Pacific—and all his men Looked at each other with a wild surmise— Silent, upon a peak in Darien. ³

* For introductory sketch see I, 138.

¹ Elizabethan dramatist and translator, George Chapman, "Englished" Homer.

² error for Balboa. ³ on Isthmus of Panama.

WHEN I HAVE FEARS THAT
I MAY CEASE TO BE

When I have fears that I may cease to be
Before my pen has gleaned my teeming brain,
Before high-piled books, in character,
Hold like rich garners the full-ripened grain.
When I behold, upon the night's starred face,
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
And think that I may never live to trace
Their shadows, with the magic hand of
chance;
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour,
That I shall never look upon thee more,
Never have relish in the faery power
Of unreflecting love;—then on the shore
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.

ODE ON MELANCHOLY

No, no, go not to Lethe,¹ neither twist
Wolf's-bane,² tight-rooted, for its poisonous
wine;
Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kissed
By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine,³
Make not your rosary of yew-berries,⁴
Nor let the beetle,⁵ nor the death-moth⁶ be
Your mournful Psyche,⁷ nor the downy owl
A partner in your sorrow's mysteries,
For shade to shade will come too drowsily,
And drown the wakeful anguish of the
soul.

But when the melancholy fit shall fall
Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,
That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,
And hides the green hill in an April shroud,
Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,
Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,
Or on the wealth of globed peonies,
Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,

¹ river of oblivion in Hades² poisonous plant; nightshade also poisonous.³ queen of the lower regions⁴ Yew is symbol of grief.⁵ The ancients placed beetles in coffins.⁶ moth with skull markings⁷ the soul.

And feed deep, deep upon her peerless
eyes.

She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must
die,
And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
Bidding adieu, and aching Pleasure nigh,
Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips.
Ay, in the very temple of Delight
Veiled Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
Though seen of none save him whose
strenuous tongue
Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine,
His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,
And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

1
20 Thou still unravished bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of Silence and slow Time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme.
25 What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy
shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?¹
What men or gods are these? What maidens
loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ec-
stasy?

2
35 Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter, therefore, ye soft pipes, play
on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,
40 Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not
leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
45 Though winning near the goal—yet, do not
grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy
bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

¹ regions in Greece suggesting pastoral back-ground.

3

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new.
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoyed,
For ever panting, and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and
cloyed,
A burning forehead, and a parching
tongue.

4

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands
drest?
What little town by river or sea shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

5

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form! dost tease us out of
thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou
say'st,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to
know.

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

1

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock¹ I had
drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains

¹ poison.

One minute past, and Lethe-wards had
sunk:

'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thine happiness,—
That thou, light-winged Dryad² of the
trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

2

O for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cooled a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora³ and the country green,
Dance, and Provençal⁴ song, and sunburnt
mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,⁵
With beaded bubbles winking at the
brim,
And purple-stained mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world
unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest
dim:

3

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never
known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other
groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin,
and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous
eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-
morrow.

4

45 Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,⁶

² tree nymph.

³ goddess of flowers.

⁴ Medieval home of troubadours was in Provence
(southern France).

⁵ fountain sacred to muses.

⁶ Bacchus, god of wine, was accompanied by
leopards (pards) and other beasts.

But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
 Though the dull brain perplexes and re-
 tards:
 Already with thee! tender is the night,
 And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
 Clustered around by all her starry Fays;
 But here there is no light,
 Save what from heaven is with the breezes
 blown
 Through verdurous glooms and winding
 mossy ways.

5

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
 Nor what soft incense hangs upon the
 boughs,
 But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
 Wherewith the seasonable month endows
 The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
 White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
 Fast-fading violets covered up in leaves,
 And mid-May's eldest child,
 The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
 The murmurous haunt of flies on summer
 eves.

6

Darkling I listen; and for many a time
 I have been half in love with easeful Death,
 Called him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
 To take into the air my quiet breath;
 Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
 To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
 While thou art pouring forth thy soul
 abroad

In such an ecstasy!
 Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in
 vain—
 To thy high requiem become a sod.

7

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
 No hungry generations tread thee down;
 The voice I hear this passing night was heard
 In ancient days by emperor and clown:
 Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
 Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick
 for home,
 She stood in tears amid the alien corn;⁷

The same that oft-times hath
 Charmed magic casements, opening on the
 foam
 Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

8

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
 To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
 Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
 As she is fabled to do, deceiving elf.
 Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
 Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
 Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
 In the next valley-glades.
 Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
 Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

*Bryant (1794–1878) was educated at Williams College in his native Massachusetts and set out to practice law. The publication of "Thanatopsis" led to the Poems of 1821, and finally, in 1825, Bryant decided to give up law. He was later to become editor of the New York Evening Post for several decades. His poems kept coming out meanwhile. Although at one time Bryant was considered the best living American poet, his work is limited in its field of Nature; his emotion is low-pitched, some poems sound like second-rate Shelley or Wordsworth. Nevertheless he has his followers among those who value his fundamental decency, intelligence, and didacticism, and who forgive his lack of depth or originality.**

THANATOPSIS¹

To him who in the love of Nature holds
 Communion with her visible forms, she speaks
 A various language: for his gayer hours
 She has a voice of gladness, and a smile
 And eloquence of beauty; and she glides
 Into his darker musings with a mild
 And healing sympathy that steals away
 Their sharpness ere he is aware. When
 thoughts
 Of the last bitter hour come like a blight

* The selections from Bryant's poetry are printed with the permission of the publisher, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc.

¹ View of death.

⁷ See Book of Ruth in the Bible.

Over thy spirit, and sad images
Of the stern agony and shroud and pall
And breathless darkness and the narrow house
Make thee to shudder and grow sick at heart,
Go forth under the open sky and list
To Nature's teachings, while from all around—
Earth and her waters and the depths of air—
Comes a still voice:

Yet a few days, and thee
The all-beholding sun shall see no more
In all his course; nor yet in the cold ground,
Where thy pale form was laid with many tears,
Nor in the embrace of ocean, shall exist
Thy image. Earth, that nourished thee, shall
claim
Thy growth, to be resolved to earth again,
And, lost each human trace, surrendering up
Thine individual being, shalt thou go
To mix for ever with the elements,
To be a brother to the insensible rock
And to the sluggish clod, which the rude swain
Turns with his share and treads upon; the oak
Shall send his roots abroad and pierce thy
mould.

Yet not to thine eternal resting-place
Shalt thou retire alone, nor couldst thou wish
Couch more magnificent. Thou shalt lie down
With patriarchs of the infant world, with
kings,

The powerful of the earth, the wise, the good,
Fair forms, and hoary seers of ages past,
All in one mighty sepulchre. The hills
Rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun, the vales
Stretching in pensive quietness between;
The venerable woods, rivers that move
In majesty, and the complaining brooks
That make the meadows green; and, poured
round all,

Old Ocean's gray and melancholy waste,—
Are but the solemn decorations all
Of the great tomb of man. The golden sun,
The planets, all the infinite host of heaven,
Are shining on the sad abodes of death,
Through the still lapse of ages. All that tread
The globe are but a handful to the tribes
That slumber in its bosom. Take the wings
Of morning, pierce the Barcan² wilderness,
Or lose thyself in the continuous woods
Where rolls the Oregon, and hears no sound 50

² African.

Save his own dashings; yet the dead are there,
And millions in those solitudes, since first
The flight of years began, have laid them down
In their last sleep: the dead reign there alone.
5 So shalt thou rest; and what if thou withdraw
In silence from the living, and no friend
Take note of thy departure? All that breathe
Will share thy destiny. The gay will laugh
When thou art gone, the solemn brood of care
10 Plod on, and each one as before will chase
His favorite phantom; yet all these shall leave
Their mirth and their employments, and shall
come
And make their bed with thee. As the long
15 train
Of ages glide away, the sons of men—
The youth in life's green spring, and he who
goes
In the full strength of years, matron and maid,
20 The speechless babe, and the gray-headed
man—
Shall one by one be gathered to thy side
By those who in their turn shall follow them.

25 So live that when thy summons comes to
join
The innumerable caravan which moves
To that mysterious realm where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
30 Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and
soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
35 About him and lies down to pleasant dreams.

TO A WATERFOWL

Whither, midst falling dew,
40 While glow the heavens with the last steps of
day,
Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pur-
sue
Thy solitary way?
Vainly the fowler's eye
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,
As, darkly seen against the crimson sky,
Thy figure floats along.

Seek'st thou the plashy brink
Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide,

Or where the rocking billows rise and sink
On the chafed ocean-side?

There is a Power whose care
Teaches thy way along that pathless coast— 5
The desert and illimitable air—
Lone wandering, but not lost.

All day thy wings have fanned,
At that far height, the cold thin atmosphere, 10
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,
Though the dark night is near.

And soon that toil shall end;
Soon shalt thou find a summer home, and rest, 15
And scream among thy fellows; reeds shall
bend,
Soon, o'er thy sheltered nest.

Thou'rt gone, the abyss of heaven
Hath swallowed up thy form, yet, on my heart
Deeply has sunk the lesson thou hast given,
And shall not soon depart.

He who, from zone to zone,
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain
flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone,
Will lead my steps aright.

TO THE FRINGED GENTIAN

Thou blossom bright with autumn dew,
And colored with the heaven's own blue, 35
That openest when the quiet light
Succeeds the keen and frosty night,

Thou comest not when violets lean
O'er wandering brooks and springs unseen, 40
Or columbines, in purple dressed,
Nod o'er the ground-bird's hidden nest.

Thou waitest late and com'st alone,
When woods are bare and birds are flown, 45
And frosts and shortening days portend
The aged year is near his end.

Then doth thy sweet and quiet eye
Look through its fringes to the sky, 50
Blue—blue—as if that sky let fall
A flower from its cerulean wall.

I would that thus, when I shall see
The hour of death draw near to me,
Hope, blossoming within my heart,
May look to heaven as I depart.

EDGAR ALLAN POE

If poets must suffer or live Bohemian lives (as some lay opinion would have it), Poe (1809–1849) would qualify on both counts. He is the sole member of the early American group of "major" writers who was weak, poor, or abandoned, the only one to die young. Ironically, while the others had respectability, not one had the touch, the genius of this erratic individual.

Poe's life is a series of troubles and frustrations. Bereft of parents by death and desertion, he quarreled with his benefactor, John Allan. 20 He was involved in family scandal. He got nowhere at the University of Virginia, was dismissed from West Point. He lost editorial jobs—though writing poems and stories for many reputable magazines—because he drank. His wife Virginia died of tuberculosis. A good bit of the time Poe was in poverty because of his habits. He could never quite achieve stability. After attempted suicide and following indecision over three ladies, Poe became engaged, 25 but never reached his wedding. He was found in bad shape under strange circumstances near a Baltimore saloon. He died shortly afterward.

Separating moral criticism from literary criticism, few will dispute Poe's claim to a significant place in American letters, though all will not agree on details. English, American, and French writers have confessed his influence. In developing detective and horror stories and experimenting with mood poetry in place of conventional rhapsodies, Poe had both originality and power. (For further comment on Poe, see II, 430.)

ROMANCE

Romance, who loves to nod and sing,
With drowsy head and folded wing,
Among the green leaves as they shake
Far down within some shadowy lake,
To me a painted parrot
Hath been—a most familiar bird—
Taught me my alphabet to say—

To lisp my very earliest word
While in the wild wood I did lie,
A child—with a most knowing eye.

Of late, eternal Condor years
So shake the very Heaven on high
With tumult as they thunder by,
I have no time for idle cares
Through gazing on the unquiet sky.
And when an hour with calmer wings
Its down upon my spirit flings—
That little time with lyre and rhyme
To while away—forbidden things!
My heart would feel to be a crime
Unless it trembled with the strings.

THE CITY IN THE SEA

Lo! Death has reared himself a throne
In a strange city lying alone
Far down within the dim West,
Where the good and the bad and the
 worst and the best
Have gone to their eternal rest.
There shrines and palaces and towers
(Time-eaten towers that tremble not!)
Resemble nothing that is ours.
Around, by lifting winds forgot,
Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.

No rays from the holy heaven come down
On the long night-time of that town;
But light from out the lurid sea
Streams up the turrets silently—
Gleams up the pinnacles far and free—
Up domes—up spires—up kingly halls—
Up fanes—up Babylon-like walls—
Up shadowy long-forgotten bowers
Of sculptured ivy and stone flowers—
Up many and many a marvellous shrine
Whose wreathed friezes intertwine
The viol, the violet, and the vine.
Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.
So blend the turrets and shadows there
That all seem pendulous in air,
While from a proud tower in the town
Death looks gigantically down.

There open fanes and gaping graves
Yawn level with the luminous waves

But not the riches there that lie
In each idol's diamond eye—
Not the gayly-jewelled dead
Tempt the waters from their bed;
5 For no ripples curl, alas!
Along that wilderness of glass—
No swellings tell that winds may be
Upon some far-off happier sea—
No heavings hint that winds have been
10 On seas less hideously serene.

But lo, a stir is in the air!
The wave—there is a movement there!
As if the towers had thrust aside,
In slightly sinking, the dull tide—
As if their tops had feebly given
A void within the filmy Heaven.
The waves have now a redder glow—
The hours are breathing faint and low—
20 And when, amid no earthly moans,
Down, down that town shall settle hence,
Hell, rising from a thousand thrones,
Shall do it reverence.

THE CONQUEROR WORM

Lo! 't is a gala night
Within the lonesome latter years!
An angel throng, bewinged, bedight
30 In veils, and drowned in tears,
Sit in a theatre, to see
A play of hopes and fears,
While the orchestra breathes fitfully
The music of the spheres.

Mimes, in the form of God on high,
Mutter and mumble low,
And hither and thither fly—
Mere puppets they, who come and go
40 At bidding of vast formless things
That shift the scenery to and fro,
Flapping from out their Condor wings
Invisible Woel

That motley drama—oh, be sure
It shall not be forgot!
With its Phantom chased for evermore,
By a crowd that seize it not,
Through a circle that ever returneth in
50 To the self-same spot,
And much of Madness, and more of Sin,
And Horror the soul of the plot.

But see, amid the mimic rout
 A crawling shape intrude!
 A blood-red thing that writhes from out
 The scenic solitude!
 It writhes!—it writhes!—with mortal
 pangs
 The mimes become its food,
 And seraphs sob at vermin fangs
 In human gore imbued.

Out—out are the lights—out all!
 And, over each quivering form,
 The curtain, a funeral pall,
 Comes down with the rush of a storm,
 While the angels, all pallid and wan,
 Uprising, unveiling, affirm
 That the play is the tragedy, 'Man,'
 And its hero the Conqueror Worm

THE HAUNTED PALACE

In the greenest of our valleys
 By good angels tenanted,
 Once a fair and stately palace—
 Radiant palace—reared its head.
 In the monarch Thought's dominion—
 It stood there!
 Never seraph spread a pinion
 Over fabric half so fair!

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
 On its roof did float and flow,
 (This—all this—was in the olden
 Time long ago)
 And every gentle air that dallied
 In that sweet day
 Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,
 A wingèd odor went away.

Wanderers in that happy valley,
 Through two luminous windows saw
 Spirits moving musically
 To a lute's well-tuned law,
 Round about a throne where, sitting,
 (Porphyrogene!)
 In state his glory well befitting,
 The ruler of the realm was seen.

And all with pearl and ruby glowing
 Was the fair palace door,
 Through which came flowing, flowing,
 flowing

And sparkling evermore,
 A troop of Echoes, whose sweet duty
 Was but to sing,
 In voices of surpassing beauty,
 The wit and wisdom of their king.

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,
 Assailed the monarch's high estate
 (Ah, let us mourn!—for never morrow
 Shall dawn upon him desolate!)
 And round about his home the glory
 That blushed and bloomed,
 Is but a dim-remembered story
 Of the old time entombed.

And travellers, now, within that valley,
 Through the red-litten windows see
 Vast forms, that move fantastically
 To a discordant melody,
 While, like a ghastly rapid river,
 Through the pale door
 A hideous throng rush out forever
 And laugh—but smile no more.

ULALUME

The skies they were ashen and sober;
 The leaves they were crisped and sere—
 The leaves they were withering and sere;
 30 It was night in the lonesome October
 Of my most immemorial year,
 It was hard by the dim lake of Auber,
 In the misty mid region of Weir—
 It was down by the dank tarn of Auber,
 35 In the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

Here once, through an alley Titanic,
 Of cypress, I roamed with my Soul—
 Of cypress, with Psyche, my Soul.
 40 These were days when my heart was volcanic
 As the scoriac rivers that roll—
 As the lavas that restlessly roll
 Their sulphurous currents down Yaanek
 In the ultimate climes of the pole—
 45 That groan as they roll down Mount Yaanek
 In the realms of the boreal pole.

Our talk had been serious and sober,
 But our thoughts they were palsied and
 50 sere—
 Our memories were treacherous and sere—
 For we knew not the month was October,

LYRIC POETRY · RALPH WALDO EMERSON

And we marked not the night of the year—
(Ah, night of all nights in the year!)

We noted not the dim lake of Auber—
(Though once we have journeyed down
here)—

Remembered not the dank tarn of Auber,
Nor the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

And now, as the night was senescent
And star-dials pointed to morn—
As the star-dials hunted of morn—
At the end of our path a liquescent
And nebulous lustre was born,
Out of which a miraculous crescent
Arose with a duplicate horn—
Astarte's bediamonded crescent
Distinct with its duplicate horn.

And I said—"She is warmer than Dian:
She rolls through an ether of sighs—
She revels in a region of sighs:
She has seen that the tears are not dry on
These cheeks, where the worm never dies
And has come past the stars of the Lion
To point us the path to the skies—
To the Lethæan peace of the skies—
Come up, in despite of the Lion,
To shine on us with her bright eyes—
Come up through the lair of the Lion,
With love in her luminous eyes."

But Psyche, uplifting her finger,
Said—"Sadly this star I mistrust—
Her pallor I strangely mistrust:—
Oh, hasten!—oh, let us not linger!
Oh, fly!—let us fly!—for we must."
In terror she spoke, letting sink her
Wings until they trailed in the dust—
In agony sobbed, letting sink her
Plumes till they trailed in the dust—
Till they sorrowfully trailed in the dust.

I replied—"This is nothing but dreaming:
Let us on by this tremulous light!
Let us bathe in the crystalline light!
Its Sibyllic splendor is beaming
With Hope and in Beauty to-night:—
Seel—it flickers up the sky through the night!
Ah, we safely may trust to its gleaming,
And be sure it will lead us aright—
We safely may trust to a gleaming
That cannot but guide us aright,

Since it flickers up to Heaven through the
night."

Thus I pacified Psyche and kissed her,
5 And tempted her out of her gloom—
And conquered her scruples and gloom;
And we passed to the end of the vista,
But were stopped by the door of a tomb—
By the door of a legended tomb;
10 And I said—"What is written, sweet sister,
On the door of this legended tomb?"
She replied—"Ulalume—Ulalume—
'Tis the vault of thy lost Ulalume!"
15 Then my heart it grew ashen and sober
As the leaves that were crisp'd and sere—
As the leaves that were withering and sere,
And I cried—"It was surely October
On this very night of last year
20 That I journeyed—I journeyed down here—
That I brought a dread burden down here—
On this night of all nights in the year,
Ah, what demon has tempted me here?
Well I know, now, this dim lake of Auber—
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THE RHODORA:

ON BEING ASKED, WHENCE IS THE FLOWER?

In May, when sea-winds pierced our solitudes,
I found the fresh Rhodora in the woods,
Spreading its leafless blooms in a damp nook,
To please the desert and the sluggish brook.
The purple petals, fallen in the pool,
Made the black water with their beauty gay.
Here might the redbird come his plumes to 10
cool,

And court the flower that cheapens his array.
Rhodora! if the sages ask thee why
This charm is wasted on the earth and sky,
Tell them, dear, that if eyes were made for 15
seeing,
Then Beauty is its own excuse for being:
Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose!
I never thought to ask, I never knew:
But, in my simple ignorance, suppose
The self-same Power that brought me there
brought you.

THE SNOW-STORM

Announced by all the trumpets of the sky,
Arrives the snow, and, driving o'er the fields,
Seems nowhere to alight, the whited air
Hides hills and woods, the river, and the
heaven,
And veils the farm-house at the garden's end
The sled and traveller stopped, the courier's
feet
Delayed, all friends shut out, the housemates
sit
Around the radiant fireplace, enclosed
In a tumultuous privacy of storm.

Come see the north wind's masonry.
Out of an unseen quarry evermore
Furnished with tile, the fierce artificer
Curves his white bastions with projected roof
Round every windward stake, or tree, or door.
Speeding, the myriad-handed, his wild work
So fanciful, so savage, nought cares he
For number or proportion. Mockingly,
On coop or kennel he hangs Parian wreaths;
A swan-like form invests the hidden thorn;
Fills up the farmer's lane from wall to wall,
Maugre¹ the farmer's sighs; and at the gate

¹ in spite of.

A tapering turret overtops the work.
And when his hours are numbered, and the
world
Is all his own, retiring, as he were not,
5 Leaves, when the sun appears, astonished Art
To mimic in slow structures, stone by stone,
Built in an age, the mad wind's nightwork,
The frolic architecture of the snow.

MUSKETAQUID

Because I was content with these poor fields,
Low, open meads, slender and sluggish
streams,
And found a home in haunts which others
scorned,
The partial wood-gods overpaid my love,
And granted me the freedom of their state,
20 And in their secret senate have prevailed
With the dear, dangerous lords that rule our
life,
Made moon and planets parties to their bond,
And through my rock-like, solitary wont
25 Shot million rays of thought and tenderness.
For me, in showers, in sweeping showers, the
Spring
Visits the valley;—break away the clouds,—
I bathe in the morn's soft and silvered air,
30 And loiter willing by yon loitering stream.
Sparrows far off, and nearer, April's bird,
Blue-coated,—flying before from tree to tree,
Courageous sing a delicate overture
To lead the tardy concert of the year.
35 Onward and nearer rides the sun of May;
And wide around, the marriage of the plants
Is sweetly solemnized. Then flows amain
The surge of summer's beauty, dell and crag,
Hollow and lake, hillside and pine arcade,
40 Are touched with genius. Yonder ragged cliff
Has thousand faces in a thousand hours.

Beneath low hills, in the broad interval
Through which at will our Indian rivulet
45 Winds mindful still of sannup and of squaw,
Whose pipe and arrow oft the plough un-
buries,
Here in pine houses built of new-fallen trees,
Supplanters of the tribe, the farmers dwell.
50 Traveller, to thee, perchance, a tedious road,
Or, it may be, a picture; to these men,
The landscape is an armory of powers,

LYRIC POETRY · RALPH WALDO EMERSON

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HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW · LYRIC POETRY

As a feather is wafted downward
From an eagle in his flight,

I see the lights of the village
Gleam through the rain and the mist,
And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me
That my soul cannot resist

A feeling of sadness and longing,
That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles the rain.

Come, read to me some poem,
Some simple and heartfelt lay,
That shall soothe this restless feeling,
And banish the thoughts of day.

Not from the grand old masters,
Not from the bards sublime,
Whose distant footsteps echo
Through the corridors of Time

For, like strains of martial music,
Their mighty thoughts suggest
Life's endless toil and endeavor,
And to-night I long for rest.

Read from some humbler poet,
Whose songs gushed from his heart,
As showers from the clouds of summer,
Or tears from the eyelids start,

Who, through long days of labor,
And nights devoid of ease,
Still heard in his soul the music
Of wonderful melodies.

Such songs have power to quiet
The restless pulse of care,
And come like the benediction
That follows after prayer.

Then read from the treasured volume
The poem of thy choice,
And lend to the rhyme of the poet
The beauty of thy voice.

And the night shall be filled with music,
And the cares that infest the day
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away.

MY LOST YOUTH

Often I think of the beautiful town¹
That is seated by the sea,
5 Often in thought go up and down
The pleasant streets of that dear old town,
And my youth comes back to me
And a verse of a Lapland song
Is haunting my memory still.
10 'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts.'

I can see the shadowy lines of its trees,
15 And catch, in sudden gleams,
The sheen of the far surrounding seas,
And islands that were the Hesperides
Of all my boyish dreams,
And the burden of that old song,
20 It murmurs and whispers still
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts.'

25 I remember the black wharves and the ships
And the sea-tides tossing free,
And the Spanish sailors with bearded lips,
And the beauty and mystery of the ships,
And the magic of the sea,
30 And the voice of that wayward song
Is singing and saying still,
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts.'

35 I remember the bulwarks by the shore,
And the fort upon the hill,
The sunrise gun, with its hollow roar,
The drum-beat repeated o'er and o'er,
40 And the bugle wild and shrill,
And the music of that old song
Throbs in my memory still,
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
45 thoughts.'

I remember the sea-fight far away,²
How it thundered o'er the tide!
And the dead captains, as they lay
50 In their graves, o'erlooking the tranquil bay

¹ Portland, Maine.

² *Enterprise* vs. *Boxer*, 1813.

Where they in battle died.
And the sound of that mournful song
Goes through me with a thrill:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts.'

I can see the breezy dome of groves,
The shadows of Deering's Woods;
And the friendships old and the early loves 10
Come back with a Sabbath sound, as of doves
In quiet neighborhoods.
And the verse of that sweet old song,
It flutters and murmurs still:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts.'

I remember the gleams and glooms that dart
Across the school-boy's brain;
The song and the silence in the heart,
That in part are prophecies, and in part
Are longings wild and vain.
And the voice of that fitful song
Sings on, and is never still:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts.'

There are things of which I may not speak; 30
There are dreams that cannot die;
There are thoughts that make the strong heart
weak,
And bring a pallor into the cheek,
And a mist before the eye.
And the words of that fatal song
Come over me like a chill:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts.'

Strange to me now are the forms I meet
When I visit the dear old town;
But the native air is pure and sweet,
And the trees that o'ershadow each well- 45
known street,
As they balance up and down,
Are singing the beautiful song,
Are sighing and whispering still:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts.'

And Deering's Woods are fresh and fair,
And with joy that is almost pain
My heart goes back to wander there,
And among the dreams of the days that were,
I find my lost youth again.
And the strange and beautiful song,
The groves are repeating it still:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts.'

DIVINA COMMEDIA¹

1

15 Oft have I seen at some cathedral door
A laborer, pausing in the dust and heat,
Lay down his burden, and with reverent feet
Enter, and cross himself, and on the floor
Kneel to repeat his paternoster o'er;
20 Far off the noises of the world retreat;
The loud vociferations of the street
Become an undistinguishable roar.
So, as I enter here from day to day,
And leave my burden at this minster gate,
25 Kneeling in prayer, and not ashamed to pray,
The tumult of the time disconsolate
To inarticulate murmurs dies away,
While the eternal ages watch and wait.

2

How strange the sculptures that adorn these
towers!
This crowd of statues, in whose folded sleeves
Birds build their nests; while canopied with
35 leaves
Parvis and portal bloom like trellised bowers,
And the vast minster seems a cross of flowers!
But fiends and dragons on the gargoyled eaves
Watch the dead Christ between the living
40 thieves,
And, underneath, the traitor Judas lowers!
Ah! from what agonies of heart and brain,
What exultations trampling on despair,
What tenderness, what tears, what hate of
wrong,
What passionate outcry of a soul in pain,
Uprose this poem of the earth and air,
This mediæval miracle of song!

¹ Longfellow's translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy* is divided into three parts, each of which is preceded and followed by one sonnet from this sequence.

3

I enter, and I see thee in the gloom
Of the long aisles, O poet saturnine!
And strive to make my steps keep pace with
thine.

The air is filled with some unknown perfume,
The congregation of the dead make room
For thee to pass; the votive tapers shine,
Like rooks that haunt Ravenna's groves of pine 10
The hovering echoes fly from tomb to tomb.
From the confessionals I hear arise
Rehearsals of forgotten tragedies,
And lamentations from the crypts below,
And then a voice celestial that begins 15
With the pathetic words, 'Although your sins
As scarlet be,' and ends with 'as the snow.'

4

With snow-white veil and garments as of 20
flame,
She stands before thee, who so long ago
Filled thy young heart with passion and the
woe

From which thy song and all its splendors 25
came;
And while with stern rebuke she speaks thy
name,
The ice about thy heart melts as the snow
On mountain heights, and in swift overflow
Comes gushing from thy lips in sobs of shame.
Thou makest full confession; and a gleam,
As of the dawn on some dark forest east,
Seems on thy lifted forehead to increase,
Lethe and Eunoe—the remembered dream 35
And the forgotten sorrow—bring at last
That perfect pardon which is perfect peace.

5

I lift mine eyes, and all the windows blaze
With forms of Saints and holy men who died,
Here martyred and hereafter glorified;
And the great Rose upon its leaves displays
Christ's Triumph, and the angelic roundelays,
With splendor upon splendor multiplied; 45
And Beatrice again at Dante's side
No more rebukes, but smiles her words of
praise.

And then the organ sounds, and unseen choirs
Sing the old Latin hymns of peace and love 50
And benedictions of the Holy Ghost;
And the melodious bells among the spires

O'er all the house-tops and through heaven
above

Proclaim the elevation of the Host!

6

O star of morning and of liberty!
O bringer of the light, whose splendor shines
Above the darkness of the Apennines,
Forerunner of the day that is to be!
The voices of the city and the sea,
The voices of the mountains and the pines,
Repeat thy song, till the familiar hues
Are footpaths for the thought of Italy!
Thy flame is blown abroad from all the
heights, 15
Through all the nations, and a sound is heard,
As of a mighty wind, and men devout,
Strangers of Rome, and the new proselytes,
In their own language hear the wondrous
word,
And many are amazed and many doubt.

CHAUCER

An old man in a lodge within a park;
The chamber walls depicted all around
With portraitures of huntsman, hawk, and
hound,
And the hurt deer. He listeneth to the lark,
30 Whose song comes with the sunshine through
the dark
Of painted glass in leaden lattice bound;
He listeneth and he laugheth at the sound,
Then writeth in a book like any clerk.
35 He is the poet of the dawn, who wrote
The Canterbury Tales, and his old age
Made beautiful with song; and as I read
I hear the crowing cock, I hear the note
Of lark and linnet, and from every page
40 Rise odors of ploughed field or flowery mead.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER*

ASTRÆA

Jove means to settle
Astræa in her seat again,
And let down from his golden chain
An age of better metal

BEN JONSON.

* For introductory sketch see I, 148. Whittier's
poems are reprinted by permission of the publisher,
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Where they in battle died.
And the sound of that mournful song
Goes through me with a thrill:
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Across the school-boy's brain;
The song and the silence in the heart,
That in part are prophecies, and in part
Are longings wild and vain.
And the voice of that fitful song
Sings on, and is never still:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts.'

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There are dreams that cannot die;
There are thoughts that make the strong heart
weak,
And bring a pallor into the cheek,
And a mist before the eye.
And the words of that fatal song
Come over me like a chill:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts.'

Strange to me now are the forms I meet
When I visit the dear old town;
But the native air is pure and sweet,
And the trees that o'ershadow each well- 45
known street,
As they balance up and down,
Are singing the beautiful song,
Are sighing and whispering still:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts.'

And Deering's Woods are fresh and fair,
And with joy that is almost pain
My heart goes back to wander there,
And among the dreams of the days that were,
I find my lost youth again.
And the strange and beautiful song,
The groves are repeating it still:
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DIVINA COMMEDIA¹

1

15 Oft have I seen at some cathedral door
A laborer, pausing in the dust and heat,
Lay down his burden, and with reverent feet
Enter, and cross himself, and on the floor
Kneel to repeat his paternoster o'er;
20 Far off the noises of the world retreat;
The loud vociferations of the street
Become an undistinguishable roar.
So, as I enter here from day to day,
And leave my burden at this minster gate,
25 Kneeling in prayer, and not ashamed to pray,
The tumult of the time disconsolate
To inarticulate murmurs dies away,
While the eternal ages watch and wait.

2

How strange the sculptures that adorn these
towers!
This crowd of statues, in whose folded sleeves
Birds build their nests; while canopied with
35 leaves
Parvis and portal bloom like trellised bowers,
And the vast minster seems a cross of flowers!
But fiends and dragons on the gargoyled eaves
Watch the dead Christ between the living
40 thieves,
And, underneath, the traitor Judas lowers!
Ah! from what agonies of heart and brain,
What exultations trampling on despair,
What tenderness, what tears, what hate of
wrong,
What passionate outcry of a soul in pain,
Uprose this poem of the earth and air,
This mediæval miracle of song!

¹ Longfellow's translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy* is divided into three parts, each of which is preceded and followed by one sonnet from this sequence.

I walk with bare, hushed feet the ground
 Ye tread with boldness shod;
 I dare not fix with mete and bound
 The love and power of God.

Ye praise his justice, even such
 His pitying love I deem;
 Ye seek a king; I fain would touch
 The robe that hath no seam.

Ye see the curse which overbroods
 A world of pain and loss,
 I hear our Lord's beatitudes
 And prayer upon the cross.

More than your schoolmen teach, within
 Myself, alas! I know.
 Too dark ye cannot paint the sin,
 Too small the ment show.

I bow my forehead to the dust,
 I veil mine eyes for shame,
 And urge, in trembling self-distrust,
 A prayer without a claim.

I see the wrong that round me lies,
 I feel the guilt within,
 I hear, with groan and travail-cries,
 The world confess its sin.

Yet, in the maddening maze of things,
 And tossed by storm and flood,
 To one fixed trust my spirit clings;
 I know that God is good!

Not mine to look where cherubim
 And seraphs may not see,
 But nothing can be good in Him
 Which evil is in me.

The wrong that pains my soul below
 I dare not throne above,
 I know not of his hate,—I know
 His goodness and his love.

I dimly guess from blessings known
 Of greater out of sight,
 And, with the chastened Psalmist, own
 His judgments too are right.

I long for household voices gone,
 For vanished smiles I long,

But God hath led my dear ones on,
 And He can do no wrong.

I know not what the future hath
 Of marvel or surprise,
 Assured alone that life and death
 His mercy underlies.

And if my heart and flesh are weak
 To bear an untried pain,
 The bruised reed He will not break,
 But strengthen and sustain.

No offering of my own I have,
 Nor works my faith to prove;
 I can but give the gifts He gave,
 And plead his love for love.

And so beside the Silent Sea
 I wait the muffled oar;
 No harm from Him can come to me
 On ocean or on shore.

I know not where his islands lift
 Their fronded palms in air;
 I only know I cannot drift
 Beyond his love and care.

O brothers! if my faith is vain,
 If hopes like these betray,
 Pray for me that my feet may gain
 The sure and safer way.

And Thou, O Lord! by whom are seen
 Thy creatures as they be,
 Forgive me if too close I lean
 My human heart on Thee!

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON*

THE LOTOS-EATERS

"Courage!" he¹ said, and pointed toward the
 land,

* For introductory sketch see I, 150. The following selections are from Tennyson's *Poetical Works*. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

¹ Ulysses and his men visited the lotos-eaters on the long way home from Troy. See *Odyssey*, Bk. IX.

Where they in battle died.
And the sound of that mournful song
Goes through me with a thrill:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts.'

I can see the breezy dome of groves,
The shadows of Deering's Woods;
And the friendships old and the early loves 10
Come back with a Sabbath sound, as of doves
In quiet neighborhoods.
And the verse of that sweet old song,
It flutters and murmurs still:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
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I remember the gleams and glooms that dart
Across the school-boy's brain;
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Strange to me now are the forms I meet
When I visit the dear old town;
But the native air is pure and sweet,
And the trees that o'ershadow each well- 45
known street,
As they balance up and down,
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And Deering's Woods are fresh and fair,
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Enter, and cross himself, and on the floor
Kneel to repeat his paternoster o'er;
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Become an undistinguishable roar.
So, as I enter here from day to day,
And leave my burden at this minster gate,
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The tumult of the time disconsolate
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How strange the sculptures that adorn these
towers!
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35 leaves
Parvis and portal bloom like trellised bowers,
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Watch the dead Christ between the living
40 thieves,
And, underneath, the traitor Judas lowers!
Ah! from what agonies of heart and brain,
What exultations trampling on despair,
What tenderness, what tears, what hate of
wrong,
What passionate outcry of a soul in pain,
Uprose this poem of the earth and air,
This mediæval miracle of song!

¹ Longfellow's translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy* is divided into three parts, each of which is preceded and followed by one sonnet from this sequence.

Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo! sweetened with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night,
All its allotted length of days
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

4

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
Death is the end of life; ah, why
Should life all labor be?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last?
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?
All things have rest, and ripen toward the
grave
In silence—ripen, fall and cease.
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or
dreamful ease.

5

How sweet it were, hearing the downward
stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream!
To dream and dream, like vonder amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the
height;
To hear each other's whispered speech,
Eating the Lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray;
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;
To muse and brood and live again in memory,
With those old faces of our infancy
Heaped over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of
brass!

6

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives

And their warm tears; but all hath suffered
change;

For surely now our household hearths are
cold,

5 Our sons inherit us, our looks are strange,
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy
Or else the island princes³ over-bold
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
Before them of the ten-years' war in Troy,
10 And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things
Is there confusion in the little isle?

Let what is broken so remain.

The Gods are hard to reconcile;

'Tis hard to settle order once again.

15 There is confusion worse than death,
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labor unto aged breath,
Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-
20 stars.

7

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,
How sweet (while warm airs hush us, blowing
25 lowly)

With half-dropt eyelids still,
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing
slowly

30 His waters from the purple hill—
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined
vine—

To watch the emerald-colored water falling
35 Thro' many a woven acanthus-wreath divine!
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling
brine,

Only to hear were sweet, stretched out be-
neath the pine.

8

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak,
The Lotos blows by every winding creek;
All day the wind breathes low with mellow
45 tone;

Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow
Lotos-dust is blown.

We have had enough of action, and of mo-
50 tion we,

³ suitors for hand of Penelope, wife of Ulysses,
the latter believed lost at sea.

Where they in battle died.
And the sound of that mournful song
Goes through me with a thrill:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts.'

I can see the breezy dome of groves,
The shadows of Deering's Woods;
And the friendships old and the early loves 10
Come back with a Sabbath sound, as of doves
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Strange to me now are the forms I meet
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How strange the sculptures that adorn these
towers!
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Parvis and portal bloom like trellised bowers,
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Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge,
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awakened birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more

Dear as remembered kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feigned
On lips that are for others, deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret,
O Death in Life, the days that are no more.

3

Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white,
Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font
The fire-fly wakens; waken thou with me.

Now droops the milkwhite peacock like a ghost,
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

Now lies the Earth all Danae¹ to the stars,
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,
And slips into the bosom of the lake.
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip
Into my bosom and be lost in me.

4

Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height:
What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang)
In height and cold, the splendor of the hills?
But cease to move so near the heavens, and cease

To glide a sunbeam by the blasted pine,
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire;

¹ Greek legendary maiden visited by Zeus in the form of a shower of gold.

And come, for Love is of the valley, come,
For Love is of the valley, come thou down
And find him; by the happy threshold, he,
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,
Or red with spiced purple of the vats,
Or foxlike in the vine, nor cares to walk
With Death and Morning on the Silver Horns,
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine
Nor find him dropt upon the fiths of ice,
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors.
But follow, let the torrent dance thee down
To find him in the valley; let the wild
Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone, and leave
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill
Then thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,
That like a broken purpose waste in air.
So waste not thou, but come, for all the vales
Await thee, azure pillars of the hearth
Arise to thee, the children call, and I
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet;
Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees.

FROM *In Memoriam* A. H. H.¹

I

I held in truth, with him² who sings
To one clear harp in divers tones,
That men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years
And find in loss a gain to match?
Or reach a hand thro' time to catch
The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drowned,
Let darkness keep her raven gloss.
Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,
To dance with Death, to beat the ground,

² mountain peaks.

¹ Arthur Henry Hallam was Tennyson's close friend at Cambridge. Engaged to Tennyson's sister Emily, he died suddenly in Vienna in 1833. The poet wrote *In Memoriam* in sections, the whole appearing seventeen years later.

² perhaps Goethe.

Where they in battle died.
And the sound of that mournful song
Goes through me with a thrill:
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And the thoughts of youth are long, long
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How strange the sculptures that adorn these
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O, yet we trust that somehow good
 Will be the final goal of ill,
 To pangs of nature, sins of will,
 Defects of doubt, and taints of blood,

 That nothing walks with aimless feet;
 That not one life shall be destroyed,
 Or cast as rubbish to the void,
 When God hath made the pile complete,

That not a worm is cloven in vain,
 That not a moth with vain desire
 Is shriveled in a fruitless fire,
 Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything,
 I can but trust that good shall fall
 At last—far off—at last, to all,
 And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream; but what am I?
 An infant crying in the night,
 An infant crying for the light,
 And with no language but a cry.

55

The wish, that of the living whole
 No life may fail beyond the grave,
 Derives it not from what we have
 The likest God within the soul?

Are God and Nature then at strife,
 That Nature lends such evil dreams?
 So careful of the type she seems,
 So careless of the single life,

That I, considering everywhere
 Her secret meaning in her deeds,
 And finding that of fifty seeds
 She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,
 And falling with my weight of cares
 Upon the great world's altar-stairs
 That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
 And gather dust and chaff, and call
 To what I feel is Lord of all,
 And faintly trust the larger hope.

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
 The flying cloud, the frosty light:
 5 The year is dying in the night,
 Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
 Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
 10 The year is going, let him go,
 Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
 For those that here we see no more;
 15 Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
 Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
 And ancient forms of party strife;
 20 Ring in the nobler modes of life,
 With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
 The faithless coldness of the times;
 25 Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
 But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
 The civic slander and the spite;
 30 Ring in the love of truth and right,
 Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
 Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
 35 Ring out the thousand wars of old,
 Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
 The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
 40 Ring out the darkness of the land,
 Ring in the Christ that is to be.

126

Love is and was my lord and king,
 45 And in his presence I attend
 To hear the tidings of my friend,
 Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my king and lord,
 50 And will be, tho' as yet I keep
 Within his court on earth, and sleep
 Encompassed by his faithful guard,

Where they in battle died.
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 And, underneath, the traitor Judas lowers!
 Ah! from what agonies of heart and brain,
 What exultations trampling on despair,
 What tenderness, what tears, what hate of
 wrong,
 What passionate outcry of a soul in pain,
 Uprose this poem of the earth and air,
 This mediæval miracle of song!

50 ¹ Longfellow's translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy* is divided into three parts, each of which is preceded and followed by one sonnet from this sequence.

HOME-THOUGHTS FROM
ABROAD

Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brush-wood
sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard
bough
In England—now!
And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swal-
lows!
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the
hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's
edge—
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song
twice over,
Lest you should think he never could re-
capture
The first fine careless rapture!
And though the fields look rough with hoary
dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower
—Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

THE LAST RIDE TOGETHER

I said—Then, dearest, since 'tis so,
Since now at length my fate I know,
Since nothing all my love avails,
Since all, my life seemed meant for, fails,
Since this was written and needs must be—
My whole heart rises up to bless
Your name in pride and thankfulness!
Take back the hope you gave,—I claim
Only a memory of the same,
—And this beside, if you will not blame,
Your leave for one more last ride with me.

My mistress bent that brow of hers;
Those deep dark eyes where pride demurs
When pity would be softening through,
Fixed me a breathing-while or two
With life or death in the balance: right!

The blood replenished me again;
My last thought was at least not vain;
I and my mistress, side by side
Shall be together, breathe and ride,
5 So, one day more am I deified.
Who knows but the world may end to-morrow!

Hush! if you saw some western cloud
All billowy bosomed, over-bowed
10 By many benedictions—sun's
And moon's and evening-star's at once—
And so, you, looking and loving best,
Conscious grew, your passion drew
Cloud, sunset, moonrise, star-shine too,
15 Down on you, near and yet more near,
Till flesh must fade for heaven was here!—
Thus leant she and lingered—joy and fear!
Thus lay she a moment on my breast.

20 Then we began to ride, My soul
Smoothed itself out, a long-cramped scroll
Freshening and fluttering in the wind.
Past hopes already lay behind.

What need to strive with a life away?
25 Had I said that, had I done this,
So might I gain, so might I miss.
Might she have loved me? just as well
She might have hated, who can tell!
Where had I been now if the worst befell?
30 And here we are riding, she and I.

Fail I alone, in words and deeds?
Why, all men strive, and who succeeds?
We rode; it seemed my spirit flew,
35 Saw other regions, cities new,
As the world rushed by on either side.
I thought,—All labor, yet no less
Bear up beneath their unsuccess.
Look at the end of work, contrast
40 The petty done, the undone vast,
This present of theirs with the hopeful past!
I hoped she would love me; here we ride.

What hand and brain went ever paired?
45 What heart alike conceived and dared?
What act proved all its thought had been?
What will but felt the fleshly screen?
We ride and I see her bosom heave.
There's many a crown for who can reach.
50 Ten lines, a statesman's life in each!
The flag stuck on a heap of bones,
A soldier's doing! what atones?

Where they in battle died.
And the sound of that mournful song
Goes through me with a thrill:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts.'

I can see the breezy dome of groves,
The shadows of Deering's Woods;
And the friendships old and the early loves 10
Come back with a Sabbath sound, as of doves
In quiet neighborhoods.
And the verse of that sweet old song,
It flutters and murmurs still:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
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thoughts.'

I remember the gleams and glooms that dart
Across the school-boy's brain;
The song and the silence in the heart,
That in part are prophecies, and in part
Are longings wild and vain.
And the voice of that fitful song
Sings on, and is never still:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
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thoughts.'

There are things of which I may not speak; 30
There are dreams that cannot die;
There are thoughts that make the strong heart
weak,
And bring a pallor into the cheek,
And a mist before the eye.
And the words of that fatal song
Come over me like a chill:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts.'

Strange to me now are the forms I meet
When I visit the dear old town;
But the native air is pure and sweet,
And the trees that o'ershadow each well- 45
known street,
As they balance up and down,
Are singing the beautiful song,
Are sighing and whispering still:
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And Deering's Woods are fresh and fair,
And with joy that is almost pain
My heart goes back to wander there,
And among the dreams of the days that were,
I find my lost youth again.
And the strange and beautiful song,
The groves are repeating it still:
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15 Oft have I seen at some cathedral door
A laborer, pausing in the dust and heat,
Lay down his burden, and with reverent feet
Enter, and cross himself, and on the floor
Kneel to repeat his paternoster o'er;
20 Far off the noises of the world retreat;
The loud vociferations of the street
Become an undistinguishable roar.
So, as I enter here from day to day,
And leave my burden at this minster gate,
25 Kneeling in prayer, and not ashamed to pray,
The tumult of the time disconsolate
To inarticulate murmurs dies away,
While the eternal ages watch and wait.

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How strange the sculptures that adorn these
towers!
This crowd of statues, in whose folded sleeves
Birds build their nests; while canopied with
35 leaves
Parvis and portal bloom like trellised bowers,
And the vast minster seems a cross of flowers!
But fiends and dragons on the gargoyled eaves
Watch the dead Christ between the living
40 thieves,
And, underneath, the traitor Judas lowers!
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What exultations trampling on despair,
What tenderness, what tears, what hate of
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What passionate outcry of a soul in pain,
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In a day he leaps complete with a few strong
 April suns.
 'Mid the sharp short emerald wheat, scarce
 risen three fingers well,
 The wild tulip, at end of its tube, blows out 5
 its great red bell
 Like a thin clear bubble of blood, for the
 children to pick and sell.

Is it ever hot in the square? There's a fountain 10
 to spout and splash!
 In the shade it sings and springs, in the shine
 such foambows flash
 On the horses with curling fish-tails, that
 prance and paddle and pash 15
 Round the lady atop in her conch—fifty gazers
 do not abash,
 Though all that she wears is some weeds
 round her waist in a sort of sash.

All the year long at the villa, nothing to see
 though you linger,
 Except yon cypress that points like death's
 lean lifted forefinger.
 Some think fireflies pretty, when they mix in 25
 the corn and mingle,
 Or thrud the stinking hemp till the stalks of
 it seem a-tingle.
 Late August or early September, the stunning
 cicala is shrill, 30
 And the bees keep their tiresome whine round
 the resinous firs on the hill.
 Enough of the seasons.—I spare you the
 months of the fever and chill.

Ere you open your eyes in the city, the blessed
 church-bells begm:
 No sooner the bells leave off than the dili-
 gence rattles in:
 You get the pick of the news, and it costs you 40
 never a pin.

By and by there's the travelling doctor gives
 pills, lets blood, draws teeth;
 Or the Pulcinello-trumpet breaks up the mar-
 ket beneath. 45
 At the post-office such a scene-picture—the
 new play, piping hot!
 And a notice how, only this morning, three
 liberal thieves were shot.
 Above it, behold the Archbishop's most 50
 fatherly of rebukes,
 And beneath, with his crown and his lion,

some little new law of the Duke's!
 Or a sonnet with flowery mauge, to the
 Reverend Don So-and-so,
 Who is Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarca, Saint
 Jerome, and Cicero,
 "And moreover," (the sonnet goes rhyming,)
 "the skirts of Saint Paul has reached,
 Having preached us those six Lent-lectures
 more unctuous than ever he preached."
 Noon strikes,—here sweeps the procession! our
 Lady borne smiling and smart
 With a pink gauze gown all spangles, and
 seven swords stuck in her heart!
Bang-whang-whang goes the drum, *tootle-te-*
tootle the life, 15
 No keeping one's haunches still: it's the
 greatest pleasure in life.

But bless you, it's dear—it's dear! fowls, wine,
 at double the rate.
 They have clapped a new tax upon salt, and
 what oil pays passing the gate
 It's horror to think of. And so, the villa for
 me, not the city!
 Beggars can scarcely be choosers: but still, ah,
 the pity, the pity!
 Look, two and two go the priests, then the
 monks with cowls and sandals,
 And the penitents dressed in white shifts,
 a-holding the yellow candles, 30
 One, he carries a flag up straight, and another
 a cross with handles,
 And the Duke's guard brings up the rear, for
 the better prevention of scandals:
 35 *Bang-whang-whang* goes the drum, *tootle-te-*
tootle the life.
 Oh, a day in the city-square, there is no such
 pleasure in life!

PROSPICE¹

Fear death?—to feel the fog in my throat,
 The mist in my face,
 When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
 I am nearing the place,
 The power of the night, the press of the storm,
 The post of the foe;
 Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible
 form,
 Yet the strong man must go:

¹ Look forward.

Where they in battle died.
And the sound of that mournful song
Goes through me with a thrill:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts.'

I can see the breezy dome of groves,
The shadows of Deering's Woods;
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Strange to me now are the forms I meet
When I visit the dear old town;
But the native air is pure and sweet,
And the trees that o'ershadow each well- 45
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As they balance up and down,
Are singing the beautiful song,
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So, as I enter here from day to day,
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my heart, the passing of blood and air through my lungs,	Always a knit of identity, always distinction, always a breed of life.
The sniff of green leaves and dry leaves, and of the shore and dark-color'd sea-rocks, and of hay in the barn,	To elaborate is no avail, learn'd and unlearn'd 5 feel that it is so.
The sound of the belch'd words of my voice loos'd to the eddies of the wind,	Sure as the most certain sure, plumb in the up- rights, well center-tied, braced in the beams,
A few light kisses, a few embraces, a reaching around of arms,	10 Stout as a horse, affectionate, haughty, electri- cal.
The play of shine and shade on the trees as the supple boughs wag,	I and this mystery here we stand
The delight alone or in the rush of the streets, or along the fields and hill-sides,	Clear and sweet is my soul, and clear and sweet is all that is not my soul.
The feeling of health, the full-moon trill, the song of me rising from bed and meeting 15 the sun.	Lack one lacks both, and the unseen is proved by the seen,
Have you reckon'd a thousand acres much? have you reckon'd the earth much?	Till that becomes unseen and receives proof in its turn.
Have you practic'd so long to learn to read?	
Have you felt so proud to get at the meaning 20 of poems?	Showing the best and dividing it from the worst age vexes age,
Stop this day and night with me and you shall possess the origin of all poems,	Knowing the perfect fitness and equanimity of things, while they discuss I am silent, and go bathe and admire myself.
You shall possess the good of the earth and sun, (there are millions of suns left,) 25	
You shall no longer take things at second or third hand, nor look through the eyes of the dead, nor feed on the specters in books,	Welcome is every organ and attribute of me, and of any man hearty and clean,
You shall not look through my eyes either, nor 30 take things from me,	Not an inch nor a particle of an inch is vile, and none shall be less familiar than the rest.
You shall listen to all sides and filter them from your self.	I am satisfied—I see, dance, laugh, sing; As the hugging and loving bed-fellow sleeps at 35 my side through the night, and withdraws at the peep of the day with stealthy tread, Leaving me baskets cover'd with white towels swelling the house with their plenty,
I have heard what the talkers were talking, the talk of the beginning and the end, But I do not talk of the beginning or the end	Shall I postpone my acceptation and realiza- 40 tion and scream at my eyes, That they turn from gazing after and down the road,
There was never any more inception than there is now,	And forthwith cipher and show to me a cent, Exactly the value of one and exactly the value 45 of two, and which is ahead?
Nor any more youth or age than there is now, And will never be any more perfection than there is now,	
Nor any more heaven or hell than there is now	
Urge and urge and urge, Always the procreant urge of the world.	Trippers and askers surround me,
Out of the dimness opposite equals advance, 50 always substance and increase, always sex,	People I meet, the effect upon me of my early life or the ward and city I live in, or the nation,

Where they in battle died.
And the sound of that mournful song
Goes through me with a thrill:
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So, as I enter here from day to day,
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How strange the sculptures that adorn these
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I hasten to inform him or her it is just as lucky
to die, and I know it.

I pass death with the dying and birth with the
new-wash'd babe, and am not contain'd
between my hat and boots,
And peruse manifold objects, no two alike and
every one good,
The earth good and the stars good, and their
adjuncts all good.

I am not an earth nor an adjunct of an earth,
I am the mate and companion of people, all
just as immortal and fathomless as myself,
(They do not know how immortal, but I
know.)

Every kind for itself and its own, for me mine
male and female,
For me those that have been boys and that
love women,
For me the man that is proud and feels how it
stings to be slighted,
For me the sweet-heart and the old maid, for
me mothers and the mothers of mothers,
For me lips that have smiled, eyes that have
shed tears,
For me children and the begetters of children.

Undrape! you are not guilty to me, nor stale
nor discarded,
I see through the broadcloth and gingham
whether or no,
And am around, tenacious, acquisitive, tireless,
and cannot be shaken away.

8

The little one sleeps in its cradle,
I lift the gauze and look a long time, and
silently brush away flies with my hand.

The youngster and the red-faced girl turn
aside up the bushy hill,
I peeringly view them from the top.

The suicide sprawls on the bloody floor of the
bedroom,
I witness the corpse with its dabbled hair, I
note where the pistol has fallen.

The blab of the pave, tires of carts, sluff of
boot-soles, talk of the promenaders,

The heavy omnibus, the driver with his inter-
rogating thumb, the clank of the shod
horses on the granite floor,

The snow-sleighs, clinking, shouted jokes, pelts
of snow-balls,

The hurrahs for popular favorites, the fury of
rous'd mobs,

The flap of the curtain'd litter, a sick man in-
side borne to the hospital,

10 The meeting of enemies, the sudden oath, the
blows and fall,

The excited crowd, the policeman with his star
quickly working his passage to the centre
of the crowd,

15 The impassive stones that receive and return
so many echoes,

What groans of over-fed or half-starv'd who
fall sunstruck or in fits,

What exclamations of women taken suddenly
who hurry home and give birth to babes,

20 What living and buried speech is always vi-
brating here, what howls restrain'd by de-
corum,

Arrests of criminals, slights, adulterous offers
made, acceptances, rejections with con-
vex lips,

I mind them or the show or resonance of them
—I come and I depart.

30

9

The big doors of the country barn stand open
and ready,

The dried grass of the harvest-time loads the
slow-drawn wagon,

35 The clear light plays on the brown gray and
green intertinged,

The armfuls are pack'd to the sagging mow.

40 I am there, I help, I came stretch'd atop of the
load,

I felt its soft jolts, one leg reclined on the other,
I jump from the cross-beams and seize the
clover and timothy,

45 And roll head over heels and tangle my hair
full of wisps.

10

50 Alone far in the wilds and mountains I hunt,
Wandering amazed at my own lightness and
glee,

Where they in battle died.
And the sound of that mournful song
Goes through me with a thrill:
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- The pilot seizes the king-pin, he heaves down
 with a strong arm,
 The mate stands braced in the whale-boat,
 lance and harpoon are ready,
 The duck-shooter walks by silent and cautious
 stretches,
 The deacons are ordain'd with cross'd hands at
 the altar,
 The spinning-girl retreats and advances to the
 hum of the big wheel,
 The farmer stops by the bars as he walks on a
 First-day loafe and looks at the oats and
 rye,
 The lunatic is carried at last to the asylum a
 confirm'd case,
 (He will never sleep any more as he did in the
 cot in his mother's bed-room,)
 The jour printer with gray head and gaunt
 jaws works at his case,
 He turns his quid of tobacco while his eye
 blurr with the manuscript,
 The malform'd limbs are tied to the surgeon's
 table,
 What is removed drops horridly in a pail,
 The quadrone girl is sold at the auction-stand,
 the drunkard nods by the bar-room stove,
 The machinist rolls up his sleeves, the police-
 man travels his beat, the gate-keeper
 marks who pass,
 The young fellow drives the express-wagon, (I
 love him, though I do not know him;)
 The half-breed straps on his light boots to
 compete in the race,
 The western turkey-shooting draws old and
 young, some lean on their rifles, some sit
 on logs,
 Out from the crowd steps the marksman, takes
 his position, levels his piece;
 The groups of newly-come immigrants cover
 the wharf or levee,
 As the woolly-pates hoe in the sugar-field, the
 overseer views them from his saddle,
 The bugle calls in the ball-room, the gentle-
 men run for their partners, the dancers
 bow to each other,
 The youth lies awake in the cedar-roof'd gar-
 ret and harks to the musical rain,
 The Wolverine sets traps on the creek that
 helps fill the Huron,
 The squaw wrapt in her yellow-hemm'd cloth
 is offering moccasins and bead-bags for
 sale.
- The connoisseur peers along the exhibition-gal-
 lery with half-shut eyes bent sideways,
 As the deck-hands make fast the steamboat the
 plank is thrown for the shore-going pas-
 sengers,
 The young sister holds out the skein while the
 elder sister winds it off in a ball, and stops
 now and then for the knots,
 The one-year wife is recovering and happy
 having a week ago borne her first child,
 The clean-hair'd Yankee girl works with her
 sewing-machine or in the factory or mill,
 The paving-man leans on his two-handed ram-
 mer, the reporter's lead flies swiftly over
 the note-book, the sign-painter is lettering
 with blue and gold,
 The canal boy trots on the tow-path, the book-
 keeper counts at his desk, the shoemaker
 waxes his thread,
 The conductor beats time for the band and all
 the performers follow him,
 The child is baptized, the convert is making his
 first professions,
 The regatta is spread on the bay, the race is
 begun, (how the white sails sparkle!)
 The drover watching his drove sings out to
 them that would stray,
 The pedler sweats with his pack on his back,
 (the purchaser higgling about the odd
 cent;)
 The bride unrumple her white dress, the min-
 ute-hand of the clock moves slowly,
 The opium-eater reclines with rigid head and
 just-open'd lips,
 The prostitute draggles her shawl, her bonnet
 bobs on her tipsy and pimpled neck,
 The crowd laugh at her blackguard oaths, the
 men jeer and wink to each other,
 (Miserable! I do not laugh at your oaths nor
 jeer you;)
 The President holding a cabinet council is sur-
 rounded by the great Secretaries,
 On the piazza walk three matrons stately and
 friendly with twined arms,
 The crew of the fish-smack pack repeated lay-
 ers of halibut in the hold,
 The Missourian crosses the plains toting his
 wares and his cattle,
 As the fare-collector goes through the train he
 gives notice by the jingling of loose
 change,
 The floor-men are laying the floor, the tanners

Where they in battle died.
And the sound of that mournful song
Goes through me with a thrill:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts.'

I can see the breezy dome of groves,
The shadows of Deering's Woods;
And the friendships old and the early loves 10
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I remember the gleams and glooms that dart
Across the school-boy's brain;
The song and the silence in the heart,
That in part are prophecies, and in part
Are longings wild and vain.
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Sings on, and is never still:
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There are dreams that cannot die;
There are thoughts that make the strong heart
weak,
And bring a pallor into the cheek,
And a mist before the eye.
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Strange to me now are the forms I meet
When I visit the dear old town;
But the native air is pure and sweet,
And the trees that o'ershadow each well- 45
known street,
As they balance up and down,
Are singing the beautiful song,
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1

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Lay down his burden, and with reverent feet
Enter, and cross himself, and on the floor
Kneel to repeat his paternoster o'er;
20 Far off the noises of the world retreat;
The loud vociferations of the street
Become an undistinguishable roar.
So, as I enter here from day to day,
And leave my burden at this minster gate,
25 Kneeling in prayer, and not ashamed to pray,
The tumult of the time disconsolate
To inarticulate murmurs dies away,
While the eternal ages watch and wait.

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How strange the sculptures that adorn these
towers!
This crowd of statues, in whose folded sleeves
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35 leaves
Parvis and portal bloom like trellised bowers,
And the vast minster seems a cross of flowers!
But fiends and dragons on the gargoyled eaves
Watch the dead Christ between the living
40 thieves,
And, underneath, the traitor Judas lowers!
Ah! from what agonies of heart and brain,
What exultations trampling on despair,
What tenderness, what tears, what hate of
wrong,
What passionate outcry of a soul in pain,
Uprose this poem of the earth and air,
This mediæval miracle of song!

¹ Longfellow's translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy* is divided into three parts, each of which is preceded and followed by one sonnet from this sequence.

I also say it is good to fall, battles are lost in the same spirit in which they are won.	How is it I extract strength from the beef I eat?
I beat and pound for the dead, I blow through my embouchures my loudest and gayest for them.	What is a man anyhow? what am I? what are you?
Vivas to those who have fail'd! And to those whose war-vessels sank in the sea!	All I mark as my own you shall offset it with your own, Else it were time lost listening to me.
And to those themselves who sank in the sea! And to all generals that lost engagements, and all overcome heroes!	I do not snivel that snivel the world over, That months are vacuums and the ground but wallow and filth.
And the numberless unknown heroes equal to the greatest heroes known!	15 Whimpering and truckling fold with powders for invalids, conformity goes to the fourth- remov'd.
19 This is the meal equally set, this the meat for natural hunger. It is for the wicked just the same as the right- eous, I make appointments with all, I will not have a single person slighted or left away, The kept-woman, sponger, thief, are hereby in- vited. There shall be no difference between them and the rest.	I wear my hat as I please indoors or out. 20 Why should I pray? why should I venerate and be ceremonious? Having pried through the strata, analyzed to a hair, counsel'd with doctors and calcul- lated close, 25 I find no sweeter fat than sticks to my own bones.
This is the press of a bashful hand, this the float and odor of hair, This the touch of my lips to yours, this the murmur of yearning, This the far-off depth and height reflecting my own face, This the thoughtful merge of myself, and the outlet again. Do you guess I have some intricate purpose? Well I have, for the Fourth-month showers have, and the mica on the side of the rock has.	In all people I see myself, none more and not one a barleycorn less, 30 And the good or bad I say of myself I say of them. I know I am solid and sound, To me the converging objects of the universe perpetually flow, 35 All are written to me, and I must get what the writing means. I know I am deathless, 40 I know this orbit of mine cannot be swept by a carpenter's compass, I know I shall not pass like a child's carlacue cut with a burnt stick at night.
Do you take it I would astonish? Does the daylight astonish? does the early red- start twittering through the woods? Do I astonish more than they? This hour I tell things in confidence, I might not tell everybody, but I will tell you.	45 I know I am august, I do not trouble my spirit to vindicate itself or be understood, I see that the elementary laws never apologize, (I reckon I behave no prouder than the level I 50 plant my house by, after all.) I exist as I am, that is enough,
20 Who goes there? hankering, gross, mystical, nude;	

Where they in battle died.
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I stand indifferent,
My gait is no fault-finder's or rejecter's gait,
I moisten the roots of all that has grown.

Did you fear some scrofula out of the unflag- 5
ging pregnancy?

Did you guess the celestial laws are yet to be
work'd over and rectified?

I find one side a balance and the antipodal side 10
a balance,

Soft doctrine as steady help as stable doctrine,
Thoughts and deeds of the present our rouse
and early start.

This minute that comes to me over the past 15
decillions,

There is no better than it and now.

What behaved well in the past or behaves well
to-day is not such a wonder, 20

The wonder is always and always how there
can be a mean man or an infidel.

25

Dazzling and tremendous how quick the sun- 25
rise would kill me,

If I could not now and always send sun-rise
out of me.

We also ascend dazzling and tremendous as 30
the sun,

We found our own O my soul in the calm and
cool of the daybreak.

My voice goes after what my eyes cannot 35
reach,

With the twirl of my tongue I encompass
worlds and volumes of worlds.

Speech is the twin of my vision, it is unequal 40
to measure itself,

It provokes me forever, it says sarcastically,
*Walt you contain enough, why don't you let it
out then?*

Come now I will not be tantalized, you con-
ceive too much of articulation,

Do you not know O speech how the buds be-
neath you are folded?

Waiting in gloom, protected by frost, 50
The dirt receding before my prophetic
screams,

I underlying causes to balance them at last,
My knowledge my live parts, it keeping tally
with the meaning of all things,

Happiness, (which whoever hears me let him
or her set out in search of this day.)

My final merit I refuse you, I refuse putting
from me what I really am,

Encompass worlds, but never try to encompass
me,

I crowd your sleekest and best by simply look-
ing toward you.

Writing and talking do not prove me,

I carry the plenum of proof and every thing
else in my face,

With the hush of my lips I wholly confound
the skeptic.

26

Now I will do nothing but listen,
To accue what I hear into this song, to let
sounds contribute toward it.

•

I hear bravuras of birds, bustle of growing
wheat, gossip of flames, clack of sticks
cooking my meals,

I hear the sound I love, the sound of the hu-
man voice,

I hear all sounds running together, combined,
fused or following,

Sounds of the city and sounds out of the city,
sounds of the day and night,

Talkative young ones to those that like them,
the loud laugh of work-people at their
meals,

The angry base of disjointed friendship, the
faint tones of the sick,

The judge with hands tight to the desk, his
pallid lips pronouncing a death-sentence,

The heave'e'yo of stevedores unlading ships by
the wharves, the refrain of the anchor-
lifters,

45 The ring of alarm-bells, the cry of fire, the
whirr of swift-streaking engines and hose-
carts with premonitory tinkles and color'd
lights,

The steam-whistle, the solid roll of the train of
approaching cars,

The slow march play'd at the head of the as-
sociation marching two and two,

Where they in battle died.
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thoughts.'

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How strange the sculptures that adorn these
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What exultations trampling on despair,
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What passionate outcry of a soul in pain,
Uprose this poem of the earth and air,
This mediæval miracle of song!

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It is time to explain myself—let us stand up.

What is known I strip away,
I launch all men and women forward with
me into the Unknown.
The clock indicates the moment—but what
does eternity indicate?

We have thus far exhausted trillions of winters
and summers,
There are trillions ahead, and trillions ahead of
them.

Births have brought us richness and variety,
And other births will bring us richness and
variety.

I do not call one greater and one smaller,
That which fills its period and place is equal to
any.

Were mankind murderous or jealous upon you,
my brother, my sister?

I am sorry for you, they are not murderous or
jealous upon me,

All has been gentle with me, I keep no account
with lamentation,
(What have I to do with lamentation?)

I am an acme of things accomplish'd, and I an
encloser of things to be.

My feet strike an apex of the apices of the
stairs,

On every step bunches of ages, and larger
bunches between the steps,

All below duly travel'd, and still I mount and
mount.

Rise after rise bow the phantoms behind me,
Afar down I see the huge first Nothing, I
know I was even there,

I waited unseen and always, and slept through
the lethargic mist,

And took my time, and took no hurt from the
fetid carbon.

Long I was hugg'd close—long and long.

Immense have been the preparations for me,

Faithful and friendly the arms that have help'd
me.

Cycles ferried my cradle, rowing and rowing
like cheerful boatmen,

For room to me stars kept aside in their own
rings,

They sent influences to look after what was to
hold me.

Before I was born out of my mother genera-
tions guided me,

My embryo has never been torpid, nothing
could overlay it.

For it the nebula cohered to an orb,
The long slow strata piled to rest it on,
Vast vegetables gave it sustenance,

Monstrous sauroids transported it in their
mouths and deposited it with care.

All forces have been steadily employ'd to com-
plete and delight me,

Now on this spot I stand with my robust soul.

I know I have the best of time and space, and
was never measured and never will be
measured.

I tramp a perpetual journey (come listen all!)
My signs are a rain-proof coat, good shoes, and
a staff cut from the woods,

No friend of mine takes his ease in my chair,
I have no chair, no church, no philosophy,

I lead no man to a dinner-table, library, ex-
change,

But each man and each woman of you I lead
upon a knoll,

My left hand hooking you round the waist,
My right hand pointing to landscapes of conti-
nents and the public road.

Not I, not any one else can travel that road
for you,

You must travel it for yourself.

It is not far, it is within reach,

Perhaps you have been on it since you were
born and did not know,

Perhaps it is everywhere on water and on land.

Where they in battle died.
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And as to you Corpse I think you are good
manure, but that does not offend me,
I smell the white roses sweet-scented and
growing,
I reach to the leafy lips, I reach to the polish'd
breasts of melons.

And as to you Life I reckon you are the leav-
ings of many deaths,
(No doubt I have died myself ten thousand 10
times before.)

I hear you whispering there O stars of heaven,
O suns—O grass of graves—O perpetual trans-
fers and promotions,
If you do not say any thing how can I say any
thing?

Of the turbid pool that lies in the autumn for-
est,
Of the moon that descends the steep of the
soughing twilight,
Toss, sparkles of day and dusk—toss on the
black stems that decay in the muck,
Toss to the moaning gibberish of the dry 25
limbs.

I ascend from the moon, I ascend from the
night,
I perceive that the ghastly glimmer is noon- 30
day sunbeams reflected,
And debouch to the steady and central from
the offspring great or small.

50

There is that in me—I do not know what it is
—but I know it is in me.

Wrench'd and sweaty—calm and cool then my
body becomes,
I sleep—I sleep long.

I do not know it—it is without name—it is a
word unsaid,
It is not in any dictionary, utterance, symbol. 45
Something it swings on more than the earth I
swing on,
To it the creation is the friend whose embrac-
ing awakes me.

Perhaps I might tell more. Outlines! I plead for

my brothers and sisters.

Do you see O my brothers and sisters?
It is not chaos or death—it is form, union, plan
—it is eternal life—it is Happiness.

51

The past and present wilt—I have fill'd them,
emptied them,
And proceed to fill my next fold of the future.

Listener up there! what have you to confide to
me?
15 Look in my face while I snuff the sidle of
evening,
(Talk honestly, no one else hears you, and I
stay only a minute longer.)

20 Do I contradict myself?
Very well then I contradict myself,
(I am large, I contain multitudes.)

I concentrate toward them that are nigh, I wait
on the door-slab.

Who has done his day's work? who will soonest
be through with his supper?
Who wishes to walk with me?

Will you speak before I am gone? will you
prove already too late?

52

35 The spotted hawk swoops by and accuses me,
he complains of my gab and my loitering.

I too am not a bit tamed, I too am untranslata-
40 ble,
I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the
world.

The last scud of day holds back for me,
It flings my likeness after the rest and true as
any on the shadow'd wilds,
It coaxes me to the vapor and the dusk.

I depart as air, I shake my white locks at the
50 runaway sun,
I effuse my flesh in eddies, and drift it in lacy
jags.

Where they in battle died.
And the sound of that mournful song
Goes through me with a thrill:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts.'

I can see the breezy dome of groves,
The shadows of Deering's Woods;
And the friendships old and the early loves 10
Come back with a Sabbath sound, as of doves
In quiet neighborhoods.
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I remember the gleams and glooms that dart
Across the school-boy's brain;
The song and the silence in the heart,
That in part are prophecies, and in part
Are longings wild and vain.
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Sings on, and is never still:
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thoughts.'

There are things of which I may not speak; 30
There are dreams that cannot die;
There are thoughts that make the strong heart
weak,
And bring a pallor into the cheek,
And a mist before the eye.
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Come over me like a chill:
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thoughts.'

Strange to me now are the forms I meet
When I visit the dear old town;
But the native air is pure and sweet,
And the trees that o'ershadow each well- 45
known street,
As they balance up and down,
Are singing the beautiful song,
Are sighing and whispering still:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
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And Deering's Woods are fresh and fair,
And with joy that is almost pain
My heart goes back to wander there,
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DIVINA COMMEDIA¹

1

15 Oft have I seen at some cathedral door
A laborer, pausing in the dust and heat,
Lay down his burden, and with reverent feet
Enter, and cross himself, and on the floor
Kneel to repeat his paternoster o'er;
20 Far off the noises of the world retreat;
The loud vociferations of the street
Become an undistinguishable roar.
So, as I enter here from day to day,
And leave my burden at this minster gate,
25 Kneeling in prayer, and not ashamed to pray,
The tumult of the time disconsolate
To inarticulate murmurs dies away,
While the eternal ages watch and wait.

2

How strange the sculptures that adorn these
towers!
This crowd of statues, in whose folded sleeves
Birds build their nests; while canopied with
35 leaves
Parvis and portal bloom like trellised bowers,
And the vast minster seems a cross of flowers!
But fiends and dragons on the gargoyled eaves
Watch the dead Christ between the living
40 thieves,
And, underneath, the traitor Judas lowers!
Ah! from what agonies of heart and brain,
What exultations trampling on despair,
What tenderness, what tears, what hate of
wrong,
What passionate outcry of a soul in pain,
Uprose this poem of the earth and air,
This mediæval miracle of song!

¹ Longfellow's translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy* is divided into three parts, each of which is preceded and followed by one sonnet from this sequence.

Manhattan crowds, with their turbulent musical chorus!
Manhattan faces and eyes forever for me.

WHEN I HEARD THE LEARN'D
ASTRONOMER

When I heard the learn'd astronomer,
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in
columns before me,
When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to
add, divide, and measure them,
When I sitting heard the astronomer where he
lectured with much applause in the lecture-room,
How soon unaccountable I became tired and
sick,
Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by
myself,
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time
to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.

WHEN LILACS LAST IN THE
DOORYARD BLOOM'D

1
When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd,
And the great star early droop'd in the western
sky in the night,
I mourn'd, and yet shall mourn with ever-re-
turning spring.
Ever-returning spring, trinity sure to me you
bring,
Lilac blooming perennial and drooping star in
the west,
And thought of him I love.

2
O powerful western fallen star!
O shades of night—O moody, tearful night!
O great star disappear'd—O the black murk
that hides the star!
O cruel hands that hold me powerless—O
helpless soul of me!
O harsh surrounding cloud that will not free
my soul.

3
In the dooryard fronting an old farm-house
near the white-wash'd palings,

Stands the lilac-bush tall-growing with heart-
shaped leaves of rich green,
With many a pointed blossom rising delicate,
with the perfume strong I love,
5 With every leaf a miracle—and from this bush
in the dooryard,
With delicate-color'd blossoms and heart-
shaped leaves of rich green,
A sprig with its flower I break.

10
4
In the swamp in secluded recesses,
A shy and hidden bird is warbling a song.
15 Solitary the thrush,
The hermit withdrawn to himself, avoiding the
settlements,
Sings by himself a song.

20 Song of the bleeding throat,
Death's outlet song of life, (for well dear
brother I know,
If thou wast not granted to sing thou would'st
surely die.)

25
5
Over the breast of the spring, the land, amid
cities,
Amid lanes and through old woods, where
lately the violets peep'd from the ground,
30 spotting the gray debris,
Amid the grass in the fields each side of the
lanes, passing the endless grass,
Passing the yellow-spear'd wheat, every grain
35 from its shroud in the dark-brown fields
uprisen,
Passing the apple-tree blows of white and pink
in the orchards,
Carrying a corpse to where it shall rest in the
grave,
40 Night and day journeys a coffin.

6
Coffin that passes through lanes and streets,
45 Through day and night with the great cloud
darkening the land,
With the pomp of the inloop'd flags with the
cities draped in black,
With the show of the States themselves as of
crape-veil'd women standing,
50 With processions long and winding and the
flambeaus of the night,

Where they in battle died.
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Goes through me with a thrill:
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12

Lo, body and soul—this land,
 My own Manhattan with spires, and the sparkling and hurrying tides, and the ships,
 The varied and ample land, the South and the North in the light, Ohio's shores and flashing Missouri,
 And ever the far-spreading prairies cover'd with grass and corn.

Lo, the most excellent sun so calm and haughty,
 The violet and purple morn with just-felt breezes,
 The gentle soft-born measureless light,
 The miracle spreading bathing all, the fulfill'd noon,
 The coming eve delicious, the welcome night and the stars,
 Over my cities shining all, enveloping man and land.

13

Sing on, sing on, you grey-brown bird,
 Sing from the swamps, the recesses, pour your chant from the bushes,
 Limitless out of the dusk, out of the cedars and pines.

Sing on, dearest brother, warble your reedy song,
 Loud human song, with voice of uttermost woe.

O liquid and free and tender!
 O wild and loose to my soul—O wondrous singer!
 You only I hear—yet the star holds me (but will soon depart.)
 Yet the lilac with mastering odour holds me.

14

Now while I sat in the day and look'd forth,
 In the close of the day with its light and the fields of spring, and the farmers preparing their crops,
 In the large unconscious scenery of my land with its lakes and forests,
 In the heavenly aerial beauty, (after the perturb'd winds and the storms,)

Under the arching heavens of the afternoon swift passing, and the voices of children and women,

5 The many-moving sea-tides, and I saw the ships how they sail'd,

And the summer approaching with richness, and the fields all busy with labor,

10 And the infinite separate houses, how they all went on, each with its meals and minutia of daily usages,

And the streets how their throbbings throbb'd, and the cities pent—lo, then and there,

Falling upon them all and among them all, enveloping me with the rest,

15 Appear'd the cloud, appear'd the long black trail,

And I knew death, its thought, and the sacred knowledge of death.

20 Then with the knowledge of death as walking one side of me,

And the thought of death close-walking the other side of me,

25 And I in the middle as with companions, and as holding the hands of companions,

I fled forth to the hiding receiving night that talks not,

Down to the shores of the water, the path by the swamp in the dimness,

30 To the solemn shadowy cedars and ghostly pines so still.

And the singer so shy to the rest receiv'd me,
 The gray-brown bird I know receiv'd us comrades three,

35 And he sang the carol of death, and a verse for him I love.

From deep secluded recesses,

40 From the fragrant cedars and the ghostly pines so still,

Came the carol of the bird.

And the charm of the carol rapt me,

45 As I held as if by their hands my comrades in the night,

And the voice of my spirit tallied the song of the bird.

50 *Come lovely and soothing death,*

Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,

Where they in battle died.
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And the trees that o'ershadow each well- 45
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As that powerful psalm in the night I heard
from recesses,
Passing, I leave thee lilac with heart-shaped
leaves,
I leave thee there in the door-yard, blooming, 5
returning with spring.

I cease from my song for thee,
From my gaze on thee in the west, fronting
the west, communing with thee,
O comrade lustrous with silver face in the
night.

Yet each to keep and all, retrievements out of
the night,
The song, the wondrous chant of the gray-
brown bird,
And the tallying chant, the echo arous'd in my
soul,
With the lustrous and drooping star with the
countenance full of woe,
With the holders holding my hand heaving the
call of the bird,
Comrades mine and I in the midst, and their
memory ever to keep, for the dead I loved 25
so well,
For the sweetest, wisest soul of all my days
and lands—and this for his dear sake,
Lilac and star and bird twined with the chant
of my soul,
There in the fragrant pines and the cedars
dusk and dim.

MATTHEW ARNOLD

Dryden, Pope, Dr. Johnson were literary arbiters in their day; Arnold (1822–1888) was their Victorian equivalent. He seemed destined for some Olympian function. Son of the famous headmaster of Rugby, with an Oxford background (and friendship with Arthur Hugh Clough), with reading and traveling playing important roles in his growth, Arnold never got away from literature and art. He became inspector of schools, university professor, lecturer, poet, essayist, critic. He fancied himself a good combination of Tennyson and Browning. With classic attitude and serious mien Arnold attacked the Philistines around him for their narrowness and vulgarity. His Essays in Criticism are still classics in their field. Whether friend or antagonist, Arnold is always

*a formidable figure: vigorous, intelligent, respectable without being stuffy.**

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

Come, dear children, let us away;
Down and away below!
Now my brothers call from the bay,
10 Now the great winds shorewards blow,
Now the salt tides seawards flow,
Now the wild white horses play,
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
Children dear, let us away!
15 This way, this way!

Call her once before you go—
Call once yet!
In a voice that she will know:
20 "Margaret! Margaret!"
Children's voices should be dear
(Call once more) to a mother's ear;
Children's voices, wild with pain—
Surely she will come again!
25 Call her once and come away;
This way, this way!
"Mother dear, we cannot stay!
The wild white horses foam and fret."
Margaret! Margaret!
30
Come, dear children, come away down;
Call no more!
One last look at the white-walled town,
And the little grey church on the windy shore;
35 Then come down!
She will not come though you call all day;
Come away, come away!

Children dear, was it yesterday
40 We heard the sweet bells over the bay?
In the caverns where we lay,
Through the surf and through the swell,
The far-off sound of a silver bell?
Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
45 Where the winds are all asleep;
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,
Where the salt weed sways in the stream,
Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,
Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground;

* The selections which follow are from Arnold's *Poetical Works*. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

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When clear falls the moonlight,
 When spring-tides are low;
 When sweet airs come seaward
 From heaths starred with broom,
 And high rocks throw mildly
 On the blanchèd sands a gloom;
 Up the still, glistening beaches,
 Up the creeks we will hie,
 Over banks of bright seaweed
 The ebb-tide leaves dry.
 We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
 At the white, sleeping town;
 At the church on the hill-side—
 And then come back down.
 Singing, "There dwells a loved one,
 But cruel is she!
 She left lonely for ever
 The kings of the sea."

THE BURIED LIFE

Light flows our war of mocking words, and
 yet,
 Behold, with tears my eyes are wet!
 I feel a nameless sadness o'er me roll.
 Yes, yes, we know that we can jest,
 We know, we know that we can smile!
 But there's a something in this breast,
 To which thy light words bring no rest,
 And thy gay smiles no anodyne.
 Give me thy hand, and hush awhile,
 And turn those limpid eyes on mine,
 And let me read there, love, thy inmost soul.

Alas, is even love too weak
 To unlock the heart, and let it speak?
 Are even lovers powerless to reveal
 To one another what indeed they feel?
 I knew the mass of men concealed
 Their thoughts, for fear that if revealed
 They would by other men be met
 With blank indifference, or with blame re-
 proved;
 I knew they lived and moved
 Tricked in disguises, alien to the rest
 Of men, and alien to themselves—and yet
 The same heart beats in every human breast!

But we, my love!—does a like spell benumb
 Our hearts, our voices?—must we too be
 dumb?

Ah, well for us, if even we,
 Even for a moment, can get free
 Our heart, and have our lips unchained;
 For that which seals them hath been deep-
 5 ordained.

Fate, which foresaw
 How frivolous a baby man would be—
 By what distractions he would be possessed,
 10 How he would pour himself in every strife,
 And well-nigh change his own identity—
 That it might keep from his capricious play
 His genuine self, and force him to obey
 Even in his own despite his being's law,
 15 Bade through the deep recesses of our breast
 The unregarded river of our life
 Pursue with indiscernible flow its way;
 And that we should not see
 The buried stream, and seem to be
 20 Eddying about in blind uncertainty,
 Though driving on with it eternally.

But often, in the world's most crowded streets,
 But often, in the din of strife,
 25 There rises an unspeakable desire
 After the knowledge of our buried life;
 A thirst to spend our fire and restless force
 In tracking out our true, original course;
 A longing to inquire
 30 Into the mystery of this heart that beats
 So wild, so deep in us—to know
 Whence our lives come, and where they go.
 And many a man in his own breast then delves,
 But deep enough, alas, none ever mines.
 35 And we have been on many thousand lines,
 And we have shown, on each, spirit and
 power;
 But hardly have we, for one little hour,
 Been on our own line, have we been our-
 40 selves—
 Hardly had skill to utter one of all
 The nameless feelings that course through our
 breast,
 But they course on for ever unexpressed.
 45 And long we try in vain to speak and act
 Our hidden self, and what we say and do
 Is eloquent, is well—but 'tis not true!
 And then we will no more be racked
 With inward striving, and demand
 50 Of all the thousand nothings of the hour
 Their stupefying power;
 Ah yes, and they benumb us at our call!

Where they in battle died.
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 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts.'

DIVINA COMMEDIA¹

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 Enter, and cross himself, and on the floor
 Kneel to repeat his paternoster o'er;
 20 Far off the noises of the world retreat;
 The loud vociferations of the street
 Become an undistinguishable roar.
 So, as I enter here from day to day,
 And leave my burden at this minster gate,
 25 Kneeling in prayer, and not ashamed to pray,
 The tumult of the time disconsolate
 To inarticulate murmurs dies away,
 While the eternal ages watch and wait.

2

How strange the sculptures that adorn these
 towers!
 This crowd of statues, in whose folded sleeves
 Birds build their nests; while canopied with
 35 leaves
 Parvis and portal bloom like trellised bowers,
 And the vast minster seems a cross of flowers!
 But fiends and dragons on the gargoyled eaves
 Watch the dead Christ between the living
 40 thieves,
 And, underneath, the traitor Judas lowers!
 Ah! from what agonies of heart and brain,
 What exultations trampling on despair,
 What tenderness, what tears, what hate of
 wrong,
 What passionate outcry of a soul in pain,
 Uprose this poem of the earth and air,
 This mediæval miracle of song!

¹ Longfellow's translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy* is divided into three parts, each of which is preceded and followed by one sonnet from this sequence.

Days not dark at thy side;
Seasons impaired not the ray
Of thy buoyant cheerfulness clear.
Such thou wast! and I stand
In the autumn evening, and think
Of bygone autumns with thee.

5

Fifteen years have gone round
Since thou arosest to tread,
In the summer-morning, the road
Of death, at a call unforeseen,
Sudden. For fifteen years,
We who till then in thy shade
Rested as under the boughs
Of a mighty oak, have endured
Sunshine and rain as we might,
Bare, unshaded, alone,
Lacking the shelter of thee.

10

O strong soul, by what shore
Tarriest thou now? For that force,
Surely, has not been left vain!
Somewhere, surely, afar,
In the sounding labor-house vast
Of being, is practised that strength,
Zealous, beneficent, firm!
Yes, in some far-shining sphere,
Conscious or not of the past,
Still thou performest the word
Of the Spirit in whom thou dost live—
Prompt, unwearied, as here!
Still thou upraiest with zeal
The humble good from the ground,
Sternly represses the bad!
Still, like a trumpet, doth rouse
Those who with half-open eyes
Tread the border-land dim
'Twixt vice and virtue; reviv'st,
Succorest!—this was thy work,
This was thy life upon earth.

25

30

35

40

What is the course of the life
Of mortal men on the earth?
Most men eddy about
Here and there—eat and drink,
Chatter and love and hate,
Gather and squander, are raised
Aloft, are hurled in the dust,
Striving blindly, achieving
Nothing; and then they die—
Perish;—and no one asks
Who or what they have been,

45

50

More than he asks what waves,
In the moonlit solitudes mild
Of the midmost Ocean, have swelled,
Foamed for a moment, and gone.

And there are some, whom a thirst
Ardent, unquenchable, fires,
Not with the crowd to be spent,
Not without aim to go round
In an eddy of purposeless dust,
Effort unmeaning and vain.
Ah yes! some of us strive
Not without action to die
Fruitless, but something to snatch
From dull oblivion, nor all
Glut the devouring grave!
We, we have chosen our path—
Path to a clear-purposed goal,
Path of advance!—but it leads
A long, steep journey, through sunk
Gorges, o'er the mountains in snow.
Cheerful, with friends, we set forth—
Then, on the height, comes the storm.
Thunder crashes from rock
To rock, the cataracts reply,
Lightnings dazzle our eyes.
Roaring torrents have breached
The track, the stream-bed descends
In the place where the wayfarer once
Planted his footstep—the spray
Boils o'er its borders! aloft
The unseen snow-beds dislodge
Their hanging ruin; alas,
Havoc is made in our train!
Friends, who set forth at our side,
Falter, are lost in the storm.
We, we only are left!
With frowning foreheads, with lips
Sternly compressed, we strain on,
On—and at nightfall at last
Come to the end of our way,
To the lonely inn 'mid the rocks;
Where the gaunt and taciturn host
Stands on the threshold, the wind
Shaking his thin white hairs—
Holds his lantern to scan
Our storm-beat figures, and asks:
Whom in our party we bring?
Whom we have left in the snow?

Sadly we answer: We bring
Only ourselves! we lost

Where they in battle died.
And the sound of that mournful song
Goes through me with a thrill:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts.'

I can see the breezy dome of groves,
The shadows of Deering's Woods;
And the friendships old and the early loves 10
Come back with a Sabbath sound, as of doves
In quiet neighborhoods.
And the verse of that sweet old song,
It flutters and murmurs still:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
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thoughts.'

I remember the gleams and glooms that dart
Across the school-boy's brain;
The song and the silence in the heart,
That in part are prophecies, and in part
Are longings wild and vain.
And the voice of that fitful song
Sings on, and is never still:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
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There are things of which I may not speak; 30
There are dreams that cannot die;
There are thoughts that make the strong heart
weak,
And bring a pallor into the cheek,
And a mist before the eye.
And the words of that fatal song
Come over me like a chill:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts.'

Strange to me now are the forms I meet
When I visit the dear old town;
But the native air is pure and sweet,
And the trees that o'ershadow each well- 45
known street,
As they balance up and down,
Are singing the beautiful song,
Are sighing and whispering still:
'A boy's will is the wind's will,
And the thoughts of youth are long, long
thoughts.'

And Deering's Woods are fresh and fair,
And with joy that is almost pain
My heart goes back to wander there,
And among the dreams of the days that were,
I find my lost youth again.
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Watch the dead Christ between the living
40 thieves,
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What exultations trampling on despair,
What tenderness, what tears, what hate of
wrong,
What passionate outcry of a soul in pain,
Uprose this poem of the earth and air,
This mediæval miracle of song!

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Is it for beauty to forego her wreath?
—Yes, but not this alone.

Is it to feel our strength—
Not our bloom only, but our strength—decay? 5
Is it to feel each limb
Grow stiffer, every function less exact,
Each nerve more loosely strung?

Yes, this, and more; but not
Ah, 'tis not what in youth we dreamed 'twould
be!

'Tis not to have our life
Mellowed and softened as with sunset-glow,
A golden day's decline. 15

'Tis not to see the world
As from a height, with rapt prophetic eyes,
And heart profoundly stirred;
And weep, and feel the fullness of the past, 20
The years that are no more.

It is to spend long days
And not once feel that we were ever young;
It is to add, immured 25
In the hot prison of the present, month
To month with weary pain.

It is to suffer this,
And feel but half, and feebly, what we feel. 30
Deep in our hidden heart
Festers the dull remembrance of a change,
But no emotion—none.

It is—last stage of all— 35
When we are frozen up within, and quite
The phantom of ourselves,
To hear the world applaud the hollow ghost
Which blamed the living man. 40

EMILY DICKINSON

*Emily Dickinson (1830–1886) was for a long
period an obscure lyricist in New England. 45
She was “discovered” late and is still being un-
covered, so to speak. By her own choice (per-
haps because of an unhappy love affair) Miss
Dickinson remained in the seclusion of her
home, keeping most of her work secret. Her
epistolary friends were many, however. If she*

*had chosen to publish (only four of her hun-
dreds of pieces were circulated in her lifetime),
she might well have altered the course of
American poetry years before it became “mod-
ern”; as it is, Miss Dickinson's original voice
has influenced many. In images and rhymes,
wit and conciseness, economy and swiftmess,
she was far ahead of her time. Today her repu-
tation is high. Even a cursory reading of the
10 lyrics produces the indefinable yet undeniable
feeling that one is in the presence of a genius
with words.**

I TASTE A LIQUOR NEVER BREWED

I taste a liquor never brewed,
From tankards scooped in pearl;
Not all the vats upon the Rhine
Yield such an alcohol!

Inebriate of air am I,
And debauchee of dew,
Reeling, through endless summer days,
From inns of molten blue.

When landlords turn the drunken bee
Out of the foxglove's door,
When butterflies renounce their drams,
I shall but drink the more!

Till seraphs swing their snowy hats,
And saints to windows run,
To see the little tippler
Leaning against the sun!

I NEVER SAW A MOOR

I never saw a moor,
I never saw the sea;
Yet know I how the heather looks,
And what a wave must be.

I never spoke with God,
Nor visited in heaven;
Yet certain am I of the spot
As if the chart were given.

* The following selections are reprinted from
The Poems of Emily Dickinson, edited by Martha
Dickinson Bianchi and Alfred Leete Hampson, by
permission of the publisher, Little, Brown & Com-
pany.

Where they in battle died.
And the sound of that mournful song
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As they balance up and down,
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Split at the rock and together again,
Accept my bed, or narrow or wide,
And flee from folly on every side
With a lover's pain to attain the plain
Far from the hills of Habersham,
Far from the valleys of Hall.

All down the hills of Habersham,
All through the valleys of Hall,
The rushes cried *Abide, abide*,
The willful waterweeds held me thrall,
The laving laurel turned my tide,
The ferns and the fondling grass said *Stay*,
The dewberry dipped for to work delay,
And the little reeds sighed *Abide, abide*,
Here in the hills of Habersham,
Here in the valleys of Hall.

High o'er the hills of Habersham,
Veiling the valleys of Hall,
The hickory told me manifold
Fair tales of shade, the poplar tall
Wrought me her shadowy self to hold,
The chestnut, the oak, the walnut, the pine,
Overleaning, with flickering meaning and sign, 25
Said, *Pass not, so cold, these manifold*
Deep shades of the hills of Habersham,
These glades in the valleys of Hall.

And oft in the hills of Habersham,
And oft in the valleys of Hall,
The white quartz shone, and the smooth
brook-stone
Did bar me of passage with friendly brawl,
And many a luminous jewel lone
—Crystals clear or a-cloud with mist,
Ruby, garnet and amethyst—
Made lures with the lights of streaming stone
In the clefts of the hills of Habersham,
In the beds of the valleys of Hall.

But oh, not the hills of Habersham,
And oh, not the valleys of Hall
Avail: I am fain for to water the plain.
Downward the voices of Duty call—
Downward, to toil and be mixed with the
main,
The dry fields burn, and the mills are to turn,
And a myriad flowers mortally yearn,
And the lordly main from beyond the plain
Calls o'er the hills of Habersham,
Calls through the valleys of Hall.

THE MARSHES OF GLYNN

Glooms of the live-oaks, beautiful-braided and
woven
5 With intricate shades of the vines that myriad-
cloven
Clamber the forks of the multiform
boughs,—
Emerald twilights,—
10 Virginal shy lights,
Wrought of the leaves to allure to the whisper
of vows,
When lovers pace timidly down through the
green colonnades
15 Of the dim sweet woods, of the dear dark
woods,
Of the heavenly woods and glades,
That run to the radiant marginal sand-beach
within
20 The wide sea-marshes of Glynn;—

Beautiful glooms, soft dusks in the noon-day
fire,—
Wildwood privacies, closets of lone desire,
25 Chamber from chamber parted with wavering
arras of leaves,—
Cells for the passionate pleasure of prayer to
the soul that grieves,
Pure with a sense of the passing of saints
30 through the wood,
Cool for the dutiful weighing of ill with
good;—

O braided dusks of the oak and woven shades
35 of the vine,
While the riotous noon-day sun of the June-
day long did shine
Ye held me fast in your heart and I held you
fast in mine;

40 But now when the noon is no more, and riot
is rest,
And the sun is a-wait at the ponderous gate of
the West,
45 And the slant yellow beam down the wood-
aisle doth seem
Like a lane into heaven that leads from a
dream,—

50 Ay, now, when my soul all day hath drunken
the soul of the oak,
And my heart is at ease from men, and the

Where they in battle died.
And the sound of that mournful song
Goes through me with a thrill:
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About and about through the intricate chan-
nels that flow
Here and there,
Everywhere,
Till his waters have flooded the uttermost
creeks and the low-lying lanes.
And the marsh is meshed with a million veins,
That like as with rosy and silvery essences
flow
In the rose-and-silver evening glow.
Farewell, my lord Sun!
The creeks overflow: a thousand rivulets run
Twixt the roots of the sod; the blades of the
marsh-grass stir;
Passeth a hurrying sound of wings that west- 15
ward whirr;
Passeth, and all is still; and the currents cease
to run;

And the sea and the marsh are one.

How still the plains of the waters be!
The tide is in his ecstasy.

5 The tide is at his highest height.
And it is night.

And now from the Vast of the Lord will the
waters of sleep

10 Roll in on the souls of men,
But who will reveal to our waking ken
The forms that swim and the shapes that creep
Under the waters of sleep?
And I would I could know what swimmeth be-
low when the tide comes in
On the length and the breadth of the marvel-
lous marshes of Glynn.

TWENTIETH CENTURY

THOMAS HARDY

*Before writing The Return of the Native and The Mayor of Casterbridge Hardy had written some verse and had practiced architecture. His novels are pessimistic, ironic, sometimes fatalistic. The gloom, however, is now and then lightened with humor. (The novelist confesses to having learned much from George Crabbe.) Hardy's Jude the Obscure (1895) was too realistic for public taste; the author turned in disgust to verse again, also wrote a nineteen-act drama, The Dynasts, but never returned to the novel. Much of Hardy's poetry is like his prose—the satires, for example, show up man's greed and pettiness; but the verse cannot be labeled with any single adjective, for it is possible in the lyrics to find all moods and lighting effects, nearly all subtypes. With Hardy (1840–1928) one literary era ends and another begins. He remains a large, solid figure, honest and sincere, unruffled by the new isms of our century. (See also II, 446.)**

HAP

If but some vengeful god would call to me
From up the sky, and laugh: "Thou suffering
thing,

Know that thy sorrow is my ecstasy,
5 That thy love's loss is my hate's profiting!"

Then would I bear it, clench myself, and die,
Steeled by the sense of ire unmerited;

Half-eased in that a Powerfuller than I 10
Had willed and meted me the tears I shed.

But not so. How arrives it joy lies slain,

* Of the selections which follow, "Hap" is reprinted from *Wessex Poems*, by Thomas Hardy; copyright, 1898 by Harper & Brothers; copyright, 1926, by Thomas Hardy. All the others are from Hardy's *Collected Poems*, copyright, 1926. By permission of the Trustees of the Hardy Estate, The Macmillan Company publishers, Macmillan & Co., Ltd., and The Macmillan Company of Canada, Ltd.

And why unblooms the best hope ever sown?
—Crass Casualty obstructs the sun and rain,
And dicing Time for gladness casts a moan. . . .
These purblind Doomsters had as readily
 strown 5
Blisses about my pilgrimage as pain.

AT THE DRAPER'S¹

"I stood at the back of the shop, my dear, 10
But you did not perceive me.
Well, when they deliver what you were shown
I shall know nothing of it, believe me!"
And he coughed and coughed as she paled and
 said, 15
"Oh, I didn't see you come in there—
Why couldn't you speak?"—"Well, I didn't. I
left
That you should not notice I'd been there. 20
"You were viewing some lovely things.
'Soon required for a widow of latest fashion';
And I knew 'twould upset you to meet the
man
Who had to be cold and ashen, 25
And screwed in a box before they could dress
you
'In the last new note in mourning,'
As they defined it. So, not to distress you,
I left you to your adorning." 30

THE DARKLING THRUSH

I leant upon a coppice gate
When Frost was specter-gray, 35
And Winter's dregs made desolate
The weakening eye of day.
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky
Like strings of broken lyres,
And all mankind that haunted nigh 40
Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be
The Century's corpse outleant,
His crypt the cloudy canopy, 45
The wind his death-lament.
The ancient pulse of germ and birth
Was shrunken hard and dry,
And every spirit upon earth
Seemed fervorless as I.

At once a voice arose among
The bleak twigs overhead
In a full-hearted evensong
Of joy illimited;
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,
In blast-beruffled plume,
Had chosen thus to fling his soul
Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carolings
Of such ecstatic sound
Was written on terrestrial things
Afar or nigh around,
That I could think there trembled through
His happy good-night air
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew
And I was unaware.

THE MAN HE KILLED

"Had he and I but met
By some old ancient inn,
We should have sat us down to wet
Right many a nipperkin!

"But ranged as infantry,
And staring face to face,
I shot at him as he at me,
And killed him in his place.

"I shot him dead because—
Because he was my foe,
Just so: my foe of course he was;
That's clear enough; although

"He thought he'd 'list, perhaps,
Off-hand like—just as I—
Was out of work—had sold his traps—
No other reason why.

"Yes; quaint and curious war is!
You shoot a fellow down
You'd treat if met where any bar is,
Or help to half-a-crown."

AFTERWARDS

When the Present has latched its postern be-
hind my tremulous stay,
50 And the May month flaps its glad green
leaves like wings,
Delicate-filmed as new-spun silk, will the

¹ one of the *Satires of Circumstance*.

neighbors say,
 "He was a man who used to notice such
 things"?

If it be in the dusk when, like an eyelid's
 soundless blink,
 The dewfall-hawk comes crossing the shades
 to alight
 Upon the wind-warped upland thorn, a gazer
 may think,
 "To him this must have been a familiar
 sight."

If I pass during some nocturnal blackness,
 mothy and warm,
 When the hedgehog travels furtively over
 the lawn,
 One may say, "He strove that such innocent
 creatures should come to no harm,
 But he could do little for them; and now he
 is gone."

If, when hearing that I have been stilled at
 last, they stand at the door,
 Watching the full-starred heavens that win-
 ter sees,
 Will this thought rise on those who will meet
 my face no more,
 "He was one who had an eye for such
 mysteries"?

And will any say when my bell of quittance is
 heard in the gloom,
 And a crossing breeze cuts a pause in its
 outrollings,
 Till they rise again, as they were a new bell's
 boom,
 "He hears it not now, but used to notice
 such things"?

A. E. HOUSMAN

Housman (1859–1936), an Oxford man, eventually found himself teaching Latin at University College, London, and at Cambridge, acquiring considerable reputation as a classical scholar. One of his collections of verse, A Shropshire Lad, became so popular that it was possible for other versifiers to burlesque the original with considerable success. Although Housman's lyrics seem simple, almost blithe, underneath they sing a sad message about life;

*technically they are the work of a master who believed in inspiration and who turned his lines with apparent ease. The fact that they seem easily done is a tribute to the poet's art; by his own testimony, after phrases came to him out of the air, only painful labor could put them together and fill in the gaps.**

10 WITH RUE MY HEART IS LADEN

With rue my heart is laden
 For golden friends I had,
 For many a rose-lipt maiden
 And many a lightfoot lad.

By brooks too broad for leaping
 The lightfoot boys are laid;
 The rose-lipt girls are sleeping
 In fields where roses fade.

WHEN I WAS ONE-AND-TWENTY

When I was one-and-twenty
 I heard a wise man say,
 "Give crowns and pounds and guineas
 But not your heart away;
 Give pearls away and rubies
 But keep your fancy free."
 But I was one-and-twenty,
 No use to talk to me.

When I was one-and-twenty
 I heard him say again,
 "The heart out of the bosom
 Was never given in vain;
 'Tis paid with sighs a-plenty
 And sold for endless rue."
 And I am two-and-twenty,
 And oh, 'tis true, 'tis true.

TO AN ATHLETE DYING YOUNG

The time you won your town the race
 We chaired you through the market-place;
 Man and boy stood cheering by,
 And home we brought you shoulder-high.

* The poems which follow are reprinted from *A Shropshire Lad* by A. E. Housman by permission

Today, the road all runners come,
Shoulder-high we bring you home,
And set you at your threshold down,
Townsmen of a stiller town.

Smart lad, to slip betimes away
From fields where glory does not stay,
And early though the laurel grows
It withers quicker than the rose.

Eyes the shady night has shut
Cannot see the record cut,
And silence sounds no worse than cheers
After earth has stopped the ears:

Now you will not swell the rout
Of lads that wore their honors out,
Runners whom renown outran
And the name died before the man.

So set, before its echoes fade,
The fleet foot on the sill of shade,
And hold to the low lintel up
The still-defended challenge-cup.

And round that early-laureled head
Will flock to gaze the strengthless dead,
And find unwithered on its curls
The garland briefer than a girl's.

LOVELIEST OF TREES

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Eastertide.

Now, of my threescore years and ten,
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy springs a score,
It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom
Fifty springs are little room,
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow.

of Henry Holt and Company, Inc.; and of the Society of Authors as the Literary Representative of the Trustees of the Estate of the late A. E. Housman, and Messrs. Jonathan Cape, Ltd., publishers of his *Collected Poems*.

OH, WHEN I WAS IN LOVE WITH YOU

Oh, when I was in love with you,
Then I was clean and brave,
And miles around the wonder grew
How well did I behave.

And now the fancy passes by,
And nothing will remain,
And miles around they'll say that I
Am quite myself again.

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

*Born and bred in Ireland, Yeats (1865–1939) went to London in 1888 and later traveled on the Riviera. He was ever concerned with Irish lore, much of which found its way into his plays and poetry; as an editor he was vocal in yet a third field. Yeats was particularly active in the great Celtic revival of drama. A prolific writer, he eventually won the Nobel Prize. His early poetry is filled with music, with Irish magic and mysticism. The later poetry is often tougher, a bit disillusioned, but not decadent.**

THE LAKE ISLE OF INNISFREE

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattle made;
Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the honey bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day

* The selections which follow are from Yeats's *Collected Poems*, copyright, 1933. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers, and of A. P. Watt & Son.

I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by
the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pave-
ments gray,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

WHEN YOU ARE OLD

When you are old and gray and full of sleep,
And nodding by the fire, take down this book, 10
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows
deep;

How many loved your moments of glad grace, 15
And loved your beauty with love false or true,
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,
And loved the sorrows of your changing face

And bending down beside the glowing bars 20
Murmur, a little sadly, how love fled
And paced upon the mountains overhead
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

THE INDIAN UPON GOD

I passed along the water's edge below the
humid trees,

My spirit rocked in evening light, the rushes
round my knees,

My spirit rocked in sleep and sighs; and saw
the moorfowl pace

All dripping on a grassy slope, and saw them
cease to chase

Each other round in circles, and heard the 35
eldest speak:

*Who holds the world between His bill and
made us strong or weak*

*Is an undying moonfowl, and He lives beyond
the sky.*

*The rains are from His dripping wings, the
moonbeams from His eye.*

I passed a little further on and heard a lotus
talk:

*Who made the world and ruleth it, He hang- 45
eth on a stalk,*

*For I am in His image made, and all this
tinkling tide*

*Is but a sliding drop of rain between His petals
wide.*

A little way within the gloom a roebuck raised
his eyes

Brimful of starlight, and he said: *The Stamper
of the Skies,*

*He is a gentle roebuck; for how else, I pray,
could He*

5 *Conceive a thing so sad and soft, a gentle
thing like me?*

I passed a little further on and heard a pea-
cock say:

*Who made the grass and made the worms and
made my feathers gay,*

*He is a monstrous peacock, and He waveth all
the night*

*His languid tail above us, lit with myriad spots
of light.*

SAILING TO BYZANTIUM

1

That is no country for old men. The young
20 In one another's arms, birds in the trees,
—Those dying generations—at their song,
The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded seas,
Fish, flesh, or fowl, commend all summer long
Whatever is begotten, born, and dies.

25 Caught in that sensual music all neglect
Monuments of unaging intellect.

2

An aged man is but a paltry thing,
30 A tattered coat upon a stick, unless
Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder sing
For every tatter in its mortal dress,
Nor is there singing school but studying
Monuments of its own magnificence;
35 And therefore I have sailed the seas and come
To the holy city of Byzantium.

3

O sages standing in God's holy fire
40 As in the gold mosaic of a wall,
Come from the holy fire, perne¹ in a gyre,
And be the singing-masters of my soul.
Consume my heart away; sick with desire
And fastened to a dying animal
It knows not what it is; and gather me
Into the artifice of eternity.

4

Once out of nature I shall never take
50 My bodily form from any natural thing,

¹ wheeling in a circle like a hawk or buzzard.

But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make
Of hammered gold and gold enameling
To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;
Or set upon a golden bough to sing
To lords and ladies of Byzantium
Of what is past, or passing, or to come.

RUDYARD KIPLING

Kipling (1865–1936), born in India, schooled in England, returned to his native land for a career in journalism. He later spent some time in Vermont with his American wife. Meanwhile, tales and verses had poured forth from a ready pen. He wrote of the ordinary man, of “real life,” in a ballad style that was tremendously popular. Something of a flag waver, Kipling has been criticized by some writers for an overabundance of patriotism. Nevertheless, he won a Nobel Prize and, critics or no, became the most widely known English poet of his day. (For further details concerning Kipling see II, 457.)

GUNGA DIN*

You may talk o' gin an' beer
When you're quartered safe out 'ere,
An' you're sent to penny-fights an' Aldershot
it:
But if it comes to slaughter,
You will do your work on water,
An' you'll lick the bloomin' boots of 'im that's
got it.
Now in Injia's sunny clime,
Where I used to spend my time
A-servin' of 'Er Majesty the Queen,
Of all them black-faced crew
The finest man I knew
Was our regimental Bhisti,¹ Gunga Din,
He was “Din! Din! Din!
You limping lump o' brick-dust, Gunga Din!
Hi! slippy hitherao!
Water! Get it! Pance laol!²
You squidgy-nosed old idol, Gunga Din!”

* From *Departmental Ditties and Barrack-Room Ballads*, by Rudyard Kipling, copyright, 1892, 1893, 1899, 1927, by Rudyard Kipling, reprinted by permission of Mrs. George Bambridge, Doubleday & Company, Inc., and The Macmillan Company of Canada, Ltd.

¹ water carrier.

² bring water swiftly.

The uniform 'e wore
Was nothin' much before,
An' rather less than 'arf o' that be'ind;
For a twisty piece o' rag
5 An' a goatskin water-bag
Was all the field-equipment 'e could find.
When the sweatin' troop-train lay
In a sidin' through the day,
Where the 'cat would make your bloomin' eye-
brows crawl,
We shouted “Harry By!”³
Till our throats were lricky-dry,
Then we wopped 'im cause 'e couldn't serve
us all.
15 It was “Din! Din! Din!
You 'eathen, where the mischief 'ave you been?
You put some juldee⁴ in it,
Or I'll marrow⁵ you this minute
If you don't fill up my helmet, Gunga Din!”
20 'E would dot an' carry one
Till the longest day was done,
An' 'e didn't seem to know the use o' fear.
If we charged or broke or cut,
25 You could bet your bloomin' nut,
'E'd be waitin' fifty paces right flank rear.
With 'is mussick⁶ on 'is back,
'E would skip with our attack,
An' watch us till the bugles made “Retire,”
30 An' for all 'is dirty 'ide
'E was white, clear white, inside,
When 'e went to tend the wounded under fire!
It was “Din! Din! Din!”
With the bullets kickin' dust-spots on the
35 green.
When the cartridges ran out,
You could 'ear the front-files shout:
“Hi! ammunition mules an' Gunga Din!”
40 I sha'n't forget the night
When I dropped be'ind the fight
With a bullet where my belt-plate should a'
been.
I was chokin' mad with thirst,
45 An' the man that spied me first
Was our good old grinnin', gruntin' Gunga
Din.
'E lifted up my 'ead,
An' e' guv me 'arf a pint o' water—green:

³ O Brother.

⁵ hit.

⁴ snap.

⁶ water bag.

It was crawlin' and it stunk,
But of all the drinks I've drunk,
I'm gratefulest to one from Gunga Din.
It was "Din! Din! Din!
'Ere's a beggar with a bullet through 'is spleen;
'E's chawin' up the ground an' 'e's kickin' all
around:
For Gawd's sake git the water, Gunga Din!"

'E carried me away
To where a dooli⁷ lay,
An' a bullet come an' drilled the beggar clean.
'E put me safe inside,
An' just before 'e died.
"I 'ope you liked your drink," sez Gunga Din. 15
So I'll meet 'im later on
In the place where 'e is gone—
Where its always double drill and no can-
teen;
'E'll be squattin' on the coals
Givin' drink to pore damned souls,
An I'll get a swig in Hell from Gunga Din.
Din! Din! Din!
You Lazarushian-leather Gunga Din!
Tho' I've belted you an' flayed you,
By the livin' God that made you,
You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din.

DANNY DEEVER*

"What are the bugles blowin' for?" said Files-
on-Parade.
"To turn you out, to turn you out," the Color-
Sergeant said.
"What makes you look so white, so white?"
said Files-on-Parade.
"I'm dreadin' what I've got to watch," the
Color-Sergeant said.
For they're hangin' Danny Deever, you can 40
'ear the Dead March play,
The regiment's in 'ollow square—they're
hangin' him today;
They've taken of his buttons off an' cut his
stripes away,

⁷ stretcher.

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An' they're hangin' Danny Deever in the
mornin'.

"What makes the rear-rank breathe so 'ard?"
said Files-on-Parade.
"It's bitter cold, it's bitter cold," the Color-
Sergeant said.
"What makes that front-rank man fall down?"
says Files-on-Parade.
10 "A touch of sun, a touch of sun," the Color-
Sergeant said.
They are hangin' Danny Deever, they are
marchin' of 'im round.
They 'ave 'alted Danny Deever by 'is coffin
on the ground:
An 'e'll swing in 'arf a minute for a sneakin'
shootin' hound—
O they're hangin' Danny Deever in the
mornin'!

20 " 'Is cot was right-'and cot to mine," said Files-
on-Parade.
" 'E's sleepin' out an' far tonight," the Color-
Sergeant said.
25 "I've drunk 'is beer a score o' times," said Files-
on-Parade.
" 'E's drinkin' bitter beer alone," the Color-
Sergeant said.
They are hangin' Danny Deever, you must
mark 'im to 'is place,
For 'e shot a comrade sleepin'—you must
look 'im in the face;
Nine 'undred of 'is county an' the regiment's
disgrace,
35 While they're hangin' Danny Deever in the
mornin'.

"What's that so black agin' the sun?" said
Files-on-Parade.
40 "It's Danny fightin' 'ard for life," the Color-
Sergeant said.
"What's that that whimpers over'ead?" said
Files-on-Parade.
"It's Danny's soul that's passin' now," the
Color-Sergeant said.
45 For they're done with Danny Deever, you
can 'ear the quickstep play,
The regiment's in column, an' they're
marchin' us away;
50 Ho! the young recruits are shakin', an' they'll
want their beer today,
After hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'.

RECESSIONAL*

God of our fathers, known of old,
 Lord of our far-flung battle-line,
 Beneath whose awful hand we hold
 Dominion over palm and pine—
 Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
 Lest we forget—lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies;
 The captains and the kings depart:
 Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
 An humble and a contrite heart.
 Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
 Lest we forget—lest we forget!

Far-called, our navies melt away;
 On dune and headland sinks the fire:
 Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
 Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!¹
 Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
 Lest we forget—lest we forget!

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
 Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe,
 Such boastings as the Gentiles use,
 Or lesser breeds without the Law—
 Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
 Lest we forget—lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust
 In reeking tube and iron shard,
 All valiant dust that builds on dust,
 And, guarding, calls not Thee to guard,
 For frantic boast and foolish word—
 Thy Mercy on Thy People, Lord!

FOR TO ADMIRE**

The Injian Ocean sets an' smiles
 So sof', so bright, so bloomin' blue;

* From *The Five Nations* by Rudyard Kipling, copyright, 1903, 1931, by Rudyard Kipling, reprinted by permission of Mrs. George Bambridge, Doubleday & Company, Inc., and The Macmillan Company of Canada, Ltd.

¹ that is, either destroyed or reduced to insignificance.

** From *The Seven Seas* by Rudyard Kipling, copyright, 1893, 1894, 1896, 1905, 1933, by Rudyard Kipling, reprinted by permission of Mrs. George Bambridge, Doubleday & Company, Inc., and The Macmillan Company of Canada, Ltd.

There aren't a wave for miles an' miles
 Excep' the jiggle from the screw.
 The ship is swep', the day is done,
 The bugle's gone for smoke and play;
 5 An' black agin' the settin' sun
 The Lascar sings, "*Hum deckty hai!*"

*For to admire an' for to see,
 For to be'old this world so wide—
 It never done no good to me,
 But I can't drop it if I tried!*

I see the sergeants pitchin' quoits,
 I 'ear the women laugh an' talk,
 15 I spy upon the quarter-deck
 The officers an' lydies walk.
 I thinks about the things that was,
 An' leans an' looks acrost the sea,
 Till spite of all the crowded ship
 20 There's no one lef' alive but me.

The things that was which I 'ave seen,
 In barrick, camp, an' action too,
 I tells them over by myself,
 An' sometimes wonders if they're true;
 For they was odd—most awful odd—
 But all the same now they are o'er,
 There must be 'eaps o' plenty such,
 An' if I wait I'll see some more.

30 Oh, I 'ave come upon the books,
 An' frequent broke a barrick rule,
 An' stood beside an' watched myself
 Be'avin' like a bloomin' fool.
 35 I paid my price for findin' out,
 Nor never grutched the price I paid,
 But sat in Clink without my boots,
 Admirin' 'ow the world was made.

40 Be'old a crowd upon the beam,
 An' 'umped above the sea appears
 Old Aden, like a barrick-stove
 That no one's lit for years an' years!
 I passed by that when I began,
 45 An' I go 'ome the road I came,
 A time-expired soldier-man
 With six years' service to 'is name.

50 My girl she said, "Oh, stay with me!"
 My mother 'eld me to 'er breast.
 They've never written none, an' so
 They must 'ave gone with all the rest—

With all the rest which I 'ave seen
 An' found an' known an' met along,
 I cannot say the things I feel,
 And so I sing my evenin' song:

*For to admire an' for to see,
 For to be'old this world so wide—
 It never done no good to me,
 But I can't drop it if I tried!*

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON*

THE MAN AGAINST THE SKY

Between me and the sunset, like a dome
 Against the glory of a world on fire,
 Now burned a sudden hill,
 Bleak, round and high, by flame-lit height
 made higher,
 With nothing on it for the flame to kill
 Save one who moved and was alone up there
 To loom before the chaos and the glare
 As if he were the last god going home
 Unto his last desire.
 Dark, marvellous, and inscrutable he moved on
 Till down the fiery distance he was gone,
 Like one of those eternal, remote things
 That range across a man's imaginings
 When a sure music fills him and he knows
 What he may say thereafter to few men—
 The touch of ages having wrought
 An echo and a glimpse of what he thought
 A phantom or a legend until then;
 For whether lighted over ways that save,
 Or lured from all repose,
 If he go on too far to find a grave,
 Mostly alone he goes.

Even he, who stood where I had found him,
 On high with fire all around him,
 Who moved along the molten west,
 And over the round hill's crest
 That seemed half ready with him to go down,
 Flame-bitten and flame-cleft
 As if there were to be no last thing left
 Of a nameless unimaginable town—
 Even he who climbed and vanished may have
 taken

* For introductory sketch see I, 181. "The Man Against the Sky" is reprinted from Robinson's *Collected Poems*, copyright, 1937. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

Down to the perils of a depth not known,
 From death defended, though by men forsaken,
 The bread that every man must eat alone;
 5 He may have walked while others hardly dared
 Look on to see him stand where many fell,
 And upward out of that as out of hell,
 He may have sung and striven
 To mount where more of him shall yet be
 10 given,
 Bereft of all retreat,
 To sevenfold heat—
 As on a day when three in Dura¹ shared
 The furnace, and were spared
 15 For glory by that king of Babylon
 Who made himself so great that God, who
 heard,
 Covered him with long feathers, like a bird.
 20 Again, he may have gone down easily,
 By comfortable altitudes, and found,
 As always, underneath him solid ground
 Whereon to be sufficient and to stand
 Possessed already of the promised land,
 25 Far stretched and fair to see:
 A good sight, verily,
 And one to make the eyes of her who bore him
 Shine glad with hidden tears.
 Why question of his ease of who before him,
 30 In one place or another where they left
 Their names as far behind them as their bones,
 And yet by dint of slaughter, toil and theft,
 And shrewdly sharpened stones,
 Carved hard the way for his ascendancy
 35 Through deserts of lost years?
 Why trouble him now who sees and hears
 No more than what his innocence requires,
 And therefore to no other height aspires
 Than one at which he neither quails nor tires?
 40 He may do more by seeing what he sees
 Than others eager for iniquities;
 He may, by seeing all things for the best,
 Incite futurity to do the rest.
 45 Or with an even likelihood,
 He may have met with atrabilious eyes
 The fires of time on equal terms and passed
 Indifferent down, until at last
 His only kind of grandeur would have been,
 50 Apparently, in being seen.

¹ In Babylon. See *Book of Daniel*, 3.

He may have had for evil or for good
 No argument; he may have had no care
 For what without himself went anywhere
 To failure or to glory, and least of all
 For such a stale, flamboyant miracle;
 He may have been the prophet of an art
 Immovable to old idolatries;
 He may have been a player without a part,
 Annoyed that even the sun should have the
 skies

For such a flaming way to advertise;
 He may have been a painter sick at heart
 With Nature's toiling for a new surprise;
 He may have been a cynic, who now, for all
 Of anything divine that his effete
 Negation may have tasted,
 Saw truth in his own image, rather small,
 Forbore to fever the ephemeral,
 Found any barren height a good retreat
 From any swarming street,
 And in the sun saw power superbly wasted;
 And when the primitive old-fashioned stars
 Came out again to shine on joys and wars
 More primitive, and all arrayed for doom,
 He may have proved a world a sorry thing
 In his imagining,
 And life a lighted highway to the tomb.

Or, mounting with infirm unsearching tread,
 His hopes to chaos led,
 He may have stumbled up there from the
 past,
 And with an aching strangeness viewed the
 last

Abysmal conflagration of his dreams,—
 A flame where nothing seems
 To burn but flame itself, by nothing fed;
 And while it all went out,
 Not even the faint anodyne of doubt
 May then have eased a painful going down
 From pictured heights of power and lost re-
 nown,

Revealed at length to his outlived endeavor
 Remote and unapproachable forever;
 And at his heart there may have gnawed
 Sick memories of a dead faith foiled and
 flawed

And long dishonored by the living death
 Assigned alike by chance
 To brutes and hierophants;
 And anguish fallen on those he loved around
 him

May once have dealt the last blow to confound
 him,

And so have left him as death leaves a child,
 Who sees it all too near;

5 And he who knows no young way to forget
 May struggle to the tomb unreconciled.
 Whatever suns may rise or set
 There may be nothing kinder for him here
 Than shafts and agonies;

10 And under these
 He may cry out and stay on horribly;
 Or, seeing in death too small a thing to fear,
 He may go forward like a stoic Roman
 Where pangs and terrors in his pathway lie—
 15 Or, seizing the swift logic of a woman,
 Curse God and die.

Or maybe there, like many another one
 Who might have stood aloft and looked ahead,
 Black-drawn against wild red,

20 He may have built unawed by fiery gules
 That in him no commotion stirred,
 A living reason out of molecules
 Why molecules occurred,
 And one for smiling when he might have
 25 sighed

Had he seen far enough
 And in the same inevitable stuff
 Discovered an odd reason too for pride
 In being what he must have been by laws
 30 Infrangible and for no kind of cause.

Deterred by no confusion or surprise
 He may have seen with his mechanic eyes
 A world without a meaning, and had room,
 Alone amid magnificence and doom,

35 To build himself an airy monument
 That should, or fail him in his vague intent,
 Outlast an accidental universe—
 To call it nothing worse—
 Or, by the burrowing guile

40 Of Time disintegrated and effaced,
 Like once-remembered mighty trees go down
 To ruin, of which by man may now be traced
 No part sufficient even to be rotten,
 And in the book of things that are forgotten

45 Is entered as a thing not quite worth while.
 He may have been so great
 That satraps would have shivered at his frown,
 And all he prized alive may rule a state
 No larger than a grave that holds a clown;

50 He may have been a master of his fate,
 And of his atoms—ready as another
 In his emergence to exonerate

His father and his mother;
He may have been a captain of a host,
Self-eloquent and ripe for prodigies,
Doomed here to swell by dangerous degrees,
And then give up the ghost.
Nahum's great grasshoppers were such as
these,
Sun-scattered and soon lost.

Whatever the dark road he may have taken,
This man who stood on high
And faced alone the sky,
Whatever drove or lured or guided him,—
A vision answering a faith unshaken,
An easy trust assumed of easy trials,
A sick negation born of weak denials,
A crazed abhorrence of an old condition,
A blind attendance on a brief ambition,—
Whatever stayed him or derided him,
His way was even as ours;
And we, with all our wounds and all our
powers,
Must each await alone at his own height
Another darkness or another light,
And there, of our poor self dominion reft,
If inference and reason shun
Hell, Heaven, and Oblivion,
May thwarted will (perforce precarious,
But for our conservation better thus)
Have no misgiving left
Of doing yet what here we leave undone?
Or if unto the last of these we cleave,
Believing or protesting we believe
In such an idle and ephemeral
Florescence of the diabolical—
If, robbed of two fond old enormities,
Our being had no onward auguries,
What then were this great love of ours to say
For launching other lives to voyage again
A little farther into time and pain,
A little faster in a futile chase
For a kingdom and a power and a Race
That would have still in sight
A manifest end of ashes and eternal night?
Is this the music of the toys we shake
So loud,—as if there might be no mistake
Somewhere in our indomitable will?
Are we no greater than the noise we make
Along one blind atomic pilgrimage
Whereon by crass chance billeted we go
Because our brains and bones and cartilage
Will have it so?

If this we say, then let us all be still
About our share in it, and live and die
More quietly thereby.

- 5 Where was he going, this man against the sky?
You know not, nor do I.
But this we know, if we know anything.
That we may laugh and fight and sing
And of our transience here make offering
- 10 To an orient Word that will not be erased,
Or, save in incommunicable gleams
Too permanent for dreams,
Be found or known.
No tonic and ambitious irritant
- 15 Of increase or of want
Has made an otherwise insensate waste
Of ages overthrown
A ruthless, veiled, implacable foretaste
Of other ages that are still to be
- 20 Depleted and rewarded variously
Because a few, by fate's economy,
Shall seem to move the world the way it goes:
No soft evangel of equality,
Safe-cradled in a communal repose
- 25 That huddles into death and may at last
Be covered well with equatorial snows—
And all for what, the devil only knows—
Will aggregate an inkling to confirm
The credit of a sage or of a worm,
- 30 Or tell us why one man in five
Should have a care to stay alive
While in his heart he feels no violence
Laid on his humor and intelligence
When infant Science makes a pleasant face
- 35 And waves again that hollow toy, the Race;
No planetary trap where souls are wrought
For nothing but the sake of being caught
And sent again to nothing will attune
Itself to any key of any reason
- 40 Why man should hunger through another
season
To find out why 'twere better late than soon
To go away and let the sun and moon
And all the silly stars illuminate
- 45 A place for creeping things,
And those that root and trumpet and have
wings,
And herd and ruminant,
Or dive and flash and poise in rivers and seas,
- 50 Or by their loyal tails in lofty trees
Hang screeching lewd victorious derision
Of man's immortal vision.

Shall we, because Eternity records
 Too vast an answer for the time-born words
 We spell, whereof so many are dead that once
 In our capricious lexicons
 Were so alive and final, hear no more
 The Word itself, the living word
 That none alive has ever heard
 Or ever spelt,
 And few have ever felt
 Without the fears and old surrenderings
 And terrors that began
 When Death let fall a feather from his wings
 And humbled the first man?
 Because the weight of our humility,
 Wherefrom we gain
 A little wisdom and much pain,
 Falls here too sore and there too tedious,
 Are we in anguish or complacency,
 Not looking far enough ahead
 To see by what mad couriers we are led
 Along the roads of the ridiculous,
 To pity ourselves and laugh at faith
 And while we curse life bear it?
 And if we see the soul's dead end in death,
 Are we to fear it?
 What folly is here that has not yet a name
 Unless we say outright that we are liars?
 What have we seen beyond our sunset fires
 That lights again the way by which we came?
 Why pay we such a price, and one we give
 So clamouringly, for each racked empty day
 That leads one more last human hope away,
 As quiet fiends would lead past our crazed eyes
 Our children to an unseen sacrifice?
 If after all that we have lived and thought,
 All comes to Nought—
 If there be nothing after Now,
 And we be nothing anyhow,
 And we know that—why live?
 'Twere sure but weaklings' vain distress
 To suffer dungeons where so many doors
 Will open on the cold eternal shores
 That look sheer down
 To the dark tideless floods of Nothingness
 Where all who know may drown.

EDGAR LEE MASTERS

With a Kansas and Illinois background, Masters (1869–) was well on his way toward a successful career in law after being clerk, collector, and so on. Two forces intervened: poli-

tics and poetry. The success of the Spoon River Anthology determined his future. With Sandburg, Lindsay, and others, Masters owed some debt to the magazine Poetry for his start.

5 *Sturdy and tough, he managed in his cemetery monologues to open up a new approach to the heart and mind of America; his frankness in verse was similar to that of Sherwood Anderson and Dreiser in fiction, and received the*
 10 *same mixed reception at first. Although Masters has many titles to his credit—he wrote novels and plays as well as poetry—Spoon River is still his major accomplishment.*

15 FROM *Spoon River Anthology**

PETIT, THE POET

Seeds in a dry pod, tick, tick, tick,
 20 Tick, tick, tick, like mites in a quarrel—
 Faint iambs that the full breeze wakens—
 But the pine tree makes a symphony thereof.
 Triolets, villanelles, rondels, rondeaus,
 Ballades by the score with the same old
 25 thought:
 The snows and roses of yesterday are vanished;
 And what is love but a rose that fades?
 Life all around me here in the village:
 30 Tragedy, comedy, valor and truth,
 Courage, constancy, heroism, failure—
 All in the loom, and oh what patterns!
 Woodlands, meadows, streams and rivers—
 Blind to all of it all my life long.
 35 Triolets, villanelles, rondels, rondeaus,
 Seeds in a dry pod, tick, tick, tick,
 Tick, tick, tick, what little iambs,
 While Homer and Whitman roared in the
 pines?

40

SETH COMPTON

When I died, the circulating library
 Which I built up for Spoon River,
 45 And managed for the good of inquiring minds,
 Was sold at auction on the public square,
 As if to destroy the last vestige
 Of my memory and influence.
 For those of you who could not see the virtue

* By special permission of Mr. Edgar Lee Masters.

Of knowing Volney's "Ruins"¹ as well as Butler's "Analogy"²
 And "Faust"³ as well as "Evangeline,"⁴
 Were really the power in the village,
 And often you asked me,
 "What is the use of knowing the evil in the world?"
 I am out of your way now, Spoon River,
 Choose your own good and call it good.
 For I could never make you see
 That no one knows what is good
 Who knows not what is evil;
 And no one knows what is true
 Who knows not what is false.

ANNE RUTLEDGE

Out of me unworthy and unknown
 The vibrations of deathless music,
 "With malice toward none, with charity for all."
 Out of me the forgiveness of millions toward millions,
 And the beneficent face of a nation
 Shining with justice and truth.
 I am Anne Rutledge who sleep beneath these weeds,
 Beloved in life of Abraham Lincoln,
 Wedded to him, not through union,
 But through separation.
 Bloom forever, O Republic,
 From the dust of my bosom!

LUCINDA MATLOCK

I went to the dances at Chandlerville,
 And played snap-out at Winchester.
 One time we changed partners,
 Driving home in the moonlight of middle June,
 And then I found Davis.
 We were married and lived together for seventy years,
 Enjoying, working, raising the twelve children,
 Eight of whom we lost
 Ere I had reached the age of sixty.

¹ Constantin François Volney: *Ruins of Empire* (Paris, 1791).

² Joseph Butler: *Analogy of Religion* (1736).

³ subject of dramas by Marlowe and Goethe.

⁴ narrative poem by Longfellow (1847).

I spun, I wove, I kept the house, I nursed the sick,
 I made the garden, and for holiday
 Rambled over the fields where sang the larks,
 5 And by Spoon River gathering many a shell,
 And many a flower and medicinal weed—
 Shouting to the wooded hills, singing to the green valleys.
 At ninety-six I had lived enough, that is all,
 10 And passed to a sweet repose.
 What is this I hear of sorrow and weariness,
 Anger, discontent and drooping hopes?
 Degenerate sons and daughters,
 Life is too strong for you—
 15 It takes life to love Life.

AMY LOWELL

Amy Lowell (1874-1925), unlike some of her contemporaries, did not have to worry about making a living. Descended from an old New England family of patricians and educators, she had opportunity to travel and to write at leisure. After undistinguished early verse she developed into a poetic force in her day by leading the school of imagists, a group who used the language of common speech to create hard, clear pictures. Miss Lowell wrote criticism, did translations, and engineered a significant life of Keats. In ill health a good part of her life, always a stormy figure, she developed free verse and for a few years had great influence. Today she is remembered for three or four poems; imagism is a moribund term, and many critics publicly wonder whether she was really a poet or not (because she rarely went deep, and because she dodged issues). As a historical figure, regardless of the critical decision, Miss Lowell seems assured of a kind of
 40 *immortality.*^{*}

PATTERNS

I walk down the garden paths,
 45 And all the daffodils
 Are blowing, and the bright blue squills.
 I walk down the patterned garden paths
 In my stiff, brocaded gown.
 With my powdered hair and jeweled fan,

^{*} The poems by Miss Lowell are reprinted with the permission of Houghton Mifflin Company, publishers.

I too am a rare
 Pattern. As I wander down
 The garden paths.
 My dress is richly figured,
 And the train
 Makes a pink and silver stain
 On the gravel, and the thrift
 Of the borders.
 Just a plate of current fashion,
 Tripping by in high-heeled, ribboned shoes.
 Not a softness anywhere about me,
 Only whale-bone and brocade.
 And I sink on a seat in the shade
 Of a lime tree. For my passion
 Wars against the stiff brocade.
 The daffodils and squills
 Flutter in the breeze
 As they please.
 And I weep;
 For the lime tree is in blossom
 And one small flower has dropped upon my
 bosom.

And the plashing of waterdrops
 In the marble fountain
 Comes down the garden paths.
 The dripping never stops.
 Underneath my stiffened gown
 Is the softness of a woman bathing in a marble
 basin,
 A basin in the midst of hedges grown
 So thick, she cannot see her lover hiding,
 But she guesses he is near,
 And the sliding of the water
 Seems the stroking of a dear
 Hand upon her.
 What is Summer in a fine brocaded gown!
 I should like to see it lying in a heap upon the
 ground.
 All the pink and silver crumpled up on the
 ground.

I would be the pink and silver as I run along
 the paths,
 And he would stumble after,
 Bewildered by my laughter.
 I should see the sun flashing from his sword
 hilt and the buckles on his shoes.
 I would choose
 To lead him in a maze along the patterned
 paths,

A bright and laughing maze for my heavy-
 booted lover,
 Till he caught me in the shade,
 And the buttons of his waistcoat bruised my
 5 body as he clasped me,
 Aching, melting, unafraid.
 With the shadows of the leaves and the sun-
 drops,
 And the plopping of the waterdrops,
 10 All about us in the open afternoon—
 I am very like to swoon
 With the weight of this brocade,
 For the sun shifts through the shade.

15 Underneath the fallen blossom
 In my bosom,
 Is a letter I have hid.
 It was brought to me this morning by a rider
 from the Duke.
 20 "Madam, we regret to inform you that Lord
 Hartwell
 Died in action Thursday se'nnight."
 As I read it in the white, morning sunlight,
 The letters squirmed like snakes.
 25 "Any answer, Madam?" said my footman.
 "No," I told him.
 "See that the messenger takes some refresh-
 ment.
 No, no answer."

30 And I walked into the garden,
 Up and down the patterned paths,
 In my stiff, correct brocade.
 The blue and yellow flowers stood up proudly
 35 in the sun,
 Each one.
 I stood upright, too,
 Held rigid to the pattern
 By the stiffness of my gown.
 40 Up and down I walked,
 Up and down.

In a month he would have been my husband.
 In a month, here, underneath this lime,
 45 We would have broke the pattern;
 He for me, and I for him,
 He as Colonel, I as Lady,
 On this shady seat.
 He had a whim
 50 That sunlight carried blessing.
 And I answered, "It shall be as you have said."
 Now he is dead.

In Summer and in Winter I shall walk
Up and down
The patterned garden paths
In my stiff, brocaded gown.
The squills and daffodils
Will give place to pillared roses, and to asters,
and to snow.
I shall go
Up and down,
In my gown.
Gorgeously arrayed,
Boned and stayed.
And the softness of my body will be guarded
from embrace
By each button, hook, and lace.
For the man who should loose me is dead,
Fighting with the Duke in Flanders,
In a pattern called a war.
Christ! What are patterns for?

ON READING A LINE UNDER-
SCORED BY KEATS

IN A COPY OF *Palmerin of England*¹

You marked it with light pencil upon a printed
page,
And, as though your finger pointed along a
sunny path for my eyes' better direction,
I see "a knight mounted on a mulberry courser
and attired in green armour."
I think the sky is faintly blue, but with a
Spring shining about it,
And the new grass scarcely fetlock high in the
meads.
He rides, I believe, alongside an overflown
river,
By a path soft and easy to his charger's feet.
My vision confuses you with the green-ar-
moured knight:
So dight and caparisoned might you be in a
land of Faery.
Thus, with denoting finger, you make of your-
self an escutcheon to guide me to that in
you which is its essence.
But for the rest,
The part which most persists and is remem-
bered,
I only know I compass it in loving and neither
have, nor need, a symbol.

ON LOOKING AT A COPY OF ALICE
MEYNELL'S¹ POEMS, GIVEN ME,
YEARS AGO, BY A FRIEND

- 5 Upon this greying page you wrote
A whispered greeting, long ago.
Faint pencil-marks run to and fro
Scoring the lines I loved to quote.
- 10 A sea-shore of white, shoaling sand,
Blue creeks zigzagging through marsh-grasses,
Sand pipers, and a wind which passes
Cloudily silent up the land.
- 15 Upon the high edge of the sea
A great four-master sleeps; three hours
Her bowsprit has not cleared those flowers
I read and look alternatively.
- 20 It all comes back again, but dim
As pictures on a winking wall
Hidden save when the dark clouds fall
Or crack to show the moon's bright rim.
- 25 I will remember what I was,
And what I wanted. You, unwise
With sore un wisdom, had no eyes
For what was patently the cause.
- 30 So are we sport of others' blindness,
We who could see right well alone.
What were you made of—wood or stone?
Yet I remember you with kindness.
- 35 You gave this book to me to ease
The smart in me you could not heal.
Your gift a mirror—woe or weal.
We sat beneath the apple-trees.
- 40 And I remember how they rang,
These words, like bronze cathedral bells
Down ancient lawns, or citadels
Thundering with gongs where choirs sang.
- 45 Silent the sea, the earth, the sky,
And in my heart a silent weeping.
Who has not sown can know no reaping!
Bitter conclusion and no lie.
- 50 O heart that sorrows, heart that bleeds,

¹ sixteenth-century chivalric romance.

¹ 1850–1922.

Heart that was never mine, your words
Were like the pecking Autumn birds
Stealing away my garnered seeds.

No future where there is no past!
O cherishing grief which laid me bare,
I wrapped you like a wintry air
About me. Poor enthusiast!

How strange that tumult, looking back.
The ink is pale, the letters fade.
The verses seem to be well made,
But I have lived the almanac.

And you are dead these drifted years,
How many I forget. And she
Who wrote the book, her tragedy
Long since dried up its scalding tears.

I read of her death yesterday,
Frail lady whom I never knew
And knew so well. Would I could strew
Her grave with pansies, blue and grey.

Would I could stand a little space
Under a blowing, brightening sky,
And watch the sad leaves fall and lie
Gently upon that lonely place.

So cried her heart, a feverish thing.
But clay is still, and clay is cold,
And I was young, and I am old
And in December what birds sing!

Go, wistful book, go back again
Upon your shelf and gather dust.
I've seen the glitter through the rust
Of old, long years, I've known the pain.

I've recollected both of you,
But I shall recollect no more.
Between us I must shut the door.
The living have so much to do.

ROBERT FROST*

MENDING WALL

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,

And spills the upper boulders in the sun;
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.
The work of hunters is another thing:

I have come after them and made repair

5 Where they have left not one stone on a stone,
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,
No one has seen them made or heard them

made,

10 But at spring mending-time we find them
there.

I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again.

15 We keep the wall between us as we go.
To each the boulders that have fallen to each.
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls
We have to use a spell to make them balance:
"Stay where you are until our backs are

20 turned!"

We wear our fingers rough with handling
them.

Oh, just another kind of out-door game,
One on a side. It comes to little more:

25 There where it is we do not need the wall:

He is all pine and I am apple orchard.

My apple trees will never get across
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.

He only says, "Good fences make good neigh-
30 bors."

Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:

"Why do they make good neighbors? Isn't it
Where there are cows? But here there are no

35 cows.

Before I built a wall I'd ask to know

What I was walling in or walling out,

And to whom I was like to give offense.

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,

40 That wants it down." I could say "Elves" to
him,

But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather

He said it for himself. I see him there

Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top

45 In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.

He moves in darkness as it seems to me,

Not of woods only and the shade of trees.

He will not go behind his father's saying,

And he likes having thought of it so well

50

* For introductory sketch see I, 186. The selections which follow are from *Collected Poems of*

Robert Frost. Copyright, 1930, 1939, by Henry Holt and Company, Inc. Copyright, 1936, by Robert Frost.

He says again, "Good fences make good neighbors."

BIRCHES

When I see birches bend to left and right
 Across the lines of straighter darker trees,
 I like to think some boy's been swinging them.
 But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay.
 Ice-storms do that. Often you must have seen
 them
 Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning
 After a rain. They click upon themselves
 As the breeze rises, and turn many-colored
 As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel.
 Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal
 shells
 Shattering and avalanching on the snow-
 crust—
 Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away
 You'd think the inner dome of heaven had
 fallen.
 They are dragged to the withered bracken by
 the load,
 And they seem not to break; though once they
 are bowed
 So low for long, they never right themselves:
 You may see their trunks arching in the woods
 Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the
 ground
 Like girls on hands and knees that throw their
 hair
 Before them over their heads to dry in the sun.
 But I was going to say when Truth broke in
 With all her matter-of-fact about the ice-storm
 (Now am I free to be poetical?)
 I should prefer to have some boy bend them
 As he went out and in to fetch the cows—
 Some boy too far from town to learn baseball,
 Whose only play was what he found himself,
 Summer or winter, and could play alone.
 One by one he subdued his father's trees
 By riding them down over and over again
 Until he took the stiffness out of them,
 And not one but hung limp, not one was left
 For him to conquer. He learned all there was
 To learn about not launching out too soon
 And so not carrying the tree away
 Clear to the ground. He always kept his poise
 To the top branches, climbing carefully
 With the same pains you use to fill a cup
 Up to the brim, and even above the brim.

Then he flung outward, feet first, with a swish,
 Kicking his way down through the air to the
 ground.

So was I once myself a swinger of birches.

5 And so I dream of going back to be.

It's when I'm weary of considerations,

And life is too much like a pathless wood

Where your face burns and tickles with the
 cobwebs

10 Broken across it, and one eye is weeping

From a twig's having lashed across it open.

I'd like to get away from earth awhile

And then come back to it and begin over.

May no fate willfully misunderstand me

15 And half grant what I wish and snatch me
 away

Not to return. Earth's the right place for love:

I don't know where it's likely to go better.

I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree,

20 And climb black branches up a snow-white
 trunk

Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no
 more,

But dipped its top and set me down again.

25 That would be good both going and coming
 back.

One could do worse than be a swinger of
 birches.

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,

And sorry I could not travel both

And be one traveler, long I stood

And looked down one as far as I could

To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,

And having perhaps the better claim,

Because it was grassy and wanted wear;

Though as for that the passing there

Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay

In leaves no step had trodden black.

Oh, I kept the first for another day!

Yet knowing how way leads on to way,

I doubted if I should ever come back.

50 I shall be telling this with a sigh

Somewhere ages and ages hence:

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—

LYRIC POETRY · CARL SANDBURG

I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

CARL SANDBURG

Sandburg (1878–), the son of Swedish immigrants, is the living embodiment of the familiar American idea that after hard knocks and adventure a good man can reach the top. Before Poetry circulated his poems he had tried various means of making a living, had enlisted for the Spanish-American War, and had then enrolled at Lombard College. In the earthy, vigorous tradition of Whitman, Sand- burg continued to sing the songs of the people, introducing topics and scenes unknown among the earlier Americans, who so often concentrated on flowers or birds and avoided unpleasantness or controversy. He has done a monumental study of Lincoln, written tales for children, and collected ballads and songs. His lectures and song programs are familiar to large audiences throughout the land. Literary history will probably mark Sandburg as a trail blazer who made poems to fit the tempo of a machine age in which "The People, Yes" proved that a functional democracy could be made up of many races and creeds.

CHICAGO*

Hog Butcher for the World,
Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat,
Player with Railroads and the Nation's
Freight Handler;
Stormy, husky, brawling,
City of the Big Shoulders:

They tell me you are wicked, and I believe
them; for I have seen your painted
women under the gas lamps luring the
farm boys.

And they tell me you are crooked, and I an-
swer: Yes, it is true I have seen the gun-
man kill and go free to kill again.

And they tell me you are brutal, and my reply
is: On the faces of women and children I
have seen the marks of wanton hunger.

And having answered so I turn once more to

those who sneer at this my city, and I give
them back the sneer and say to them:

Come and show me another city with lifted
head singing so proud to be alive and
coarse and strong and cunning.

Flinging magnetic curses amid the toil of pil-
ing job on job, here is a tall bold slugger
set vivid against the little soft cities;

Fierce as a dog with tongue lapping for action,
cunning as a savage pitted against the wil-
derness,

Bareheaded,

Shovelling,

Wrecking,

Planning,

Building, breaking, rebuilding.

Under the smoke, dust all over his mouth,
laughing with white teeth,

Under the terrible burden of destiny laughing
as a young man laughs,

Laughing even as an ignorant fighter laughs
who has never lost a battle,

Bragging and laughing that under his wrist is
the pulse, and under his ribs the heart of
the people,

Laughing!

Laughing the stormy, husky, brawling laugh-
ter of Youth, half-naked, sweating, proud
to be Hog Butcher, Tool Maker, Stacker
of Wheat, Player with Railroads and
Freight Handler to the Nation.

GRASS*

Pile the bodies high at Austerlitz and Water-
loo.

Shovel them under and let me work—

I am the grass; I cover all.

And pile them high at Gettysburg
And pile them high at Ypres and Verdun.

Shovel them under and let me work.

Two years, ten years, and passengers ask the
conductor:

What place is this?

Where are we now?

I am the grass.

Let me work.

* From *Chicago Poems* by Carl Sandburg. Copy-
right, 1916, by Henry Holt and Company.

* "Grass" and "Cool Tombs" are from *Corn-
huskers* by Carl Sandburg. Copyright, 1918, by
Henry Holt and Company.

COOL TOMBS

When Abraham Lincoln was shovelled into the
tombs, he forgot the copperheads and the
assassin . . . in the dust, in the cool
tombs.

And Ulysses Grant lost all thought of con men
and Wall Street, cash and collateral
turned ashes . . . in the dust, in the cool
tombs.

Pocahontas' body, lovely as a poplar, sweet as
a red haw in November or a pawpaw in
May, did she wonder? does she remem- 15
ber? . . . in the dust, in the cool tombs?

Take any streetful of people buying clothes
and groceries, cheering a hero or throw-
ing confetti and blowing tin horns . . . 20
tell me if the lovers are losers . . . tell
me if any get more than the lovers . . .
in the dust . . . in the cool tombs.

SMOKE AND STEEL*

Smoke of the fields in spring is one,
Smoke of the leaves in autumn another.
Smoke of a steel-mill roof or a battleship fun-
nel, 30
They all go up in a line with a smokestack,
Or they twist . . . in the slow twist . . . of
the wind.

If the north wind comes they run to the south. 35
If the west wind comes they run to the east.
By this sign
all smokes
know each other.

Smoke of the fields in spring and leaves in 40
autumn,

Smoke of the finished steel, chilled and blue,
By the oath of work they swear: 'I know
you.'

Hunted and hissed from the centre
Deep down long ago when God made us over,
Deep down are the cinders we came from—
You and I and our heads of smoke.

* From *Smoke and Steel* by Carl Sandburg,
copyright, 1920, by Harcourt, Brace and Com-
pany, Inc.

Some of the smokes God dropped on the job
Cross on the sky and count our years
And sing in the secrets of our numbers,
5 Sing their dawns and sing their evenings,
Sing an old log-fire song:
You may put the damper up,
You may put the damper down,
The smoke goes up the chimney just
the same.

Smoke of a city sunset skyline,
Smoke of a country dusk horizon—
They cross on the sky and count our
years.

Smoke of a brick-red dust
Winds on a spiral
Out of the stacks
20 For a hidden and glimpsing moon.
This, said the bar-men shed to the blooming
mill,
This is the slang of coal and steel.
The day-gang hands it to the night-gang,
25 The night-gang hands it back.

Stammer at the slang of this—
Let us understand half of it.
In the rolling mills and sheet mills,
30 In the harr and boom of the blast fires,
The smoke changes its shadow
And men change their shadow;
A nigger, a wop, a bohunk changes.
A bar of steel—it is only
Smoke at the heart of it, smoke and the blood
of a man.
A runner of fire ran in it, ran out, ran some-
where else,
And left—smoke and the blood of a man
40 And the finished steel, chilled and blue.

So fire runs in, runs out, runs somewhere else
again,
And the bar of steel is a gun, a wheel, a nail,
45 a shovel,
A rudder under the sea, a steering-gear in the
sky;
And always dark in the heart and through it,
Smoke and the blood of a man.
50 Pittsburg, Youngstown, Gary—they make their
steel with men.
In the blood of men and the ink of chimneys

The smoke nights write their oaths:
Smoke into steel and blood into steel;
Homestead, Braddock, Birmingham, they make
their steel with men.
Smoke and blood is the mix of steel.

The birdmen drone
in the blue; it is steel
a motor sings and zooms.

Steel barb-wire around The Works.
Steel guns in the holsters of the guards at the
gates of The Works.
Steel ore-boats bring the loads clawed from
the earth by steel, lifted and lugged by 15
arms of steel, sung on its way by the
clanking clam-shells.
The runners now, the handlers now, are steel;
they dig and clutch and haul; they hoist
their automatic knuckles from job to job; 20
they are steel making steel.
Fire and dust and air fight in the furnaces;
the pour is timed, the billets wriggle; the
clinkers are dumped:
Liners on the sea, skyscrapers on the land; 25
diving steel in the sea, climbing steel in
the sky.

Finders in the dark, you Steve with a dinner
bucket, you Steve clumping in the dusk 30
on the sidewalks with an evening paper
for the woman and kids, you Steve with
your head wondering where we all end
up—
Finders in the dark, Steve: I hook my arm in 35
cinder sleeves; we go down the street to-
gether; it is all the same to us; you Steve
and the rest of us end on the same stars;
we all wear a hat in hell together, in hell
or heaven.

Smoke nights now, Steve.
Smoke, smoke, lost in the sieves of
yesterday;
Dumped again to the scoops and hooks 45
to-day.
Smoke like the clocks and whistles, al-
ways.
Smoke nights now.
To-morrow something else. 50

Luck moons come and go;

Five men swim in a pot of red steel.
Their bones are kneaded into the bread of
steel:
Their bones are knocked into coils and anvils
5 And the sucking plungers of sea-fighting tur-
bines.
Look for them in the woven frame of a wireless
station.
So ghosts hide in steel like heavy-armed men
in mirrors. 10
Peepers, skulkers—they shadow-dance in
laughing tombs.
They are always there and they never answer.
One of them said: 'I like my job, the company
is good to me, America is a wonderful
country.'
One: 'Jesus, my bones ache; the company is a
liar; this is a free country, like hell.' 20
One: 'I got a girl, a peach; we save up and go
on a farm and raise pigs and be the boss
ourselves.'
And the others were roughneck singers a long
ways from home. 25
Look for them back of a steel vault door.

They laugh at the cost.
They lift the birdmen into the blue.
It is steel a motor sings and zooms.

In the subway plugs and drums,
In the slow hydraulic drills, in gumbo or
gravel,
35 Under dynamo shafts in the webs of armature
spiders.
They shadow-dance and laugh at the cost.
The ovens light a red dome.
40 Spools of fire wind and wind.
Quadrangles of crimson sputter.
The lashes of dying maroon let down.
Fire and wind wash out the slag.
Forever the slag gets washed in fire and wind
45 The anthem learned by the steel is:
Do this or go hungry.
Look for our rust on a plough.
Listen to us in a threshing-engine razz.
Look at our job in the running wagon wheat.
50 Fire and wind wash at the slag.
Box-cars, clocks, steam-shovels, churns, pis-

tons, boilers, scissors—
Oh, the sleeping slag from the mountains, the
slag-heavy pig-iron will go down many
roads.

Men will stab and shoot with it, and make
butter and tunnel rivers, and mow hay in
swaths, and slit hogs and skin beeves, and
steer airplanes across North America, Eu-
rope, Asia, round the world.

Hacked from a hard rock country, broken and
baked in mills and smelters, the rusty
dust waits

Till the clean hard weave of its atoms cripples
and blunts the drills chewing a hole in it.
The steel of its plinths and flanges is reckoned,
O God, in one-millionth of an inch.

Once when I saw the curves of fire, the rough
scarf women dancing,

Dancing out of the flues and smokestacks—
flying hair of fire, flying feet upside down,

Buckets and baskets of fire exploding and chor-
tling, fire running wild out of the steady
and fastened ovens;

Sparks cracking a hair-hair-huff from a solar-
plexus of rock-ribs of the earth taking a
laugh for themselves,

Ears and noses of fire, gibbering gorilla arms of
fire, gold mud-pies, gold bird-wings, red
jackets riding purple mules, scarlet auto-
crats tumbling from the humps of camels,
assassinated czars straddling vermilion
balloons;

I saw then the fires flash one by one, good-
bye: then smoke, smoke;

And in the screens the great sisters of night
and cool stars, sitting women arranging
their hair.

Waiting in the sky, waiting with slow easy
eyes, waiting and half-murmuring:

‘Since you know all
and I know nothing,
tell me what I dreamed last night.’

Pearl cobwebs in the windy rain,
in only a flicker of wind,
are caught and lost and never known again.

A pool of moonshine comes and waits,
but never waits long; the wind picks up
loose gold like this and is gone.

A bar of steel sleeps and looks slant-eyed
on the pearl cobwebs, the pools of moonshine;
sleeps slant-eyed a million years,
sleeps with a coat of rust, a vest of moths,
a shirt of gathering sod and loam.

The wind never bothers . . . a bar of steel
The wind picks only . . . pearl cobwebs . .
pools of moonshine.

JOHN MASEFIELD

Poet laureate after Bridges, John Masefield
(1878–) began life in sail (see Salt-Water
Ballads) and moved around soaking up ex-
perience which included humble odd jobs in
New York. He found fame in *The Everlasting*
Mercy but was criticized for dealing too forth-
rightly with life in the raw. Masefield wrote
with vigor, turning out plays and essays as well
as poetry. He could generally be counted on to
spin a good yarn. Recent poems, many written
for occasions in his capacity as laureate, have
not been outstanding.*

CARGOES

Quinquireme¹ of Nivech from distant Ophir,
Rowing home to haven in sunny Palestine,
With a cargo of ivory,
And apes and peacocks,
Sandalwood, cedarwood, and sweet white
wine.

Stately Spanish galleon coming from the Isth-
mus,
Dipping through the Tropics by the palm-
green shores,
With a cargo of diamonds,
Emeralds, amethysts,
Topazes, and cinnamon, and gold moidores.

Dirty British coaster with a salt-caked smoke
stack,
Butting through the Channel in the mad
March days,
With a cargo of Tyne coal,

* The following selections are from John Mase-
field, *Poems*, copyright, 1935. By permission of
The Macmillan Company, publishers.

¹ ancient boat with five banks of oars.

Road-rails, pig-lead,
Firewood, iron-ware, and cheap tin trays.

LONDON TOWN

Oh, London Town's a fine town, and London
sights are rare,
And London ale is right ale, and brisk's the
London air,
And busily goes the world there, but crafty 10
grows the mind,
And London Town of all towns I'm glad to
leave behind.

Then hey for croft and hop-yard, and hill, and 15
field, and pond,
With Bredon Hill before me and Malvern Hill
beyond.
The hawthorn white i' the hedgerow, and all
the spring's attire 20
In the comely land of Teme and Lugg, and
Clent, and Clee, and Wyre.

Oh, London girls are brave girls, in silk and
cloth o' gold,
And London shops are rare shops where gal-
lant things are sold,
And bonnily clinks the gold there, but drowsily
blinks the eye,
And London Town of all towns I'm glad to 30
hurry by.

Then hey for covert and woodland, and ash
and elm and oak,
Tewkesbury inns, and Malvern roofs, and 35
Worcester chimney smoke,
The apple trees in the orchard, the cattle in
the byre,
And all the land from Ludlow town to Bredon
church's spire. 40

Oh, London tunes are new tunes, and London
books are wise,
And London plays are rare plays, and fine to
country eyes, 45
But wretchedly fare the most there and merrily
fare the few,
And London Town of all towns I'm glad to
hurry through.

So hey for the road, the west road, by mill and
forge and fold,

Scent of the fern and song of the lark by brook
and field, and wold,
To the comely folk at the hearth-stone and the
talk beside the fire,
5 In the hearty land, where I was bred, my lanc
of heart's desire.

ON GROWING OLD

Be with me, Beauty, for the fire is dying;
My dog and I are old, too old for roving.
Man, whose young passion sets the spindrift
flying,
Is soon too lame to march, too cold for loving.

I take the book and gather to the fire,
Turning old yellow leaves; minute by minute
The clock ticks to my heart; a withered wire
Moves a thin ghost of music in the spinet. 20

I cannot sail your seas, I cannot wander
Your corn-land nor your hill-land nor your val-
leys
Ever again, nor share the battle yonder
25 Where the young knight the broken squadron
rallies;

Only stay quiet, while my mind remembers
The beauty of fire from the beauty of embers.

Beauty, have pity, for the strong have power,
The rich their wealth, the beautiful their grace,
Summer of man its sunlight and its flower,
Springtime of man all April in a face.

Only, as in the jostling in the Strand,¹
Where the mob thrusts or loiters or is loud,
The beggar with the saucer in his hand
Asks only a penny from the passing crowd,
40

So, from this glittering world with all its fash-
ion,
Its fire and play of men, its stir, its march,
Let me have wisdom, Beauty, wisdom and
passion, 45
Bread to the soul, rain where the summers
parch.

Give me but these, and though the darkness
close 50
Even the night will blossom as the rose.

¹ in London.

VACHEL LINDSAY

*Lindsay (1879–1931), like Sandburg, was born in Illinois and tried odd jobs (after a period as art student). He spent considerable time vagabonding up and down the land, lecturing and peddling poems for bread. He developed chant-like verses with refrain effects which allowed for audience participation in the manner of the old ballads but with more showmanship and not a little touch of the theater. His best poems, however, show a feeling for satire and a tired, pitying philosophy concerning man's muddling efforts to retain individuality in a genteel society. Although Lindsay eventually found life a wearing experience (he died by his own hand), his poems are always filled with a notable vitality.**

THE GHOSTS OF THE
BUFFALOES

Last night at black midnight I woke with a cry,
The windows were shaking, there was thunder
on high,
The floor was atremble, the door was ajar,
White fires, crimson fires, shone from afar.
I rushed to the dooryard. The city was gone.
My home was a hut without orchard or lawn.
It was mud-smear and logs near a whispering stream,
Nothing else built by man could I see in my dream . . .

Then . . .
Ghost-kings came headlong, row upon row,
Gods of the Indians, torches aglow.
They mounted the bear and the elk and the deer,
And eagles gigantic, agèd and sere,
They rode long-horn cattle, they cried
"A-la-la."
They lifted the knife, the bow, and the spear,
They lifted ghost-torches from dead fires below,
The midnight made grand with the cry
"A-la-la."

* The material which follows is from Lindsay's *Collected Poems*, copyright, 1925. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

The midnight made grand with a red-god charge,
A red-god show,
A red-god show,
5 "A-la-la, a-la-la, a-la-la, a-la-la."

With bodies like bronze, and terrible eyes
Came the rank and the file, with catamount cries,
10 Gibbering, yipping, with hollow-skull clacks,
Riding white bronchos with skeleton backs,
Scalp-hunters, beaded and spangled and bad,
Naked and lustful and foaming and mad,
Flashing primeval demoniac scorn,
15 Blood-thirst and pomp amid darkness reborn,
Power and glory that sleep in the grass
While the winds and the snows and the great rains pass.
They crossed the gray river, thousands abreast.
20 They rode out in infinite lines to the west,
Tide upon tide of strange fury and foam,
Spirits and wraiths, the blue was their home,
The sky was their goal where the star-flags are furled,
And on past those far golden splendors they whirled.
They burned to dim meteors, lost in the deep,
And I turned in dazed wonder, thinking of sleep.

And the wind crept by
Alone, unkempt, unsatisfied,
The wind cried and cried—
Muttered of massacres long past,
35 Buffaloes in shambles vast . . .
An owl said, "Hark, what is a-wing?"
I heard a cricket caroling,
I heard a cricket caroling,
I heard a cricket caroling.
40 Then . . .
Snuffing the lightning that crashed from on high
Rose royal old buffaloes, row upon row.
The lords of the prairie came galloping by.
45 And I cried in my heart "A-la-la, a-la-la."
A red-god show,
A red-god show,
A-la-la, a-la-la, a-la-la."
50 Buffaloes, buffaloes, thousands abreast,
A scourge and amazement, they swept to the west.

With black bobbing noses, with red rolling
tongues,
Coughing forth steam from their leather-
wrapped lungs,
Cows with their calves, bulls big and vain, 5
Goring the laggards, shaking the mane,
Stamping flint feet, flashing moon eyes,
Pompous and owlish, shaggy and wise.

Like sea-cliffs and caves resounded their ranks 10
With shoulders like waves, and undulant
flanks.
Tide upon tide of strange fury and foam,
Spirits and wraiths, the blue was their home,
The sky was their goal where the star-flags are 15
furled,
And on past those far golden splendors they
whirled.
They burned to dim meteors, lost in the deep,
And I turned in dazed wonder, thinking of 20
sleep.

I heard a cricket's cymbals play,
A scarecrow lightly flapped his rags,
And a pan that hung by his shoulder rang, 25
Rattled and thumped in a listless way,
And now the wind in the chimney sang,
The wind in the chimney,
The wind in the chimney,
Seemed to say:—
"Dream, boy, dream,
If you anywise can.
To dream is the work
Of beast or man.
Life is the west-going dream-storm's breath,
Life is a dream, the sigh of the skies,
The breath of the stars, that nod on their pil-
lows
With their golden hair mussed over their eyes." 40
The locust played on his musical wing,
Sang to his mate of love's delight.
I heard the whippoorwill's soft fret.
I heard a cricket caroling,
I heard a cricket caroling, 45
I heard a cricket say: "Good-night, good-night,
Good-night, good-night, . . . good-night."

FACTORY WINDOWS ARE
ALWAYS BROKEN

Factory windows are always broken.
Somebody's always throwing bricks,

Somebody's always heaving cinders,
Playing ugly Yahoo¹ tricks.

Factory windows are always broken.
Other windows are let alone.
No one throws through the chapel-windo
The bitter, snarling derisive stone.

Factory windows are always broken.
Something or other is going wrong.
Something is rotten—I think, in Denmark
End of the factory-window song.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN WALKS
AT MIDNIGHT

(IN SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS)

It is portentous, and a thing of state
That here at midnight, in our little town
A mourning figure walks, and will not rest,
Near the old court-house pacing up and down

Or by his homestead, or in shadowed yards
25 He lingers where his children used to play,
Or through the market, on the well-worn
stones
He stalks until the dawn-stars burn away.

30 A bronzed, lank man! His suit of ancient black,
A famous high top-hat and plain worn shawl
Make him the quaint great figure that men
love,
The prairie-lawyer, master of us all.

35 He cannot sleep upon his hillside now.
He is among us:—as in times before!
And we who toss and lie awake for long
Breathe deep, and start, to see him pass the
door.

His head is bowed. He thinks on men and
kings.
Yes, when the sick world cries, how can he
sleep?
45 Too many peasants fight, they know not why,
Too many homesteads in black terror weep.

The sins of all the war-lords burn his heart.
50 He sees the dreadnaughts scouring every main.

¹ in *Gulliver's Travels* a dirty, degenerate form
of man.

He carries on his shawl-wrapped shoulders
now
The bitterness, the folly and the pain.

He cannot rest until a spirit-dawn 5
Shall come;—the shining hope of Europe free:
The league of sober folk, the Workers' Earth,
Bringing long peace to Cornland, Alp and Sea.

It breaks his heart that kings must murder still, 10
That all his hours of travail here for men
Seem yet in vain. And who will bring white
peace
That he may sleep upon his hill again? 15

THE LEADEN-EYED

Let not young souls be smothered out before
They do quaint deeds and fully flaunt their 20
pride.
It is the world's one crime its babes grow dull
Its poor are ox-like, limp and leaden-eyed.

Not that they starve, but starve so dreamlessly, 25
Not that they sow, but that they seldom reap,
Not that they serve, but have no gods to serve,
Not that they die but that they die like sheep.

WALLACE STEVENS

A Harvard man, Stevens (1879–) is an of-
ficer in a well-known insurance company. In-
fluenced by French symbolists, he developed 35
an original form of poetry which has won him
many critics' awards. He was recently men-
tioned prominently in the press coverages of
Poetry's 35th anniversary. Stevens has a re-
stricted appeal because of his concern with
sound effects, moving words about, creating
impressions. A student who knows only tradi-
tional verse may have trouble working out his
titles and symbols, but with effort may experi-
ence the pleasure of recognizing wit, nearness,
and, subtly hidden, a deep preoccupation with
human values on the one hand and polished
form on the other.*

* The selections which follow this headnote are
reprinted from *Harmonium* by Wallace Stevens,
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THE PALTRY NUDE STARTS ON A SPRING VOYAGE

But not on a shell, she starts,
Archaic, for the sea.
But on the first-found weed
She scuds the glitters,
Noiselessly, like one more wave.

She too is discontent
And would have purple stuff upon her arms,
Tired of the salty harbors,
Eager for the brine and bellowing
Of the high interiors of the sea.

The wind speeds her,
Blowing upon her hands
And watery back.
She touches the clouds, where she goes
In the circle of her traverse of the sea.

Yet this is meagre play
In the scurry and water-shine,
As her heels foam—
Not as when the goldener nude
Of a later day

Will go, like the centre of sea-green pomp,
In an intenser calm,
30 Scullion of fate,
Across the spick torrent, ceaselessly,
Upon her irretrievable way.

THE EMPEROR OF ICE-CREAM

Call the roller of big cigars,
The muscular one, and bid him whip
In kitchen cups concupiscent curds.
Let the wenches dawdle in such dress 40
As they are used to wear, and let the boys
Bring flowers in last month's newspapers.
Let be be finale of seem.
The only emperor is the emperor of ice-cream.

45 Take from the dresser of deal,
Lacking the three glass knobs, that sheet
On which she embroidered fantails once
And spread it so as to cover her face.
If her horny feet protrude, they come
50 To show how cold she is, and dumb.
Let the lamp affix its beam.
The only emperor is the emperor of ice-cream.

PETER QUINCE AT THE CLAVIER

1

Just as my fingers on these keys
Make music, so the self-same sounds
On my spirit make a music too.

Music is feeling then, not sound;
And thus it is that what I feel,
Here in this room, desiring you,

Thinking of your blue-shadowed silk,
Is music. It is like the strain
Waked in the elders by Susanna:¹

Of a green evening, clear and warm,
She bathed in her still garden, while
The red-eyed elders, watching, felt

The basses of their being throb
In witching chords, and their thin blood
Pulse pizzicati of Hosanna.

2

In the green evening, clear and warm,
Susanna lay.
She searched
The touch of springs,
And found
Concealed imaginings.
She sighed,
For so much melody.

Upon the bank, she stood
In the cool
Of spent emotions.
She felt, among the leaves,
The dew
Of old devotions.

She walked upon the grass,
Still quavering.
The winds were like her maids
On timid feet,
Fetching her woven scarves,
Yet wavering.

A breath upon her hand
Muted the night.

She turned—
A cymbal crashed,
And roaring horns.

3

Soon, with a noise like tambourines,
Came her attendant Byzantines.

They wondered why Susanna cried
Against the elders by her side;

And as they whispered, the refrain
Was like a willow swept by rain.

Anon their lamps' uplifted flame
Revealed Susanna and her shame.

And then the simpering Byzantines,
Fled, with a noise like tambourines.

4

Beauty is momentary in the mind—
The fitful tracing of a portal;
But in the flesh it is immortal.

The body dies; the body's beauty lives.
So evenings die, in their green going,
A wave, interminably flowing.

So gardens die, their meek breath scenting
The cowl of Winter, done repenting.
So maidens die to the auroral
Celebration of a maiden's choral.

Susanna's music touched the bawdy strings
Of those white elders; but, escaping,
Left only Death's ironic scraping.
Now in its immortality, it plays
On the clear viol of her memory,
And makes a constant sacrament of praise.

WITTER BYNNER

45 *Bynner (1881–) began writing while he was at Harvard. His successive volumes showed a growing lyric talent. Living most of the time in New Mexico, Bynner has had the wisdom to use the Indian background of the region, thus opening up much unfamiliar material which is part of our national heritage. In another field Bynner has shown unusual interest—transla-*

¹ See *History of Susanna* in apochryphal books of Old Testament.

tion from the Chinese. Years ago he received much publicity for participating in a successful literary hoax in which the work of two "new" poets (using pseudonyms) appeared and was soberly reviewed.

WHITMAN*

As voices enter earth,
Into your great frame and windy beard
Have entered many voices,
And out of your great frame and windy beard,
As out of earth,
They are shaken free again . . .

With the thunder and the butterfly,
With the sea crossing like runners the tape of
the beach,
With machinery and tools and the sweat of
men,
With all lovers and comrades combining,
With the odour of redwoods and the whisper
of death,
Comes your prophetic presence,
Never to be downed, never to be dissuaded
from singing
The comfortable counsel of the earth
And from moving—athletic, intimate, sure,
nonchalant—
Friending whoever is friends with himself,
Accusing only avoiders, tamperers, fabricators,
And yet touching with your finger-tips
All men,
As Michael-Angelo imagined God
Touching with sap the finger-tips of Adam.

A FARMER REMEMBERS
LINCOLN**

"Lincoln?—
Well, I was in the old Second Maine,
The first regiment in Washington from the Pine
Tree State.

* Reprinted from *A Canticle of Pan* by Witter Bynner, by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Copyright 1920 by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Copyright 1948 by Witter Bynner.

** This and the following poem are reprinted from *Selected Poems* by Witter Bynner, by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. "A Farmer Remembers Lincoln," copyright 1917, 1928, 1936 by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. "A Dance for Rain," copyright 1929, 1936 by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

Of course I didn't get the butt of the clip,
We was there for guardin' Washington—
We was all green.

5 "I ain't never ben to but one theatre in my
life—
I didn't know how to behave.
I am't never ben since.
I can see as plain as my hat the box where he
10 sat in
When he was shot.
I can tell you, sir, there was a pame
When we found our President was in the shape
he was in!
15 Never saw a soldier in the world but what
liked him.

"Yes, sir. His looks was kind o' hard to forget.
He was a spare man,
20 An old farmer.
Everything was all right, you know,
But he wan't a smooth-appearin' man at all—
Not in no ways;
Thin-faced, long-necked,
25 And a swellin' kind of a thick lip like.

"And he was a jolly old fellow—always cheer-
ful;
He wan't so high but the boys could talk to
30 him their own ways.
While I was servin' at the hospital,
He'd come in and say, "You look nice in here,"
Praise us up, you know.
And he'd bend over and talk to the boys—
35 And he'd talk so good to 'em—so close—
That's why I call him a farmer.
I don't mean that everything about him wan't
all right, you understand,
It's just—well, I was a farmer—
40 And he was my neighbour, anybody's neigh-
bour.

"I guess even you young folks would 'a' liked
him."

A DANCE FOR RAIN

(COCHITI)

50 You may never see rain, unless you see
A dance for rain at Cochiti,¹

¹ near Santa Fe, N. M.

LYRIC POETRY · SARA TEASDALE

Never hear thunder in the air
 Unless you hear the thunder there,
 Nor know the lightning in the sky
 If there's no pole to know it by.
 They dipped the pole just as I came,
 And I can never be the same
 Since those feathers gave my brow
 The touch of wind that's on it now,
 Bringing over the arid lands
 Butterfly gestures from Hopi hands
 And holding me, till earth shall fail,
 As close to earth as a fox's tail.

I saw them, naked, dance in line
 Before the candles of a leafy shrine:
 Before a saint in a Christian dress
 I saw them dance their holiness,
 I saw them reminding him all day long
 That death is weak and life is strong
 And urging the fertile earth to yield
 Seed from the loin and seed from the field.
 A feather in the hair and a shell at the throat
 Were lifting and falling with every note
 Of the chorus-voices and the drum,
 Calling for the rain to come.
 A fox on the back, and shaken on the thigh
 Rain-cloth woven from the sky,
 And under the knee a turtle-rattle
 Clacking with the toes of sheep and cattle—
 These were the men, their bodies painted
 Earthen, with a white rain slanted;
 These were the men, a windy line,
 Their elbows green with a growth of pine.
 And in among them, close and slow,
 Women moved, the way things grow,
 With a mesa-tablet on the head
 And a little grassy creeping tread
 And with sprays of pine moved back and forth,
 While the dance of the men blew from the
 north,
 Blew from the south and east and west
 Over the field and over the breast.
 And the heart was beating in the drum,
 Beating for the rain to come.

Dead men out of earlier lives,
 Leaving their graves, leaving their wives,
 Were partly flesh and partly clay,
 And their heads were corn that was dry and
 gray.
 They were ghosts of men and once again
 They were dancing like a ghost of rain;

For the spirits of men, the more they eat,
 Have happier hands and lighter feet,
 And the better they dance the better they
 know

5 How to make corn and children grow.

And so in Cochiti that day,
 They slowly put the sun away
 And they made a cloud and they made it break
 10 And they made it rain for the children's sake.
 And they never stopped the song or the drum
 Pounding for the rain to come.

The rain made many suns to shine,
 15 Golden bodies in a line
 With leaping feather and swaying pine.
 And the brighter the bodies, the brighter the
 rain
 Where thunder heaped it on the plain.
 20 Arroyos had been empty, dry,
 But now were running with the sky;
 And the dancers' feet were in a lake,
 Dancing for the people's sake.
 And the hands of a ghost had made a cup
 25 For scooping handfuls of water up;
 And he poured it into a ghostly throat,
 And he leaped and waved with every note
 Of the dancers' feet and the songs of the drum
 That had called the rain and made it come.

30 For this was not a god of wood,
 This was a god whose touch was good,
 You could lie down in him and roll
 And wet your body, and wet your soul;
 35 For this was not a god in a book,
 This was a god that you tasted and took
 Into a cup that you made with your hands,
 Into your children and into your lands,
 This was a god that you could see,
 40 Rain, rain, in Cochiti!

SARA TEASDALE

45 *Sara Teasdale (1884–1933) sometimes reads
 like a later Christina Rossetti or an early Mil-
 lay; she wrote personally in a tradition of fe-
 male frankness which Emily Dickinson estab-
 lished. Like Emily, Sara lived in obscurity—in
 50 her case, however, because her marriage had
 failed. She, too, was a prolific writer with
 much public favor. Her mood poetry shows*

great capability and marked clarity. She kept away from external questions but, while singing her own emotions, reached universal desires and frustrations. Her strange and premature death stopped abruptly a voice which must have had more lovely things to say.

BURIED LOVE*

I have come to bury Love
Beneath a tree,
In the forest tall and black
Where none can see.

I shall put no flowers at his head,
Nor stone at his feet,
For the mouth I loved so much
Was bittersweet.

I shall go no more to his grave,
For the woods are cold.
I shall gather as much of joy
As my hands can hold.

I shall stay all day in the sun
Where the wide winds blow,—
But oh, I shall cry at night
When none will know.

I SHALL NOT CARE

When I am dead and over me bright April
Shakes out her rain-drenched hair,
Though you should lean above me broken-
hearted,
I shall not care.

I shall have peace, as leafy trees are peaceful
When rain bends down the bough,
And I shall be more silent and cold-hearted
Than you are now.

BARTER

Life has loveliness to sell,
All beautiful and splendid things,
Blue waves whitened on a cliff,

* "Buried Love" is from Sara Teasdale, *Helen of Troy & Other Poems*, copyright, 1911. The other three poems are from Sara Teasdale, *Collected Poems*, copyright, 1937. All are reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

Soaring fire that sways and sings,
And children's faces looking up,
Holding wonder like a cup.

Life has loveliness to sell,
Music like a curve of gold,
Scent of pine trees in the rain,
Eves that love you, arms that hold,
And for your spirit's still delight,
Holy thoughts that star the night.

Spend all you have for loveliness,
Buy it and never count the cost;
For one white singing hour of peace
Count many a year of strife well lost,
And for a breath of ecstasy
Give all you have been, or could be.

WISDOM

It was a night of early spring,
The winter-sleep was scarcely broken;
Around us shadows and the wind
Listened for what was never spoken.

Though half a score of years are gone,
Spring comes as sharply now as then—
But if we had it all to do
It would be done the same again.

It was a spring that never came;
But we have lived enough to know
That what we never have, remains;
It is the things we have that go.

ELINOR WYLIE

Elinor Wylie (1885–1928) came from an old, distinguished family. She was born in Society (Washington, D. C.) and lived in it. After an uneven love life marked by romantic elopement she married the poet, William Rose Benét (her third husband). Well read, educated in private schools, Miss Wylie displayed her erudition in novels and poems wherein the influence of Shelley, Peacock, and Donne is particularly marked. (As Keats was to Amy Lowell, Shelley was to Elinor Wylie.) Her romantic work was first published in England, but she eventually won fame in the land of her birth. (For further biographical details see II, 380.)

LYRIC POETRY · ELINOR WYLIE

*Possessing an unusual mind and strong emotions, the poet managed to avoid pure feeling or dry intellectualism by steering a melodious middle course.**

THE EAGLE AND THE MOLE

Avoid the reeking herd,
Shun the polluted flock,
Live like that stoic bird,
The eagle of the rock.

5

Which on all living creatures lies,
Nor stoops to pity in the toad
The speechless sorrow of its eyes.

He asks no questions of the snake,
Nor plumbs the phosphorescent gloom
Where lidless fishes, broad awake,
Swim staring at a night-mare doom.

10

VELVET SHOES

The huddled warmth of crowds
Begets and fosters hate;
He keeps, above the clouds,
His cliff inviolate.

15

Let us walk in the white snow
In a soundless space,
With footsteps quiet and slow,
At a tranquil pace,
Under veils of white lace.

When flocks are folded warm,
And herds to shelter run,
He sails above the storm,
He stares into the sun.

20

I shall go shod in silk,
And you in wool,
White as a white cow's milk,
More beautiful
Than the breast of a gull.

If in the eagle's track
Your snews cannot leap,
Avoid the lathered pack,
Turn from the steaming sheep.

25

We shall walk through the still town
In a windless peace;
We shall step upon white down,
Upon silver fleece,
Upon softer than these.

If you would keep your soul
From spotted sight or sound,
Live like the velvet mole;
Go burrow underground.

30

We shall walk in velvet shoes:
Wherever we go
Silence will fall like dews
On white silence below.
We shall walk in the snow.

And there hold intercourse
With roots of trees and stones,
With rivers at their source,
And disembodied bones.

35

COLD-BLOODED CREATURES

Man, the egregious egoist
(In mystery the twig is bent),
Imagines, by some mental twist,
That he alone is sentient

40

Of the intolerable load

45

LOVE SONG

Had I concealed my love
And you so loved me longer,
Since all the wise reprove
Confession of that hunger
In any human creature,
It had not been my nature.

I could not so insult
The beauty of that spirit
Who like a thunderbolt
Has broken me, or near it;
To love I have been candid,
Honest, and open-handed.

* Reprinted from *Collected Poems of Elinor Wylie*, by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. "The Eagle and the Mole," copyright 1921, 1932 by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.; "Cold-Blooded Creatures," copyright 1923, 1932 by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.; "Velvet Shoes," copyright 1921, 1932 by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.; "Love Song," copyright 1932 by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

Although I love you well
 And shall for ever love you,
 I set that archangel
 The depths of heaven above you;
 And I shall lose you, keeping
 His word, and no more weeping.

SIEGFRIED SASOON

*Sassoon (1886–), a Cambridge man, became one of the outstanding young poets of World War I. Although he was decorated for valiant performance, he rarely found war anything but a nightmare of folly. His attitude of indignation and bitterness over the horrors of modern warfare is at the opposite pole from Rupert Brooke's. With peace Sassoon could resume a more pleasant life which included fox hunting, a sport which gives title to his Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man. During World War II he moderated his earlier stand and campaigned vigorously to awake Britain to the necessity for all-out defense.**

THE REAR-GUARD

Groping along the tunnel, step by step,
 He winked his prying torch with patching
 glare
 From side to side, and sniffed the unwhole-
 some air.
 Tins, boxes, bottles, shapes too vague to know.
 A mirror smashed, the mattress from a bed,
 And he, exploring fifty feet below
 The rosy gloom of battle overhead.
 Tripping, he grabbed the wall, saw someone
 lie
 Humped at his feet, half-hidden by a rug,
 And stooped to give the sleeper's arm a tug.
 "I'm looking for headquarters." No reply
 "God blast your neck!" (For days he'd had no
 sleep.)
 "Get up and guide me through this stinking
 place."
 Savage, he kicked a soft, unanswering heap,
 And flashed his beam across the livid face
 Terribly glaring up, whose eyes yet wore
 Agony dying hard ten days before;
 And fists of fingers clutched a blackening

* The poems which follow are from *Counter Attack*, published by E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc. Copyright, 1940, by Siegfried Sassoon.

wound.
 Alone he staggered on until he found
 Dawn's ghost that filtered down a shafted stair
 To the dazed, muttering creatures under-
 ground
 Who hear the boom of shells in muffled sound.
 At last, with sweat of horror in his hair,
 He climbed through darkness to the twilight
 air,
 Unloading hell behind him step by step.

COUNTER-ATTACK

We'd gained our first objective hours before
 While dawn broke like a face with blinking
 eyes,
 Pallid, unshaved and thirsty, blind with smoke.
 Things seemed all right at first. We held their
 line,
 With bombers posted, Lewis guns well placed,
 And clink of shovels deepening the shallow
 trench.
 The place was rotten with dead; green clumsy
 legs
 High-booted, sprawled and groveled along the
 saps;
 And trunks, face downward in the sucking
 mud,
 Wallowed like trodden sand-bags, loosely
 filled;
 And naked, sodden buttocks, mats of hair,
 Bulged, clotted heads, slept in the plastering
 slime.
 And then the rain began—the jolly old rain!
 A yawning soldier knelt against the bank,
 Staring across the morning blear with fog;
 He wondered when the Allemands would get
 busy;
 And then, of course, they started with five-
 nines
 Traversing, sure as fate, and never a dud.
 Mute in the clamor of shells he watched them
 burst
 Spouting dark earth and wire with gusts from
 hell,
 While posturing giants dissolved in drifts of
 smoke.
 He crouched and flinched, dizzy with gallop-
 ing fear,
 Sick for escape,—loathing the strangled horror
 And butchered, frantic gestures of the dead.

An officer came blundering down the trench:
"Stand-to and man the fire-step!" On he
went. . . .

Gasping and hawling, "Fire-step . . . counter-
attack!"

Then the haze lifted. Bombing on the right
Down the old sap: machine guns on the left;
And stumbling figures looming out in front.

"O Christ, they're coming at us!" Bullets spat,
And he remembered his rifle . . . rapid
fire . . .

And started blazing wildly . . . then a bang
Crumpled and spun him sideways, knocked
him out

To grunt and wriggle: none heeded him; he
choked

And fought the flapping veils of smothering
gloom,

Lost in a blurred confusion of yells and
groans . . .

Down, and down, and down, he sank and
drowned.

Bleeding to death. The counter-attack had
failed.

DOES IT MATTER?

Does it matter?—losing your leg? . . .
For people will always be kind,
And you need not show that you mind
When the others come in after hunting
To gobble their muffins and eggs.

Does it matter?—losing your sight? . . .
There's such splendid work for the blind;
And people will always be kind,
As you sit on the terrace remembering
And turning your face to the light.

Do they matter?—those dreams from the
pit? . . .

You can drink and forget and be glad,
And people won't say that you're mad;
For they'll know that you've fought for your
country,

And no one will worry a bit.

RUPERT BROOKE

*Brilliant and promising member of an unusu-
ally gifted group of young British war poets,
Brooke (1887–1915) died of illness on his way*

*to the Dardanelles. His verses are remarkabl
for their spirit of youth, their basic idealism
patriotism, and sheer singing joy in life; his at-
titude toward war, perhaps because he did no
live to see much of it, is in sharp contrast to thi
tired cynicism, however justifiable, of Sassoon
and Owen.**

THE GREAT LOVER

I have been so great a lover: filled my days
So proudly with the splendor of Love's praise
The pain, the calm, and the astonishment,
Desire illimitable, and still content,

15 And all dear names men use, to cheat despair,
For the perplexed and viewless streams that
bear

Our hearts at random down the dark of life.
Now, ere the unthinking silence on that strife

20 Steals down, I would cheat drowsy Death so
far,

My night shall be remembered for a star
That outshone all the suns of all men's days.

Shall I not crown them with immortal praise

25 Whom I have loved, who have given me, dared
with me

High secrets, and in darkness knelt to see
The inenarrable¹ godhead of delight?

Love is a flame:—we have beaconed the
30 world's night.

A city:—and we have built it, these and I.

An emperor:—we have taught the world to
die.

So, for their sakes I loved, ere I go hence,

35 And the high cause of Love's magnificence,
And to keep loyalties young, I'll write those
names

Golden for ever, eagles, crying flames,

And set them as a banner, that men may
know,

To dare the generations, burn, and blow

Out on the wind of Time, shining and stream-
ing. . . .

45 These I have loved:

White plates and cups, clean-gleaming,

* The material which follows is from *The Col-
lected Poems of Rupert Brooke*. Copyright 1915
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Stewart, Ltd.

¹ indescribable.

Ringed with blue lines; and feathery, faery
dust;
Wet roofs, beneath the lamp-light, the strong
crust
Of friendly bread; and many-tasting food;
Rainbows; and the blue bitter smoke of wood,
And radiant raindrops couching in cool flow-
ers;
And flowers themselves, that sway through
sunny hours,
Dreaming of moths that drink them under the
moon;
Then, the cool kindness of sheets, that soon
Smooth away trouble; and the rough male kiss
Of blankets; grainy wood, hve hair that is
Shining and free; blue-massing clouds, the
keen
Unpassioned beauty of a great machine;
The benison of hot water, furs to touch,
The good smell of old clothes, and other
such—
The comfortable smell of friendly fingers,
Hair's fragrance, and the musty reek that
lingers
About dead leaves and last year's ferns. . . . 25

Dear names,
And thousand others throng to me! Royal
flames;
Sweet water's dimpling laugh from tap or 30
spring;
Holes in the ground; and voices that do sing;
Voices in laughter, too, and body's pain,
Soon turned to peace; and the deep-panting
train;
Firm sands; the little dulling edge of foam
That browns and dwindles as the wave goes
home;
And washen stones, gay for an hour, the cold
Graveness of iron; moist black earthen mold,
Sleep; and high places, footprints in the dew,
And oaks; and brown horse-chestnuts, glossy-
new;
And new-peeled sticks; and shining pools on
grass;—
All these have been my loves. And these shall
pass,
Whatever passes not, in the great hour,
Nor all my passion, all my prayers, have
power
To hold them with me through the gate of
Death.

They'll play deserter, turn with the traitor
breath,
Break the high bond we made, and sell Love's
trust
5 And sacramental covenant to the dust.
—Oh, never a doubt but, somewhere, I shall
wake,
And give what's left of love again, and make
New friends now strangers. . . .
10 But the best I've known
Stays here, and changes, breaks, grows old, is
blown
About the winds of the world, and fades from
brains
15 Of living men, and dies.
Nothing remains.
O dear my loves, O faithless, once again
This one last gift I give: that after men
20 Shall know, and later lovers, far-removed
Praise you, "All these were lovely"; say, "He
loved."

THE DEAD

These hearts were woven of human joys and
cares,
Washed marvelously with sorrow, swift to
mirth.
30 The years had given them kindness.
Dawn was theirs,
And sunset, and the colors of the earth.
These had seen movement, and heard music;
known
35 Slumber and waking, loved, gone proudly
friended;
Felt the quick stir of wonder; sat alone;
Touched flowers and furs and cheeks.
All this is ended.
40 There are waters blown by changing winds to
laughter
And lit by the rich skies, all day. And after,
Frost, with a gesture, stays the waves that
dance
45 And wandering loveliness. He leaves a white
Unbroken glory, a gathered radiance,
A width, a shining peace, under the night.

THE SOLDIER

50 If I should die, think only this of me;
That there's some corner of a foreign field

LYRIC POETRY · ROBINSON JEFFERS

That is for ever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made
aware,

Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to
roam,
A body of England's breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by
England given;

Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her
day;

And laughter, learnt of friends, and gentle-
ness,

In hearts at peace, under an English
heaven.

ROBINSON JEFFERS

Jeffers (1887-) was schooled abroad and in America (Occidental College and University of Southern California). He might have been a lawyer or some other type of professional man if interest in poetry and a timely legacy had not combined to woo him away to the shores of the Pacific, where he lives in a tower-house hewn out with his own hands. Roan Stallion made his name known. There have been many other long poems impossible to anthologize for various reasons. Violent drama plays a large part in Jeffers's work. His characters have strong passions and lead unconventional lives. Against the background of Carmel and Monterey trees, rocks, and sea Jeffers poses his men and women. Most of them are doomed; whatever life there is seems to be for those who live in an elemental state of emotion. Naturally there are episodes of considerable power in Tamar, Thurso's Landing, and the rest; but there are also characters who are stupid or spineless instead of being tragic; and the stories tend to repeat ideas, situations, and words, especially place names like Point Lobos, until the cumulative effect is not overwhelming, but monotonous. On the whole, as Untermeyer has said, it is "poetry we may never love but which we cannot forget." The shorter pieces which follow are rather conventional, unsensational (many readers of Jeffers are not interested in

*poetry but in another form of vicarious experience), yet illustrative of the poet's abilities.**

SHINE, PERISHING REPUBLIC

While this America settles in the mould of its
vulgarity,
heavily thickening to empire,

10 And protest, only a bubble in the molten mass,
pops and
sighs out, and the mass hardens,

I sadly remember that the flower fades to
15 make fruit,
the fruit rots to make earth.

Out of the mother, and through the spring
exultances,

20 ripeness and decadence; and home to the
mother.

You making haste haste on decay: not blame-
worthy, life is

35 good, be it stubbornly long or suddenly
A mortal splendor: meteors are not needed
less than
mountains: shine, perishing republic.

But for my children, I would rather have them
30 keep their distance

from the thickening center; corruption
Never has been compulsory, when the cities
lie at the
monster's feet there are left the mountains.

35 And boys, be in nothing so moderate as in love
of man, a
clever servant, insufferable master.

There is the trap that catches noblest spirits,
that caught—
40 they say—God, when he walked on earth.

NEW MEXICAN MOUNTAIN

45 I watch the Indians dancing to help the young
corn at Taos
pueblo. The old men squat in a ring
And make the song, the young women with fat
bare arms, and a

* The following selections copyright, 1938, by Robinson Jeffers.

few shame-faced young men, shuffle the
dance.

The lean-muscled young men are naked to the
narrow loins,
their breasts and backs daubed with white
clay,
Two eagle-feathers plume the black heads.
They dance with
reluctance, they are growing civilized; the
old men persuade them.

Only the drum is confident, it thinks the world
has not changed;
the beating heart, the simplest of rhythms. 15
It thinks the world has not changed at all; it is
only a dreamer,
a brainless heart, the drum has no eyes.

These tourists have eyes, the hundred watch- 20
ing the dance, white
Americans, hungrily too, with reverence,
not laughter;
Pilgrims from civilization, anxiously seeking
beauty, religion,
poetry; pilgrims from the vacuum.

People from cities, anxious to be human again.
Poor show how
they suck you empty! The Indians are 30
emptied,
And certainly there was never religion enough,
nor beauty nor
poetry here . . . to fill Americans.

Only the drum is confident, it thinks the world
has not changed.
Apparently only myself and the strong
Tribal drum, and the rockhead of Taos moun-
tain, remember
that civilization is a transient sickness.

BOATS IN A FOG

Sports and gallantries, the stage, the arts, the 45
antics of dancers,
The exuberant voices of music,
Have charm for children but lack nobility; it
is bitter earnestness
That makes beauty; the mind 50
Knows, grown adult.
A sudden fog-drift muffled the ocean,

A throbbing of engines moved in it,
At length, a stone's throw out, between the
rocks and the vapor,
One by one moved shadows
5 Out of the mystery, shadows, fishing-boats,
trailing each other
Following the cliff for guidance,
Holding a difficult path between the peril of
the sea-fog
10 And the foam on the shore granite.
One by one, trailing their leader, six crept by
me,
Out of the vapor and into it,
The throb of their engines subdued by the fog,
15 patient and cautious,
Coasting all round the peninsula
Back to the buoys in Monterey harbor. A flight
of pelicans
Is nothing lovelier to look at;
20 The flight of the planets is nothing nobler; all
the arts lose virtue
Against the essential reality
Of creatures going about their business among
the equally
25 Earnest elements of nature.

HOPE IS NOT FOR THE WISE

30 Hope is not for the wise, fear is for fools,
Change and the world, we think, are racing to
a fall,
Open-eyed and helpless, in every newscast
that is the news:
35 The time's events would seem mere chaos but
all
Drift the one deadly direction. But this is only
The August thunder of the age, not the No-
vember.
40 Wise men hope nothing, the wise are naturally
lonely
And think November as good as April, the wise
remember
That Caesar and even final Augustulus had
heirs,
And men lived on; rich unplanned life on earth
After the foreign wars and the civil wars, the
border wars
And the barbarians: music and religion, honor
and mirth
50 Renewed life's lost enchantments. But if life
even

LYRIC POETRY · T. S. ELIOT

Had perished utterly, Oh perfect loveliness of
earth and heaven.

T. S. ELIOT

*T. S. Eliot (1888–) is among the most discussed of modern American poets. After being exposed to Harvard and Oxford, Eliot did lecturing and editing in London, and eventually became a British subject. He has published poetry and criticism and has lectured on both sides of the Atlantic. His poems have been attacked by some for their obscurity, their lack of music or joy; they have been called "devoid of beauty," "over-intellectual," etc. Certainly Eliot is rich in allusion and symbolism. Whether the pleasure of recognizing his allusions is a poetic experience (or merely an expression of egotistic delight); what the ratio of beauty to intellectualism is; how many people have to appreciate a poet to justify his being taken seriously, and what people—these are some questions for the student to consider. Even Eliot seems to be uncertain, to be tortured with the doubts of Donne. The former prophet of the Waste Land has shown signs of going back to God; the critic who blasted Milton is now praising his strength. For better or worse, Eliot has had an effect on other poets and has shaken off many conventional bonds of subject matter and technique. Whether one likes or dislikes his work, it won for the poet a Nobel Prize in 1948.**

THE LOVE SONG OF J. ALFRED PRUFROCK

*S'io credesse che mia risposta fosse
A persona che mai tornasse al mondo,
Questa fiamma staria senza piu scosse.
Ma perciocche giammai di questo fondo
Non torno vivo alcun, s'i'odo il vero,
Senza tema d'infamia ti rispondo.¹*

* The selections which follow are from *Collected Poems 1909–1935* by T. S. Eliot, copyright, 1934, 1936, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Brace, and of Faber and Faber, Ltd.

¹ See Dante's *Inferno*, XXVII, 61–66. Freely translated, this speech of Guido da Montefeltro reads: "If I thought that I were answering some-

Let us go then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherized upon a table;
Let us go, through certain half-deserted
streets,

The muttering retreats
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels
And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:
Streets that follow like a tedious argument
Of insidious intent
To lead you to an overwhelming ques-
tion. . . .
Oh, do not ask, "What is it?"
Let us go and make our visit.

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the
window-panes,
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the
window-panes,
Licked its tongue into the corners of the eve-
ning,
Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,
Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from
chimneys,
Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,
And seeing that it was a soft October night,
Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.

And indeed there will be time
For the yellow smoke that slides along the
street,
Rubbing its back upon the window panes;
There will be time, there will be time
To prepare a face to meet the faces that you
meet;
There will be time to murder and create,
And time for all the works and days of hands
That lift and drop a question on your plate;
Time for you and time for me,
And time yet for a hundred indecisions,
And for a hundred visions and revisions,
Before the taking of a toast and tea.

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

one who could ever go back to the world, this
flame would stand still. But since, if I have been
correctly informed, nobody ever did return, I re-
ply without fear of infamy."

And indeed there will be time
 To wonder, "Do I dare?" and, "Do I dare?"
 Time to turn back and descend the stair,
 With a bald spot in the middle of my hair—
 (They will say: "How his hair is growing
 thin!")

My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to
 the chin,
 My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a
 simple pin—
 (They will say: "But how his arms and legs
 are thin!")

Do I dare
 Disturb the universe?
 In a minute there is time
 For decisions and revisions which a minute
 will reverse.

For I have known them all already, known
 them all:
 Have known the evenings, mornings, after-
 noons,
 I have measured out my life with coffee
 spoons;
 I know the voices dying with a dying fall
 Beneath the music from a farther room.
 So how should I presume?

And I have known the eyes already, known
 them all—
 The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,
 And when I am formulated, sprawling on a
 pin,
 When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall,
 Then how should I begin
 To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and
 ways?
 And how should I presume?

And I have known the arms already, known 40
 them all—
 Arms that are braceleted and white and bare
 (But in the lamplight, downed with light
 brown hair!)
 Is it perfume from a dress
 That makes me so digress?
 Arms that lie along a table, or wrap about a
 shawl,
 And should I then presume?
 And how should I begin?
 .
 .
 .
 Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through nar-

row streets
 And watched the smoke that rises from the
 pipes
 Of lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of
 windows? . . .

I should have been a pair of ragged claws
 Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.

10 And the afternoon, the evening, sleeps so
 peacefully!
 Smoothed by long fingers,
 Asleep . . . tired . . . or it malingers,
 Stretched on the floor, here beside you and me.
 15 Should I, after tea and cakes and ices,
 Have the strength to force the moment to its
 crisis?
 But though I have wept and fasted, wept and
 prayed,
 20 Though I have seen my head (grown slightly
 bald) brought in upon a platter,
 I am no prophet—and here's no great matter;
 I have seen the moment of my greatness
 flicker,
 25 And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my
 coat, and snicker,
 And in short, I was afraid.

And would it have been worth it, after all,
 30 After the cups, the marmalade, the tea,
 Among the porcelain, among some talk of you
 and me,
 Would it have been worth while,
 To have bitten off the matter with a smile,
 35 To have squeezed the universe into a ball
 To roll it toward some overwhelming question,
 To say: "I am Lazarus, come from the dead,
 Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all"—
 If one, settling a pillow by her head,
 Should say: "That is not what I meant at all;
 That is not it, at all."

And would it have been worth it, after all,
 Would it have been worth while,
 45 After the sunsets and the dooryards and the
 sprinkled streets,
 After the novels, after the teacups, after the
 skirts that trail along the floor—
 And this, and so much more?—
 50 It is impossible to say just what I mean!
 But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in
 patterns on a screen:

Would it have been worth while
If one, settling a pillow or throwing off a
shawl,
And turning toward the window, should say:
"That is not it at all,
That is not what I meant, at all."

Nol I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to
be;

Am an attendant lord, one that will do
To swell a progress, start a scene or two,
Advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool.
Deferential, glad to be of use,
Politie, cautious, and meticulous;
Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse;
At times, indeed, almost ridiculous—
Almost, at times, the Fool.

I grow old. . . . I grow old. . . .

I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled. 20

Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a
peach?

I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk
upon the beach.

I have heard the mermaids singing, each to
each.

I do not think that they will sing to me.

I have seen them riding seaward on the waves
Combing the white hair of the waves blown
back

When the wind blows the water white and
black.

We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and
brown

Till human voices wake us, and we drown. 40

THE HOLLOW MEN

*Mistah Kurtz—he dead*¹

*A penny for the Old Guy*² 45

1

We are the hollow men
We are the stuffed men

¹ a line from Conrad, apparently to set the mood.

² phrase used by English children on Guy Fawkes
Day.

Leaning together
Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!
Our dried voices, when
We whisper together
5 Are quiet and meaningless
As wind in dry grass
Or rats' feet over broken glass
In our dry cellar

10 Shape without form, shade without color,
Paralyzed force, gesture without motion;

Those who have crossed
With direct eyes, to death's other Kingdom
15 Remember us—if at all—not as lost
Violent souls, but only
As the hollow men
The stuffed men.

2

Eyes I dare not meet in dreams
In death's dream kingdom
These do not appear:
There, the eyes are
25 Sunlight on a broken column
There, is a tree swinging
And voices are
In the wind's singing
More distant and more solemn
30 Than a fading star.

Let me be no nearer
In death's dream kingdom
Let me also wear
35 Such deliberate disguises
Rat's coat, crowskin, crossed staves
In a field
Behaving as the wind behaves
No nearer—

40 Not that final meeting
In the twilight kingdom

3

This is the dead land
This is cactus land
Here the stony images
Are raised, here they receive
The supplication of a dead man's hand
50 Under the twinkle of a fading star.

Is it like this

In death's other kingdom
Waking alone
At the hour when we are
Trembling with tenderness
Lips that would kiss
From prayers to broken stone.

4

The eyes are not here
There are no eyes here
In this valley of dying stars
In this hollow valley
This broken jaw of our lost kingdoms

In this last of meeting places
We grope together
And avoid speech
Gathered on this beach of the tumid river

Sightless, unless
The eyes reappear
As the perpetual star
Multifoliate rose
Of death's twilight kingdom
The hope only
Of empty men.

5

*Here we go round the prickly pear
Prickly pear prickly pear
Here we go round the prickly pear
At five o'clock in the morning.*

Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act
Falls the Shadow

For Thine is the Kingdom

Between the conception
And the creation
Between the emotion
And the response
Falls the Shadow

Life is very long

Between the desire
And the spasm
Between the potency

And the existence
Between the essence
And the descent
Falls the Shadow

5

For Thine is the Kingdom

For Thine is
Life is
10 For Thine is the

*This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
15 Not with a bang but a whimper*

JOURNEY OF THE MAGI

20 "A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a long journey:
The ways deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter."
25 And the camels galled, sore-footed, refractory,
Lying down in the melting snow.
There were times we regretted
The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,
And the silken girls bringing sherbet.
30 Then the camel men cursing and grumbling
And running away, and wanting their liquor
and women,
And the night-fires going out, and the lack of
shelters,
35 And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly
And the villages dirty and charging high
prices:
A hard time we had of it.
At the end we preferred to travel all night,
40 Sleeping in snatches,
With the voices singing in our ears, saying
That this was all folly.

Then at dawn we came down to a temperate
45 valley,
Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegeta-
tion;
With a running stream and a water-mill beat-
ing the darkness,
50 And three trees on the low sky,
And an old white horse galloped away in the
meadow.

LYRIC POETRY · JOHN CROWE RANSOM

Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves
over the lintel,
Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of
silver,
And feet kicking the empty wine-skins. 5
But there was no information, and so we con-
tinued
And arriving at evening, not a moment too
soon
Finding the place; it was (you may say) satis- 10
factory.

All this was a long time ago, I remember,
And I would do it again, but set down
This set down 15
This: were we led all that way for
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen
birth and death,
But had thought they were different; this Birth 20
was
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our
death.
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensa- 25
tion,
With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death.

The abstemious Wordsworth
Subsisted on a curd's-worth,

But a slick one was Tennyson,
Putting gravy on his venison.

What these men had to eat and drink
Is what we say and what we think.

The flatulence of Milton
Come out of wry Stilton.

Sing a song for Percy Shelley,
Drowned in pale lemon jelly,

And for precious John Keats,
Dripping blood of pickled beets.

Then there was poor Willie Blake,
He foundered on sweet cake.

God have mercy on the sinner
Who must write with no dinner,

No gravy and no grub,
No pewter and no pub,

No belly and no bowels,
Only consonants and vowels.

30

JOHN CROWE RANSOM*

SURVEY OF LITERATURE

In all the good Greek of Plato
I lack my roast beef and potato.

A better man with Aristotle,
Pulling steady on the bottle.

I dip my hat to Chaucer
Swilling soup from his saucer,

And to Master Shakespeare
Who wrote big on small beer.

* For introductory sketch see I, 189. The poems which follow are reprinted from *Selected Poems* by John Crowe Ransom, by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. "Survey of Literature," copyright 1927, 1945 by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. "Here Lies a Lady," copyright 1924, 1945 by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. "The Equilibrists," copyright 1927, 1945 by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

HERE LIES A LADY

Here lies a lady of beauty and high degree.
35 Of chills and fever she died, of fever and chills,
The delight of her husband, her aunts, an in-
fant of three,
And of medicos marvelling sweetly on her ills.

40 For either she burned, and her confident eyes
would blaze,
And her fingers fly in a manner to puzzle their
heads—

What was she making? Why, nothing; she sat
45 in a maze
Of old scraps of laces, snipped into curious
shreds—

Or this would pass, and the light of her fire de-
cline
50 Till she lay discouraged and cold as a thin stalk
white and blown,

And would not open her eyes, to kisses, to wine;
The sixth of these states was her last; the cold
settled down.

Sweet ladies, long may ye bloom, and toughly
I hope ye may thole,
But was she not lucky? In flowers and lace and
mourning,
In love and great honour we bade God rest her
soul
After six little spaces of chill, and six of burn-
ing.

THE EQUILIBRISTS

Full of her long white arms and milky skin
He had a thousand times remembered sin.
Alone in the press of people traveled he,
Minding her jacinth, and myrrh, and ivory.

Mouth he remembered: the quaint orifice
From which came heat that flamed upon the
kiss,
Till cold words came down spiral from the
head,
Grey doves from the officious tower illsped.

Body: it was a white field ready for love,
On her body's field, with the gaunt tower
above,
The lilies grew, beseeching him to take,
If he would pluck and wear them, bruise and
break.

Eyes talking: Never mind the cruel words,
Embrace my flowers, but not embrace the
swords.
But what they said, the doves come straight-
way flying
And unsaid: Honor, Honor, they came crying.

Importunate her doves. Too pure, too wise,
Clambering on his shoulder, saying, Arise,
Leave me now, and never let us meet,
Eternal distance now command thy feet.

Predicament indeed, which thus discovers
Honor among thieves, Honor between lovers.
O such a little word is Honor, they fell
But the grey word is between them cold as
steel.

At length I saw these lovers fully were come
Into their torture of equilibrium;
Dreadfully had forsworn each other, and yet
They were bound each to each, and they did
5 not forget.

And rigid as two painful stars, and twirled
About the clustered night their prison world,
They burned with fierce love always to come
near,
But Honor beat them back and kept them
clear.

Ah, the strict lovers, they are ruined now!
15 I cried in anger. But with puddled brow
Devising for those gibbeted and brave
Came I descanting: Man, what would you
have?

20 For spin your period out, and draw your
breath,
A kinder saeculum begins with Death.
Would you ascend to Heaven and bodiless
dwell?

25 Or take your bodies honorless to Hell?

In Heaven you have heard no marriage is,
No white flesh tinder to your lecheries,
Your male and female tissue sweetly shaped
30 Sublimed away, and furious blood escaped.

Great lovers he in Hell, the stubborn ones
Infatuate of the flesh upon the bones;
Stuprate, they rend each other when they kiss,
35 The pieces kiss again, no end to this.

But still I watched them spinning, orbited
nice.

Their flames were not more radiant than their
ice.
40

I dug in the quiet earth and wrought the tomb
And made these lines to memorize their
doom:—

EPITAPH

45 *Equilibrists lie here; stranger, tread light;
Close, but untouching in each other's sight;
Mouldered the lips and ashy the tall skull,
Let them lie perilous and beautiful.¹*

50 —————
¹ Cf. Browning's "The Statue and the Bust,"
I, 162.

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY

*Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892–) is the best-known living woman poet in America. Her reputation is securely based on several volumes (Renaissance, Harp Weaver, Fatal Interview, for example), but it must be said that her most recent work has been overloaded with honest preaching rather than good poetry. A product of Vassar, Miss Millay is in the tradition of the emancipated woman singing freely of her joys and passions. Her best-known love sonnets are hardly profound, but they are nicely turned in a way that combines the lyric touch of the Elizabethans with a modern attitude toward an age-old subject. She has had great popular appeal, and has been commercially successful. During World War II the poet showed growth in ideas and sympathies, treating major issues long neglected; as poetry, however, the war pieces seemed more like sermons that merely happened to be in verse form. Miss Millay, along with Sara Teasdale, Elinor Wylie, and a half-dozen other able women whose names are familiar to anthologists, has done much for the cause of feminism in the arts; she has been especially popular with college students, who often find her particular work the stepping stone to enjoyment of poetry in general.**

WHAT LIPS MY LIPS HAVE
KISSED

What lips my lips have kissed, and where, and why,
I have forgotten, and what arms have lain
Under my head till morning, but the rain
Is full of ghosts tonight, that tap and sigh
Upon the glass and listen for reply,
And in my heart there stirs a quiet pain
For unremembered lads that not again
Will turn to me at midnight with a cry.

Thus in the winter stands the lonely tree,
Nor knows what birds have vanished one by
one,

* The first two poems are from *The Harp Weaver and Other Poems*, published by Harper & Brothers. Copyright, 1920, by Edna St. Vincent Millay. "Not in a Silver Casket Cool with Pearls" is from *Fatal Interview*, published by Harper & Brothers. Copyright, 1930, by Edna St. Vincent Millay.

Yet knows its boughs more silent than before:
I cannot say what loves have come and gone,
I only know that summer sang in me
A little while, that in me sings no more.

EUCLID ALONE HAS LOOKED ON
BEAUTY BARE

Euclid alone has looked on Beauty bare.
10 Let all that prate of Beauty hold their peace,
And lay them prone upon the earth, and cease
To ponder on themselves, the while they stare
At nothing, intricately drawn nowhere
In shapes of shifting lineage. Let geese
15 Gabble and hiss, but heroes seek release
From dusty bondage into luminous air.

Oh, blinding hour—oh, holy terrible day—
When first the shaft into his vision shone
20 Of light anatomized! Euclid alone
Has looked on Beauty bare; fortunate they
Who though once only, and then but far away,
Have heard her massive sandal set on stone.

NOT IN A SILVER CASKET
COOL WITH PEARLS

Not in a silver casket cool with pearls
Or rich with red corundum or with blue,
30 Locked, and the key withheld, as other girls
Have given their loves, I give my love to you;
Not in a lovers'-knot, not in a ring
Worked in such fashion, and the legend
plain—
35 *Semper fidelis*, where a secret spring
Kennels a drop of mischief for the brain:
Love in the open hand, no thing but that,
Ungemmed, unhidden, wishing not to hurt,
As one should bring you cowslips in a hat
40 Swung from the hand, or apples in her skirt,
I bring you, calling out as children do:
"Look what I have!—And these are all for
you."

WILFRED OWEN

Owen (1893–1918), another young British university man like Sassoon and Graves, went off to World War I, was invalided home, returned to action, won a decoration, and was killed in action a week before the Armistice. He may well stand in this collection for many young

*British and American poets of both world wars who were tragically taken before they realized their potentialities. An experimental craftsman in words, Owen indicated in his war verse that he might well have become a major figure if he had lived.**

ANTHEM FOR DOOMED YOUTH

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?
Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons.
No mockeries for them; no prayers nor bells,
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,—
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells,
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
Shall shine the holy glimmers of good-bys.
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall,
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

DULCE ET DECORUM EST

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed
through sludge,
Till on the haunting flares we turned our
backs,
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their
boots,
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame, all
blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of gas-shells dropping softly behind.

Gas! Gas! Quick, boys!—An ecstasy of fumbling,
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time,
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling
And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime.
Dim through the misty panes and thick green
light,
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

* The poems which follow are reprinted by arrangement with Messrs. Chatto & Windus, London.

In all my dreams before my helpless sight
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

5 If in some smothering dreams, you too could
pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes wailing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin,
10 If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs
Bitten as the ead
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—
My friend, you would not tell with such high
15 zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old lie: *Dulce et decorum est
Pro patria mori.*¹

GREATER LOVE

Red lips are not so red
As the stained stones kissed by the English
25 dead.
Kindness of wood and wooer
Seems shame to their love pure.
O Love, your eyes lose lure
When I behold eyes blinded in my stead!

Your slender attitude
Trembles not exquisite like limbs knife-
skewed,
Rolling and rolling there
Where God seems not to care;
Till the fierce love they bear
Cramps them in death's extreme decrepitude.

40 Your voice sings not so soft,—
Though even as wind murmuring through
raftered loft,—
Your dear voice is not clear,
Gentle, and evening clear,
45 As theirs whom none now hear
Now earth has stopped their piteous mouths
that coughed.

Heart, you were never hot,
Nor large, nor full like hearts made great
with shot;

¹ It is sweet and fitting to die for one's country.

LYRIC POETRY · E. E. CUMMINGS

And though your hand be pale,
 Paler are all which trail
 Your cross through flame and hail:
 Weep, you may weep, for you may touch
 them not.

5

four lean hounds crouched low and smiling
 the level meadows ran before.

Softer be they than slippered sleep
 the lean lithe deer
 the fleet flown deer.

Four fleet does at a gold valley
 the famished arrow sang before.

Bow at belt went my love riding
 riding the mountain down
 into the silver dawn.

four lean hounds crouched low and smiling
 the sheer peaks ran before.

Paler be they than daunting death
 the sleek slim deer
 the tall tense deer.

Four tall stags at a green mountain
 the lucky hunter sang before.

All in green went my love riding
 on a great horse of gold
 into the silver dawn.

four lean hounds crouched low and smiling
 my heart fell dead before.

MY SWEET OLD ETCETERA*

my sweet old etcetera
 aunt lacy during the recent

war could and what
 is more did tell you just
 what everybody was fighting

for,
 my sister

isabel created hundreds
 (and
 hundreds) of socks not to
 mention shirts fleaproof earwarmers

etcetera wristers etcetera, my
 mother hoped that

E. E. CUMMINGS

A Harvard man who saw service in World War I, Cummings (1894–) attracted attention by his novel, The Enormous Room, which was based on wartime prison experience. In poetry he has received considerable publicity because of extreme practices, such as not using capital letters, and spraying words and letters haphazardly over the page (he says this latter method is an aid to correct stress in reading). Cummings can be, by turns, sentimental or cynical, pleasantly humorous or bitterly satirical. He is obviously original and versatile, he also draws and paints ably. And in spite of box-office tactics that remind one of a showman, he has too many fine qualities to be called a poseur. A psychiatrist might even find reason to call him a frustrated romanticist; let the reader test Cumming's printed works and decide which seem most sincere, most deeply felt.

ALL IN GREEN WENT
 MY LOVE RIDING*

30

All in green went my love riding
 on a great horse of gold
 into the silver dawn.

35

four lean hounds crouched low and smiling
 the merry deer ran before.

Fleeter be they than dappled dreams
 the swift sweet deer
 the red rare deer.

40

Four red roebuck at a white water
 the cruel bugle sang before.

45

Horn at hip went my love riding
 riding the echo down
 into the silver dawn.

* From "Tulips & Chimneys" in *Collected Poems*, published by Harcourt, Brace & Co., Inc. Copyright, 1923, by E. E. Cummings.

* This and the following poem are from "Is 5" in *Collected Poems*, published by Harcourt, Brace & Co., Inc. Copyright, 1926, by Horace Liveright.

i would die etcetera
bravely of course my father used
to become hoarse talking about how it was
a privilege and if only he
could meanwhile my

self etcetera lay quietly
in the deep mud et
cetera
(dreaming,
et

cetera, of
Your smile
eyes knees and of your Etcetera)

I GO TO THIS WINDOW

i go to this window

just as day dissolves
when it is twilight (and
looking up in fear

i see the new moon
thinner than a hair)

making me feel
how myself has been coarse and dull
compared with you, silently who are
and cling
to my mind always

But now she sharpens and becomes crisper
until i smile with knowing
—and all about
herself

the sprouting largest final air

plunges inward with hurled
downward thousands of enormous dreams

ALLEN TATE

Tate (1899–), like Ransom, is a Southerner with agrarian-sectionalist philosophy (he has written on Stonewall Jackson and Jefferson Davis). His career is likewise linked with colleges: he has been a professor of English at the University of the South, and editor of the Sewanee Review. As a free-lance writer Tate has published his polished verse, his essays,

*and his criticism in many periodicals and books. He is a careful poet, sometimes too metaphysical for average tastes, often harsh, but his most effective work gets under the skin and is not quickly forgotten. He seems to do in poetry what Gamaliel Bradford does in biography (see II, 330)—he stalks around his subject, studies it, absorbs the “feel” of it, and then gives forth a picture of its soul.**

10

ODE TO THE CONFEDERATE
DEAD

Row after row with strict impunity
15 The headstones yield their names to the element,

The wind whirs without recollection;
In the riven troughs the splayed leaves
Pile up, of nature the casual sacrament
20 To the seasonal eternity of death,
Then driven by the fierce scrutiny
Of heaven to their business in the vast breath,
They sough the rumor of mortality.

25 Autumn is desolation in the plot
Of a thousand acres, where these memories
grow

From the inexhaustible bodies that are not
Dead, but feed the grass row after rich row:
30 Remember now the autumns that have gone—
Ambitious November with the humors of the
year,

With a particular zeal for every slab,
Staining the uncomfortable angels that rot
35 On the slabs, a wing chipped here, an arm
there:

The brute curiosity of an angel's stare
Turns you like them to stone,
Transforms the heaving air,

40 Till plunged to a heavier world below
You shift your sea-space blindly,
Heaving, turning like the blind crab.

Dazed by the wind, only the wind
45 The leaves flying, plunge

You know who have waited by the wall
The twilit certainty of an animal;

* The selections which follow are reprinted from *Selected Poems* by Allen Tate; copyright 1928, 1937 by Charles Scribner's Sons; used by permission of the publishers

Those midnight restitutions of the blood
You know—the immitigable pines, the smoky
frieze

Of the sky, the sudden call; you know the
rage—

The cold pool left by the mounting flood—
The rage of Zeno and Parmenides.

You who have waited for the angry resolution
Of those desires that should be yours to-mor-
row,

You know the unimportant shrift of death
And praise the vision

And praise the arrogant circumstance
Of those who fall

Rank upon rank, hurried beyond decision—
Here by the sagging gate, stopped by the
wall.

Seeing, seeing only the leaves
Flying, plunge and expire

Turn your eyes to the immoderate past
Turn to the inscrutable infantry rising
Demons out of the earth—they will not last.
Stonewall, Stonewall—and the sunken fields of
hemp

Shiloh, Antietam, Malvern Hill, Bull Run.
Lost in that orient of the thick and fast
You will curse the setting sun.

Cursing only the leaves crying
Like an old man in a storm

You hear the shout—the crazy hemlocks point
With troubled fingers to the silence which
Smothers you, a mummy, in time. The hound
bitch

Toothless and dying, in a musty cellar
Hears the wind only.

Now that the salt of their blood
Stiffens the saltier oblivion of the sea,
Seals the malignant purity of the flood,
What shall we, who count our days and bow
Our heads with a commemorial woe,
In the ribboned coats of grim felicity,
What shall we say of the bones, unclean—
Their verduous anonymity will grow—
The ragged arms, the ragged heads and eyes
Lost in these acres of the insane green?

The grey lean spiders come; they come and
go;

In a tangle of willows without light

The singular screech-owl's bright
Invisible lyric seeds the mind
With the furious murmur of their chivalry.

5 We shall say only, the leaves
Flying, plunge and expire

We shall say only, the leaves whispering
In the improbable mist of nightfall

10 That flies on multiple wing:
Night is the beginning and the end,
And in between the ends of distraction
Waits mute speculation, the patient curse
That stones the eyes, or like the jaguar leaps
15 For his own image in a jungle pool, his vic-
tim.

What shall we say who have knowledge
Carried to the heart? Shall we take the act
To the grave? Shall we, more hopeful, set up
20 the grave
In the house? The ravenous grave?

Leave now

The turnstile and the old stone wall:

25 The gentle serpent, green in the mulberry
bush,

Riots with his tongue through the hush—
Sentinel of the grave who counts us all!

30

IDIOT

The idiot greens the meadows with his eyes,
The meadow creeps implacable and still;
35 A dog barks, the hammock swings, he lies.
One two three the cows bulge on the hill.

Motion that is not time erects snowdrifts
While sister's hand sieves waterfalls of lace.
40 With a palm fan closer than death he lifts
The Ozarks and tilted seas across his face.

In the long sunset where impatient sound
Strips niggers to a multiple of backs
45 Flies yield their heat, magnolias drench the
ground
With Appomattox! The shadows lie in stacks.

The julep glass weaves echoes in Jim's kinks
50 While ashy Jim puts murmurs in the day:
Now in the idiot's heart a chamber stinks
Of dead asters, as the potter's field of May.

All evening the marsh is a slick pool
Where dream wild hares, witch hazel, pretty
girls.

"Up from the important picnic of a fool
Those rotted asters!" Eddy on eddy swirls

The innocent mansion of a panther's heart!
It crumbles, tick-tick time drags it in
Till now his arteries lag and now they start
Reverence with the frigid gusts of sin—

The stillness pelts the eye, assaults the hair,
A beech sticks out a branch to warm the stars,
A lightning-bug jerks angles in the air,
Diving. "I am the captain of new wars!"

The dusk runs down the lane driven like hail;
Far off a precise whistle is escheat
To the dark; and then the towering weak and
pale
Covers his eyes with memory like a sheet.

THE MEDITERRANEAN

*Quem das finem, rex magne, dolorum?*¹

Where we went in the boat was a long bay
A sling-shot wide walled in by towering
stone—
Peaked margin of antiquity's delay,
And we went there out of time's monotone:

Where we went in the black hull no light
moved
But a gull white-winged along the feckless
wave;
The breeze unseen but fierce as a body loved,
That boat drove onward like a willing slave.

Where we went in the small ship the seaweed
Parted and gave to us the murmuring shore
And we made feast and in our secret need
Devoured the very plates Aeneas bore:

Where derelict you see through the low twi-
light
The green coast that you thunder-tossed
would win,

Drop sail, and hastening to drink all night
Eat dish and bowl—to take that sweet land in!

Where we feasted and caroused on the sand-
less
Pebbles, affecting our day of piracy,
What prophecy of eaten plates could landless
Wanderers fulfill by the ancient sea?

10 We for that time might taste the famous age
Eternal here yet hidden from our eyes
When lust of power undid its stuffless rage;
They, in a wineskin, bore earth's paradise.

15 —Let us lie down once more by the breathing
side

Of ocean, where our live forefathers sleep
As if the Known Sea still were a mouth wide—
Atlantis howls but is no longer steep!

20 What country shall we conquer, what fair land
Unman our conquest and locate our blood?
We've cracked the hemispheres with careless
hand!

25 Now, from the Gates of Hercules we flood

Westward, westward till the barbarous brine
Whelms us to the tired world where tasseling
corn,

30 Fat beans, grapes sweeter than muscadine
Rot on the vine: in that land were we born.

ROBERT PENN WARREN

Warren (1905—) follows the familiar pattern of Ransom and Tate: the South; the Fugitive; reviews (Southern and Kenyon); association with colleges (Vanderbilt, California, Yale, Oxford), teaching (Louisiana State and Minnesota). Although he is represented here by his thoughtful verse, Warren has also written a prose study of John Brown and has edited various textbooks. After two or three early novels, he made quite a stir with *All the King's Men*, a novel based on the Huey Long saga, and has also successfully invaded the short-story field. As the youngest of the established Southern group, with a brilliant academic record, Warren has rich possibilities for the future.*

¹ What end of griefs, great king, do you give?
The line, ordinarily rendered *Quem das finem, rex magne, laborum?* is from the *Aeneid*, Bk. I, l. 241.

* The selections which follow are from *Selected Poems 1923-1943* by Robert Penn Warren, copyright, 1944, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

LETTER FROM A COWARD
TO A HERO

What did the day bring?
The sharp fragment,
The shard,
The promise half-meant,
The impaired thing,
At dusk the hard word,
Good action by good will marred . . .
All
In the trampled stall:
 I think you deserved better;
 Therefore I am writing you this letter.
The scenes of childhood were splendid,
And the light that there attended,
But is rescinded:
The cedar,
The lichened rocks,
The thicket where I saw the fox,
And where I swam, the river.
These things are hard
To reconstruct:
The word
Is memory's gelded usufruct.
But piety is simple,
And should be ample.
 Though late at night we have talked,
 I cannot see what ways your feet in child-
 hood walked.
 In what purities was courage early caulked?
Guns blaze in autumn and
The quail falls and
Empires collide with a bang
That shakes the pictures where they hang
And democracy shows signs of dry rot
And Dives¹ has and Lazarus not
And the time is out of joint:
But a good pointer holds the point
And is not gun-shy;
But I
Am gun-shy.

Though young, I do not like loud noise:
The sudden backfire,
The catcall of boys,
Drums beating for
The big war,
Or clocks that tick all night, and will not stop.
If you should lose your compass and map

Or a mouse get into the wall,
For sleep try love or veronal,
Though some prefer, I know, philology.
Does the airman scream in the flaming tra-
5 jectory?

You have been strong in love and hate.
Disaster owns less speed than you have got,
But he will cut across the back lot
10 To lurk and lie in wait.
Admired of children, gathered for their games,
Disaster, like the dandelion, blooms,
And the delicate film is fanned
To seed the shaven lawn.
15 Rarely, you've been unmanned;
I have not seen your courage put to pawn.

At the blind hour of unaided grief,
Of addition and subtraction,
20 Of compromise,
Of the smoky lecher, the thief,
Of regretted action,
At the hour to close the eyes,
At the hour when lights go out in the
25 houses . . .
Then wind rouses
The kildees from their sodden ground:
Their commentary is part of the wind's sound.
What is that other sound,
30 Surf or distant cannonade?
You are what you are without our aid.
No doubt, when corridors are dumb
And the bed is made,
It is your custom to recline,
35 Clutching between the forefinger and thumb
Honor, for death shy valentine.

BEARDED OAKS

40 The oaks, how subtle and marine,
Bearded, and all the layered light
Above them swims; and thus the scene,
Recessed, awaits the positive night.

45 So, waiting, we in the grass now lie
Beneath the languorous tread of light:
The grasses, kelp-like, satisfy
The nameless motions of the air.

Upon the floor of light, and time,
Unmurmuring, of polyp made,

¹ See Luke 16:19-31.

We rest; we are, as light withdraws,
Twin atolls on a shelf of shade.

Ages to our construction went,
Dim architecture, hour by hour:
And violence, forgot now, lent
The present stillness all its power.

The storm of noon above us rolled,
Of light the fury, furious gold,
The long drag troubling us, the depth:
Dark is unrocking, unripping, still.

Passion and slaughter, ruth, decay
Descend, minutely whispering down,
Silted down swaying streams, to lay
Foundation for our voicelessness.

All our debate is voiceless here,
As all our rage, the rage of stone;
If hope is hopeless, then fearless fear,
And history is thus undone.

Our feet once wrought the hollow street
With echo when the lamps were dead
At windows, once our headlight glare
Disturbed the doe that, leaping, fled.

I do not love you less that now
The caged heart makes iron stroke,
Or less that all that light once gave
The graduate dark should now revoke.

We live in time so little time
And we learn all so painfully,
That we may spare this hour's term
To practice for eternity.

RESOLUTION

Time's secret pulse
The huddled jockey knows;
Between the bull's
Horns, as the cape flows,
The matador;
The pitcher on his mound,
Sun low, tied score;
The plowman when drouth-bit ground
Deflects the plow;
The pickpocket in the press.
Your pulse, these know;
But all than lovers less.

Than lovers less?
What word had touched the heart
I cannot guess:
It was a place apart,
Of rock and sea,
Salt grass, and the salt wind,
And wind-crooked tree.
Sun gilded sea and land,
Like golden rime.
I spoke of Time. You said:
There is no Time.
Since then some friends are dead;
Hates cold, once hot;
Ambitions thewless grown;
Old slights forgot.
And the weeper is made stone.
We, too, have lain
Apart, with continents
And seas between.
Your words' most brave contents
Came narrowly.
I tried to frame your face
In the mind's eye;
And could, a little space.
Though pondering it,
The chapters glad or sorry,
I can commit
No moral from our story.

Old winnower!
I praise your paced power:
Not truth I fear.
How ripe is turned the hour.

LOUIS MAC NEICE

An Irishman and an Oxford product, MacNeice (1907–) has been called the "ablest and robustest" of the modern English group of poets. This bishop's son became a lecturer in classics at Birmingham and London universities. He has written outstanding reviews and criticism (see *Modern Poetry*). Although his poems belong to a period marked by obscurity and symbolism, he manages to steer a middle course, detached but never too far away.*

AND LOVE HUNG STILL

And love hung still as crystal over the bed
And filled the corners of the enormous room;

* The selections which follow are copyright, 1940, by Louis MacNeice.

LYRIC POETRY · LOUIS MAC NEICE

The boom of dawn that left her sleeping, showing
The flowers mirrored in the mahogany table.

O my love, if only I were able
To protract this hour of quiet after passion,
Not ration happiness but keep this door for ever
Closed on the world, its own world closed within it.

But dawn's waves trouble with the bubbling minute,
The names of books come clear upon their shelves,
The reason delves for duty and you will wake
With a start and go on living on your own.

The first train passes and the windows groan,
Voices will hector and your voice become
A drum in tune with theirs, which all last night
Like sap that fingered through a hungry tree
Asserted our one night's identity.

BIRMINGHAM

Smoke from the train-gulf hid by boardings
blunders upward, the brakes of cars
Pipe as the policeman pivoting round raises his
flat hand, bars
With his figure of a monolith Pharaoh the
queue of fidgety machines
(Chromium dogs on the bonnet, faces behind
the triplex screens)
Behind him the streets run away between the
proud glass of shops
Cubical scent-bottles artificial legs arctic foxes
and electric mops
But beyond this center the slumward vista
thins like a diagram:
There, unvisited, are Vulcan's forges who
doesn't care a tinker's damn.

Splayed outwards through the suburbs houses, 45
houses for rest
Seducingly rigged by the builder, half-tim-
bered houses with lips pressed
So tightly and eyes staring at the traffic
through bleary haws
And only a six-inch grip of the racing earth
in their concrete claws;

In these houses men as in a dream pursue the
Platonic Forms
With wireless and cairn terriers and gadgets
approximating to the fickle norms
5 And endeavor to find God and score one over
the neighbor
By climbing tentatively upward on jerry-built
beauty and sweated labor.

10 The lunch hour: the shops empty, shopgirls'
faces relax
Diaphanous as green glass empty as old almanacs
As incoherent with ticketed gewgaws tiered
15 behind their heads
As the Burne-Jones windows in St. Philip's
broken by crawling leads
Inspid color, patches of emotion, Saturday
thrills—
20 (This theater is sprayed with "June")—the
gutter take our old playbills,
Next week-end it is likely in the heart's funfair
we shall pull
Strong enough on the handle to get back our
25 money; or at any rate it is possible.

On shining lines the trams like vast sarcophagi
move
Into the sky, plum after sunset, merging to
duck's egg, barred with mauve
30 Zeppelin clouds, and pentecost-like the cars'
headlights bud
Out from sideroads and the traffic signals,
crème-de-menthe or bull's blood,
35 Tell one to stop, the engine gently breathing,
or to go on
To where like black pipes of organs in the
frayed and fading zone
Of the West the factory chimneys on sullen
sentry will all night wait
40 To call, in the harsh morning, sleep-stupid
faces through the daily gate.

SUNDAY MORNING

Down the road someone is practising scales,
The notes like little fishes vanish with a wink
of tails,
50 Man's heart expands to tinker with his car
For this is Sunday morning, Fate's great ba-
zaar,

Regard these means as ends, concentrate on
 this Now,
 And you may grow to music or drive beyond
 Hindhead anyhow,
 Take **corners** on two wheels until you go so 5
 fast
 That you can clutch a fringe or two of the
 windy past,
 That you can abstract this day and make it to
 the week of time 10
 A small eternity, a sonnet self-contained in
 rhyme.

But listen, up the road, something gulps, the
 church spire 15
 Opens its eight bells out, skulls' mouths which
 will not tire
 To tell how there is no music or movement
 which secures
 Escape from the weekday time. Which deadens 20
 and endures.

STEPHEN SPENDER

*Along with MacNeice, Auden, Lewis, and one 25
 or two others, Spender (1909–) is out-
 standing among modern British poets. An Ox-
 ford poet who also wrote short stories, Spender
 began by printing his own material, soon suc-
 cumbed to the machine age as a dominating 30
 force in determining his subjects and treat-
 ments. He is a fertile producer with definite
 emotional power. His poetry has a marked
 socialistic tinge; more than once his appeal to
 the world to look out for the common man has 35
 the ring of Shelley's early poetry and political
 pamphlets.**

MOVING THROUGH THE SILENT
CROWD

Moving through the silent crowd
 Who stand behind dull cigarettes
 These men who idle in the road,
 I have the sense of falling light.

They lounge at corners of the street
 And greet friends with a shrug of shoulder,
 And turn their empty pockets out,
 The cynical gestures of the poor.

* The selections which follow are copyright,
 1934, by The Modern Library.

Now they've no work, like better men
 Who sit at desks and take much pay
 They sleep long nights and rise at ten
 To watch the hours that drain away.

I'm jealous of the weeping hours
 They stare through with such hungry eyes
 I'm haunted by these images,
 I'm haunted by their emptiness.

THE FUNERAL

Death is another milestone on their way.
 With laughter on their lips and with winds
 blowing round them 15
 They record simply
 How this one excelled all others in making
 driving-belts.

This is festivity, it is the time of statistics
 When they record what one unit contributed:
 They are glad as they lay him back in the
 earth
 And thank him for what he gave them.

They walk home remembering the straining
 red flags,
 And with pennons of song still fluttering
 through their blood
 They speak of the world-state 30
 With its towns like brain-centers and its puls-
 ing arteries.

They think how one life hums, revolves and
 toils,
 One cog in a golden and singing hive:
 Like spark from fire, its task happily achieved,
 It falls away quietly.

No more are they haunted by the individual
 grief
 Nor the crocodile tears of European genius,
 The decline of a culture
 Mourned by scholars who dream of the ghosts
 45 of Greek boys.

THE EXPRESS

After the first powerful plain manifesto
 50 The black statement of pistons, without more
 fuss
 But gliding like a queen, she leaves the station.

LYRIC POETRY · KARL SHAPIRO

Without bowing and with restrained unconcern

She passes the houses which humbly crowd outside,

The gasworks and at last the heavy page
Of death, printed by gravestones in the cemetery.

Beyond the town there lies the open country
Where, gathering speed, she acquires mystery,
The luminous self-possession of ships on ocean.
It is now she begins to sing—at first quite low
Then loud, and at last with a jazzy madness—
The song of her whistle screaming at curves,
Of deafening tunnels, brakes, innumerable bolts.

And always light, aerial, underneath
Goes the elate meter of her wheels.
Steaming through metal landscape on her lines
She plunges new eras of wild happiness
Where speed throws up strange shapes, broad curves

And parallels clean like the steel of guns.
At last, further than Edinburgh or Rome,
Beyond the crest of the world, she reaches night

Where only a low streamline brightness
Of phosphorus on the tossing hills is white.

Ah, like a comet through flames she moves entranced

Wrapt in her music no bird song, no, nor bough

Breaking with honey buds, shall ever equal.

KARL SHAPIRO

Shapiro (1913—) stands here as a representative of a group of established younger poets; space does not permit the inclusion of a handful of others whose followers may well press the cause of their favorites. Shapiro attended Virginia and Johns Hopkins, later studied to be a librarian, but in 1941 found himself in the Army. Poetry awards helped to develop him. In 1944 he won the Pulitzer Prize for V-Letter. In 1946 he was adviser on poetry for the Library of Congress. Recently a contribution to the long history of poetic criticism appeared: Essay on Rime. Shapiro has vigor, and a facility which has moved critics to note the influence of recent British verse. But the idiom and the toughness—occasionally shocking to

*an older, more genteel generation—are purely American.**

BUICK

5 As a sloop with a sweep of immaculate wing
on her delicate spine
And a keel as steel as a root that holds in the sea as she leans,
10 Leaning and laughing, my warm-hearted beauty, you ride, you ride,
You tack on the curves with parabola speed and a kiss of goodbye,
Like a thoroughbred sloop, my new high-spirited spirit, my kiss.

As my foot suggests that you leap in the air with your hips of a girl,
My finger that praises your wheel and announces your voices of song,
20 Flouncing your skirts, you blueness of joy, you flirt of politeness,
You leap, you intelligence, essence of wheelness with silvery nose,
25 And your platinum clocks of excitement stir like the hairs of a fern.

But how alien you are from the booming belts of your birth and the smoke
30 Where you turned on the stinging lathes of Detroit and Lansing at night
And shrieked at the torch in your secret parts and the amorous tests,
But now with your eyes that enter the future of roads you forget;
35 You are all instinct with your phosphorous glow and your streaking hair.

And now when we stop it is not as the bird from the shell that I leave
40 Or the leathery pilot who steps from his bird with a sneer of delight,
And not as the ignorant beast do you squat and watch me depart,
45 But with exquisite breathing you smile, with satisfaction of love,
And I touch you again as you tick in the silence and settle in sleep.

* The selections which follow are from *Person Place and Thing* by Karl Jay Shapiro, copyright, 1942, by Karl Jay Shapiro. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

HOLLYWOOD

Farthest from any war, unique in time
 Like Athens or Baghdad, this city lies
 Between dry purple mountains and the sea. 5
 The air is clear and famous, every day
 Bright as a postcard, bringing bungalows
 And sights. The broad nights advertise
 For love and music and astronomy.

Heart of the continent, the hearts converge
 On open boulevards where palms are nursed
 With flare-pots like a grove, on villa roads
 Where castles cultivated like a style
 Breed fabulous metaphors in foreign stone, 10
 And on enormous movie lots
 Where history repeats its vivid blunders.

Alice and Cinderella are most real.
 Here may the tourist, quite sincere at last, 20
 Rest from his dream of travels. All is new.
 No ruins claim his awe, and permanence,
 Despised like customs, fails at every turn
 Here where the eccentric thrives,
 Laughter and love are leading industries. 25

Luck is another. Here the body-guard,
 The parasite, the scholar are well paid,
 The quack erects his alabaster office,
 The moron and the genius are enshrined, 30
 And the mystic makes a fortune quietly;
 Here all superlatives come true
 And beauty is marketed like a basic food.

O can we understand it? Is it ours,
 A crude whim of a beginning people,
 A private orgy in a secluded spot?
 Or alien like the word *harem*, or true
 Like hideous Pittsburgh or depraved Atlanta?
 Is adolescence just as vile
 As this its architecture and its talk?

Or are they parvenues, like boys and girls?
 10 Or ours and happy, cleverest of all?
 Yes. Yes. Though glamorous to the ignorant
 This is the simplest city, a new school.
 What is more nearly ours? If soul can mean
 The civilization of the brain,
 15 This is a soul, a possibly proud Florence.

THE CONTRABAND

I dreamed I held a poem and knew
 The capture of a living thing.
 Boys in a Grecian circle sang
 And women at their harvesting.

25 Slowly I tried to wake and draw
 The vision after, word by word,
 But sleep was covetous: the song
 The singers and the singing blurred.

30 The paper flowers of everynight
 All die. Day has no counterpart,
 Where memory writes its boldface wish
 And swiftly punishes the heart.

G L O S S A R Y

- ALEXANDRINE:** a six-foot line in iambs—in English the best example is the final line in the *Faerie Queene* stanza. The term may come from its use in early French heroic poetry on Alexander.
- ALLEGORY:** a device by which people, scenes, and objects may stand for something besides their apparent significance. In the *Faerie Queene*, for example, Una is a girl, and in a moral allegory, virtue, and in a political allegory, Queen Elizabeth.
- ALLITERATION:** figure of speech in which two or more words begin with same letter or sound ("furrow followed free").
- ANAPEST:** a metrical foot of two short syllables followed by one long (to the end).
- ANTISTROPHE:** see ODE, STROPHE.
- APOSTROPHE:** figure of speech in which the poet formally addresses a person, abstraction, muse, etc.
- ASSONANCE:** similarity in sound between vowels; differs from rhyme in that final consonants involved are not the same (wine—line).
- BALLAD:** originally a song, then a narrative poem with popular and literary traditions (see introduction to ballad on I, 65), and today (a loose use of the term) a melodramatic or amatory song.
- BALLAD STANZA:** commonly a four-line stanza with second and fourth lines rhyming and the meter running tetrameter, trimeter, tetrameter, trimeter in order. Many variations exist, however.
- BALLADE GROUP:** a group of technical forms including the ballade and variations, the chant royal, etc. It includes subtypes of verse often called "French forms"; they are tricky and involved, usually poets' playgrounds rather than steady fare for readers. The ballade, for example, has three stanzas, each with the following rhyme scheme: ababbcbC (refrain line); it ends with an envoi: bcbC.
- BLANK VERSE:** unrhymed iambic pentameter used in dignified and lofty passages of epic poetry, drama, etc. See Surrey, Marlowe, Milton, Shakespeare.
- CADENCE:** recognizable beat and rhythmic flow of phrase without formal stress pattern, in verse or prose.
- CAESURA:** a pause within a line of poetry, as in Old English verse, where it comes after the second foot. See *Beowulf*.
- CANTO:** a section of a long poem; similar to a "book."
- CAVALIER LYRICS:** term applied to the light verse of the court poets under Charles I (Suckling, Lovelace, et al.).
- COMMON METER:** see BALLAD STANZA.
- CONCEIT:** term applied to a strained or involved comparison or idea, as in seventeenth-century metaphysical poetry; see John Donne.
- COUPLET:** a pair of successive lines of verse, especially such as rhyme together and are of identical length. See HEROIC COUPLET.
- DACTYL:** a metrical foot consisting of an accented syllable followed by two unaccented ones (murmuring).
- DIMETER:** a line of poetry made up of two feet.
- DIRGE:** a subtype of poetry given over to lyrical lamentation—in Scottish ballads, a coronach. See ELEGY.
- DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE:** a poem in which one character speaks to one or more mute listeners and incidentally reveals his own psychological make-up. See Tennyson's "Ulysses" and Browning's "My Last Duchess."
- ELEGY:** a formal poem of mourning or brooding on the subject of death. See Gray's "Elegy" and Milton's "Lycidas."
- ENJAMBMENT:** the use of run-on lines, that is, lines which do not end with a completed phrase, completed sentence, or full stop. For comic effect, a final word in a line may be split into syllables with the conclusion on the following line. See Byron's *Don Juan*.
- EPIC:** a poetic type marked by its length, seriousness, noble characters, central hero, etc. Minor features may include invoking the muse, beginning in the middle, cataloguing, incorporating catastrophe, formal simile, etc. See *Beowulf*, *Faerie Queene*, *Paradise Lost*.

EPIC SIMILE: an involved stated comparison marked by length and often the introductory phrase "as when"—peculiar to the epic

EPIGRAM: a short, pithy saying or poem, Coleridge defined an epigram by writing one:

"What is an epigram? A dwarfish whole;
Its body brevity, and wit its soul."

EPITAPH: a subtype, a short poem suitable for a gravestone or valedictory. Sometimes synonymous with epigram on death. Sometimes wryly humorous like Gay's, written for himself:

"Life is a jest, and all things show it;
I thought so once, but now I know it."

EPITHALAMION: a subtype, a hymn, song, poem written for a wedding

EPITHET: an adjective or phrase aptly describing or underlining an outstanding quality in a person, object, scene, etc.

EPODE: see STROPH

FIGURE OF SPEECH: a word or combination of words used to get a specific stylistic effect; metaphors, similes, hyperbole, etc., are included

FOOT: the basic rhythmic unit in a recognizable metric pattern. In English the commonest feet are iambic, trochaic, anapestic, and dactylic (which see).

FREE VERSE: verse which has no regular metrical pattern, but which does have cadence, often set up irregularly as to length of line to "look like" poetry, employs imagery and figures of conventional verse and definitely has some organization or over-all unity of effect. Not to be confused with blank verse. Often referred to as *vers libre*.

HEPTAMETER: a line of poetry having seven feet

HEROIC COUPLET: a pair of rhyming lines in iambic pentameter; may be a "closed" couplet with a unit organization of its own or one unit with other continuous "open" couplets, with run-on lines. See Pope.

HEXAMETER: a line of poetry having six feet

HYPERBOLE: figure of speech in which exaggeration is used for dramatic or comic effect

IAMBIC: common type of foot with an unaccented syllable followed by an accented one (ōmīt')

INCREMENTAL REPETITION: a form of repetition which adds or changes slight details from stanza to stanza instead of reiterating. See BALLAD

KENNING: an early form of metaphor (see *Beowulf*) marked my compounds—"whale-road" for ocean, etc.

LIGHT VERSE: term (not to be confused with blank verse or free verse) applied to those forms (limericks, triolets, certain songs) which are light in touch but which require deftness and dexterity nevertheless. Among moderns, consult Ogden Nash, Dorothy Parker, Samuel Hoffenstein (who have serious moods also).

LIMERICK: a light-verse form consisting of one five-line stanza, the first, second, and fifth lines usually having three main stresses, the others two. American limericks generally use the rhyme scheme aabba. English limericks (Edward Lear) often repeat line one as line five

LYRIC: originally a poem to be sung to lyre accompaniment, hence melodic; today, however, generally a short poem with strong emotional basis and marked individual personality evident.

MADRIGAL: a polyphonic song for a half-dozen voices singing unaccompanied. Singers traditionally sit around a table. Because every voice carries an equal load, the effect is different from that of an "air," which has one tune harmonized upon by several voices. The term is also applied to a short love poem suitable for musical arrangement. See Elizabethan verse.

METAPHOR: a suggested comparison, a figure of speech in which a term usually having one literal meaning is used in a different sense to create a literary effect or to intensify meaning (a "knotty" problem). In a general sense, metaphor may include other figures involving comparison. See SIMILE.

METAPHYSICAL POETRY: loosely, poetry dealing with reasoning processes and philosophical complexities; in the seventeenth century, it is marked by intellectual pyrotechnics, conceits, subtleties, unusual comparisons. See Donne and Herbert.

METER: a term used as a combining form to designate the number of feet to a line (pentameter equals five-foot line, etc.). Not in combination, the word refers to any formal arrangement of rhythm.

METONYMY: a figure of speech in which for rhetorical effect a word is used in place of another which is close in meaning and easily associated with it: "The pen is mightier than the sword" equals "Writing is mightier than fighting." See SYNECDOCHE.

MOCK EPIC: a poem which burlesques the machinery of the conventional epic. See *Don Juan* and *The Rape of the Lock*

MONOMETER: literally, a line of poetry having only one foot, obviously seldom found

MUSES: nine goddesses of letters, arts, and science in Greek mythology. The poet customarily addressed the one whose specific help he needed; or figuratively, he might appeal to the muse in a routine way without specifying.

NONAMETER: a line of poetry having nine feet.

OCCASIONAL VERSE: poetry written for a special occasion such as a wedding, death, coronation, etc.

OCTAMETER: a line of poetry having eight feet.

OCTAVE: a group of eight lines of poetry; gen-

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- erally refers to the first eight lines of an Italian sonnet (see Wyatt and Surrey) which was adapted to English; rhyme scheme: abba, abba.
- ODE:** a subtype of lyric poetry with serious tone, addressed in praise to a person, object, or idea. The Pindaric ode is made up of strophe, antistrophe, and epode, with involved metrical structure. The Cowley ode is irregular, imitation Pindaric. The stanzaic ode is an ode only in a loose sense, that of a poem of address, but is more common in modern poetry than the complicated formal ode.
- ONOMATOPOEIA:** the use of words whose sound indicates meaning or sense—"gurgling," "plopping," etc.
- OTTAVA RIMA:** a stanza of eight lines with this rhyme scheme: abababcc. See *Don Juan*.
- PASTORAL:** a term, adjective or noun, applied to poetry or music or romance dealing with shepherds, flocks, fields, farms, etc. Classically it is an artificial form with lofty language, set themes, conventional names, etc. See "Lycidas."
- PENTAMETER:** a line of poetry having five feet.
- PETRARCHAN (ITALIAN) SONNET:** a fourteen-line love poem originally, introduced to England by Wyatt and Surrey. The first eight lines (octave) rhyme abba, abba; the last six (sestet) may take one of several patterns or be irregular, though strictly the last two lines should not rhyme.
- PROSODY:** the study of metrical structure.
- QUATHAIN:** a four-line stanza or a unit group of four lines in a long composition.
- REFRAIN:** the repeated portion of a poem, ballad, song—used for choral effect, audience participation, etc.
- RHYME:** repetition of sound at the end of poetic lines (or at the middle and end of a line—"internal" rhyme). Stressed vowels and following consonants should be identical (wine—mine); see ASSONANCE.
- RIME ROYAL:** a stanza of seven iambic pentameter lines with this rhyme scheme: ababbcc.
- ROMANCE:** a term originally referring to the Old French language, then to stories of knights in O.F. literature—hence "medieval romance." See *Gawain and the Green Knight*. Later, with Sidney (pastoral romance in *Arcadia*) and Scott, the term suggests a novel of love and adventure; in nineteenth-century poetry the word in adjective form (romantic) suggests the opposite of classic. It cannot be defined except in specialized uses.
- RONDEAU (RONDEAU GROUP):** special "French forms," like the ballade and ballade group, ordinarily but not necessarily gay, and complicated in structure. The roundel, rondel, triolet, etc., belong here. These subtypes are largely showpieces, not common enough to be represented in this text. For examples, see Untermeyer and Cooper in poetry bibliography, below.
- SCANSION:** the act of dividing a line of poetry into feet, placing accent marks, deciding meter, and perhaps reading aloud. The commonest lines in English are tetrameter, pentameter, and hexameter; the four familiar patterns are iambic, trochaic, anapestic, and dactylic.
- SESTET:** the last six lines of an Italian or Petrarchan sonnet (q.v.).
- SESTINA:** one of the "French forms" with six stanzas, envoi, repetition of end-words, and complicated artificial pattern.
- SHAKESPEAREAN (ENGLISH) SONNET:** a form taking its name from the poet who handled it best, although Surrey introduced it. The fourteen lines are divided into three quatrains and a couplet with the inflexible rhyme scheme: abab, cdcd, efef, gg.
- SIMILE:** a figure of speech which offers an expressed comparison (where the metaphor in its limited sense suggests the likeness) for rhetorical effect. It is introduced by "like," "as," or "as when." (He ran like a deer.)
- SONNET:** a subtype of poetry identified as fourteen lines in iambic pentameter with several possible rhyme schemes (see Petrarchan, Spenserian, and Shakespearean sonnet). In its long history it has been amatory, autobiographical, philosophical, topical.
- SPENSERIAN SONNET:** a sonnet form with the following rhyme scheme: abab, bcbc, cdcd, ee. Superficially, it resembles the Shakespearean, but uses fewer rhymes, achieves coherence by the linking repetitions.
- SPENSERIAN (Faerie Queene) STANZA:** a nine-line stanza employed in the *Faerie Queene*; its iambic pentameter lines are grouped according to this rhyme scheme: ababbcbcc. The last line is an Alexandrine (q.v.).
- SPONDEE:** a foot consisting of two accented syllables, used to prevent monotony in conjunction with commoner set patterns.
- STANZA:** the equivalent in a poem to the paragraph in prose; a unit of verse marked by distinct rhyme, meter, or subject pattern. It is recognized by spacing or indentation.
- STROPHE:** in the Pindaric ode (see Ode), the first stanza and every third stanza thereafter. In the Greek form, the chorus moved up one side of the stage while the strophe was chanted, down with the antistrophe, and remained in place with the epode.
- SYNECDOCHE:** a figure of speech close to metonymy (q.v.) in meaning, except that a part is used for the whole; "ten head" for ten cattle, "a hundred

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- sail" for a hundred ships.
- TERZA RIMA:** a stanza form marked by a series of tercets or triplets. Each group of three lines after the first takes as its initial and final rhymes the sound of the middle line of the preceding tercet; the middle line in each new group takes a new sound, thus: aba, bcb, cdc, etc.
- TETRAMETER:** a line of poetry having four feet
- TRIMETER:** a line of poetry having three feet
- TRIOLET:** a member of the rondeau group (*q.r.*)
- TROCHEE:** a metrical foot consisting of an accented syllable followed by an unaccented one (trip'it)
- VERS LIBRE:** See **FREE VERSE**
- VERSE:** technically, a single line of poetry; also a synonym for poetry; in modern songs another name for stanza.
- VILLANELLE:** one of the complicated forms in the rondeau group (*q.v.*).

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PART II
THE DRAMA

THE DRAMA

Our lives are surrounded by drama in some form or other—whether it be the drama of the latest movie thriller, a human-interest story in yesterday's tabloid, or a scene in a park witnessed from a nearby apartment. When people meet, talk, and move, new behavior patterns result. And because people the world over are ruled by much the same passions, have much the same frustrations, want alike to be appreciated, and hope for illusory beauties and gains, they are naturally interested in other people's successes and failures.

If these "other people" live far back in history, or if they are great and powerful, or if they take great risks, or if they do murder in a tenement—in short, if they somehow illuminate the universal pattern—they provide alluring vicarious experience for the amusement, horror, or education of their less-publicized fellow human beings. For out of people, dialogue, and action set against a backdrop come many other components of the drama-scheme of life: motives, morals, conflicts, causes, and so on. Place all this in a building called a theater, add lighting effects, music effects, costume, trained actors, and an intelligent version of some little fable of human life, and you have drama in a technical, indeed in a magic, sense.

Plays, of course, should be seen. But a reader with a spectator intelligence can "see" a play by reading it, and although he naturally misses much of the visual detail, he can compensate for his loss by a leisurely opportunity to reread lines or to study stage directions. Now it is undeniable that a literate person can get much enjoyment from reading a good play even if he hasn't much technical background or training. He cannot, however, be said to possess real understanding of the play without knowing the rules, any more than a profes-

sional football player can be said to understand his first tennis exhibition beyond an appreciation of grace, speed, rhythm—basic points common to all sports. Thus in textbooks we inevitably find introductions, notes, and comment designed to help the reader to achieve a richer experience. Frequently such scholarly impedimenta actually impede because of pedantry or erudition—or failure on the reader's part to realize that learning the rules of a new game doesn't come without practice. Students assigned to read the plays which follow must some day read many books and articles, listen to lectures, participate in discussions before they can hope to feel reasonably sure of their critical reactions, especially to older drama. But there is always a beginning, and, for some, this brief introduction may have to suffice.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF DRAMA

"There is always a beginning." The history of drama is long and broad. We can touch here upon only a few outstanding features of that history. (The plays of India, Japan, modern continental Europe, for example, must pass unnoticed in a text which concentrates on British and American literature and has space for only brief mention of outside influence.) For convenience, then, we begin with the Greeks and Romans. We might not have to go back even that far except for the fact that the English theater owes its present form partly to the historical influence of works by men who wrote before the time of Christ.

In most instances drama begins with some form of religious observance—with the Greeks in ceremonies in honor of Dionysus (Bacchus), a god of fertility, drinking, and revelry. The basic features of religious ritual include offer-

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ing (gesture, posturing) and recitation or chanting of set speeches. The modern responsive reading in church was anticipated by the Greeks in the dialogue between leader and chorus. In time a second and third "leader" (actor) were evolved, and the chorus lost some of its prominence. Repeated ritual naturally grew in complexity under able hands (Thespis—sixth century B.C.—is the first Greek dramatist on record), and a new form was born which quickly lost its original limitations. The fifth century before Christ saw the work of three master tragedians—Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides—and a major figure in comedy, Aristophanes. The writers of tragedy dealt with known stories of gods and heroes, stories showing characters dogged by fate or suffering from a fatal weakness. The starkness of their themes is seen in the familiar story of Oedipus, who, through a combination of circumstances, murdered his father, married his mother, and blinded himself. Comedy at first was coarse and remained racy (Aristophanes' superb piece, *Lysistrata*, still has trouble with modern censors); this is not surprising since it began as an offshoot of the licentious by-play connected with the Dionysian revels. As comedy matured, it veered toward satire and eventually domesticity, undergoing minor transformations as well; by the time of the Romans, for example, the chorus in comedy had disappeared.

The modern student who thinks of a domestic tragedy in terms of a Broadway production would find many surprises if he went back via a Wellsian time-machine to ancient Greece. Early performances did not enjoy the luxury of a raised stage, although that did develop; audiences sat outdoors in a bowl-like structure. There was no scenery, almost nothing in the way of props. The chorus commented on the action. Deaths occurred offstage and were announced by messenger. When matters got hopelessly tangled the *deus ex machina* (see Glossary, I, 629) was used. One or more of the unities of time, place, and action was observed. A well-made tragedy was expected to produce a catharsis (see Glossary) in the audience. Masks were employed (a device revived by Eugene O'Neill). The story was familiar to on-lookers. But unlike typical modern theatergoers, the Greeks did not go to a play for enter-

tainment in the modern sense—the whole production was a serious undertaking for serious people who were moved by language and theme to a point of intellectual and spiritual growth. The modern bystander would note many other differences, but these few will serve to create a superficial impression. Many Greek conventions were taken over by the Romans and eventually by Elizabethan playwrights, including Shakespeare. They have a long and honorable history which must be read elsewhere in full by any serious-minded student of the drama.

When the Romans took over Greek civilization they took over the Greek theater in wholesale fashion. Seneca, the outstanding Roman tragedian, is typical of his group in his adaptation (and debasement) of Greek technique; we are not certain whether his plays were intended for regular performance, for recitation, or for reading alone. When Seneca was imitated in England there was no doubt about performance. The Romans loved spectacle (some of their shows included gladiatorial combats, sham naval battles, and the like); it is not surprising, therefore, to find blood-and-thunder, the ghost, and expansive rhetoric in their plays. The Elizabethans were to borrow these, too. In comedy, where Terence and Plautus excelled, the Romans were clever enough to cast an influence on the early school plays in England and (as in *The Comedy of Errors*, based on the *Menaechmi* of Plautus) on Shakespeare himself. Fortunately for a brief introduction—and for the student—with the fall of Rome the curtain descends for roughly a thousand years, and we may now turn directly to England.

English drama, like the Greek, began in religious ceremony (the possibility of independent evolution with wandering singers or folk shows remains, but the evidence is not convincing). As early as the ninth or tenth century on the Continent bits of Latin dialogue had been inserted in divine services to clarify or enliven proceedings; these early units of drama—called tropes—are best illustrated by the famous "Quem quaeritis" dialogue in which the earth-dwellers seeking Jesus are told by the angels that He has risen; here we have only a few lines with no stage business, and yet these tropes were popular, so popular that as they

developed in form they were eventually presented out of doors. These new plays soon became unmanageable and were handed over by their parent to the medieval guilds for production. The guilds vied with each other in open competition for the best performance. Although we read of platforms on trestles and an occasional open-space arrangement with fixed stations for various scenes, in England these guild plays were generally acted on pageant-wagons, two-decker affairs with dressing rooms and storage below, and "stage" above. A wagon would draw up to a specified location, its section of a particular cycle of plays would be acted out, and the vehicle would move on, to be followed by another, and so on. Primitive as this system may sound, it worked, relatively speaking, it was enough. Some of the stage effects (Hell-mouth, for example) must have been sufficiently terrifying, and the costumes at least adequate, judging from the surviving account books with their bills for repairs to angels' wings or a new coat for Noah.

Medieval English religious plays, as given by the guilds, were at first deadly serious. They are sometimes divided into *miracles* (saints' lives); *mysteries* (Bible history); and *moralities* (didactic pieces with personified virtues and vices as characters—see *Everyman* for the classic example). Since there are objections to the use of the term "mystery" on grounds of insufficiently clear historical meaning or distinction, such labels must be handled with care. These were all serious plays whether stories of Abraham or of Good Deeds; like the Greeks, Englishmen at first went to a performance for illustration of familiar ideas or themes. The only note of frivolity in the early days was sounded in a burlesque of the Mass which was tolerated in the hands of theological students, but this was not true public theater. However, a public which knew the antics of traveling troupes at fairs was ready for comedy. It remained for the author of *The Second Shepherds' Play* (see I, 407) and others like him to provide it.

Sixteenth-century drama is marked among other things by a progression from religious to secular plays; increasing influence of Latin and Greek materials; a tightening in organization (the five-act formula, unities, etc.); the impact of the Senecan form on tragedy (the ghost,

blood, stock characters, declamation), and the growth of the production scene from wagons and platforms through inn yards to an actual theater building. The evolution of a national comedy from the early Mak episode in *Second Shepherd* to the prose comedy of the University Wits and the major works of Shakespeare is first seen in the racy Lucical interludes like Heywood's *Four I's* and the first straight comedies like *Fulgens and Lucrece* and *Ralph Roister Doister*. Crude as these plays are, they still can be read with more than historical interest. The pioneer blank-verse tragedy, *Corbodus*, seems a poor thing compared to Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, and a hardly recognizable competitor beside Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* or *Jew of Malta*. Marlowe, who first made blank verse a ringing mighty line, is the giant of the days shortly before Shakespeare achieved his top place in the literary hierarchy. If Marlowe (see I, 198) had lived a normal span of years, there is no telling what heights he might have reached. As it is, he made passion convincing on stage, developed the art of characterization, and clearly showed that the English language was a fit vehicle for dramatic art.

Shakespeare (see I, 419) is, of course, in a class by himself. Of his many able contemporaries, Ben Jonson (see I, 212) is perhaps the runner-up. His comedies of the humours (see Glossary) lack the poetry of Shakespeare but are tight in construction and have a satiric touch which is foreign to the master. Jonson excelled as well in the dramatic form known as the masque—a hodgepodge of plot, song, dance, and elaborate stage effects—which he produced in collaboration with the famous designer, Inigo Jones. The period is also marked by the rise of acting companies subsidized by prominent people; there were even groups of capable child actors who gave the professionals a good run for their money.

One or two other developments should be briefly mentioned. A real theater building had finally come into being, but its existence was in jeopardy. A round structure—or an octagon giving a round effect—it was open to the sky except for a thatch roof running around the rim. Performances were by daylight. The common man stood where the modern orchestra seats are, and there were galleries for the af-

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fluent. The stage projected into the audience. There were almost no props, but the costumes were elaborate. No general curtain, no spot-lights, no real scenery were to be had. (There was a small gallery over the back of the stage, serving for height effects—walls, cliffs, etc.; underneath was a curtained area available for storage or for actual use as an inner stage.) With a constant hubbub from the beholders, a small area in which to work, boys taking women's roles, and numerous other handicaps, it is a wonder that the magic of the lines or the antics of low comedians could ever get across. But plays were popular and often financially successful. There was one ominous note, however, sounded early when the new playhouses had had to be located out of town because of critical pressure. The Puritans, who hated the theater for moral and political reasons, were slowly growing in power. In 1642 they were to close the houses for almost twenty years, an act which was to have direct and indirect influences on theatrical traditions down to the present day.

After Shakespeare died in 1616 there were many able playwrights still attracting attention in addition to some already named; Marston, Dekker, Middleton, Massinger, Ford, Shirley, and Webster are a few of the many names which are to be found in any good anthology of Jacobean drama (see bibliography, I, 631). But no plays were written which were in the same class with *Hamlet* or *Macbeth*; as a matter of fact, Shakespeare himself showed signs of being "written out" as early as 1609, faded badly in his last plays, borrowing from himself and turning out two or three feeble efforts (with a notable exception, a final puff of brilliance, *The Tempest*). In spite of the interest in the War of the Theaters, the popularity of collaborators like Beaumont and Fletcher and Massinger, or the personal charm of Dekker, it can be said that drama began to run downhill after 1609. By the time Webster's *Duchess of Malfi* appeared (1623), the theater looked like the theater of Kyd's day, with revenge the motif, and dead hands, madmen, waxworks, and torture again playing their Senecan roles. The *Duchess* is not a bad play; Webster has refined the revenge story; revival groups and college classes can have fun with the stout central character and the deep-dyed villains—but

it still reads and plays like a period piece, whereas Shakespeare continues in his major plays to defy time.

By 1642 the Puritans, as has been said, were strong enough to close the theaters, and they stayed closed until the Restoration. Heavy penalties were exacted for producing or attending "bootleg" plays. The only exceptions seem to have been provincial shows and private staging of "drolls," short scenes reworked from full-length plays, which apparently got by, but were no more than small beer after the heady brew of the good old days.

After the repressive methods of the Puritans it is not surprising to find Restoration comedy almost deliberately going to extremes. Its dialogue sparkles with wit and apt phrase. Its tone varies from sophisticatedly racy to plain coarse. Its characters are stock types made over from Jonson's humors with a dash of new French sauce. Its plots are commonplace. Its glitter is false. And yet from the point of view of good theater the best work of Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh, Farquhar, and others can stand up today alongside New York's and London's best. (As a matter of fact, a revival of *The Country Wife*, with Ruth Gordon, was a hit on Broadway a few years ago.) These comedies, of course, are not for Puritans, they are ordinarily not included in college anthologies on the theory that mixed classes would suffer embarrassment if they were. This is unfortunate, for the plays also happen at times to be brilliant, vigorous, artful. The victory of the non-Puritans in 1660 was a Pyrrhic victory.

Of Restoration tragedy little need be said. It is as decorous as the comedy is indecorous. It is also dull. (Not that it is safe or true to conclude that virtue is unattractive and vice rewarding.) This late seventeenth-century tragedy is heroic; the topics are love, valor, honor; the speeches are long, the people wooden. Let the student read Dryden's *Conquest of Granada*, Otway's *Venice Preserved*, and one of Rowe's plays at the turn of the century, and he will see this period's tragedy at its best. He need read no more. "Hopelessly heroic," Nicoll calls them, and there can be no rebuttal.

If the Restoration shocks in one field and bores in another, it can lay claim to other laurels, for it is the time when women play women's roles for the first time in England,

theaters have roofs and interior furnishings and effects imitative of the Continent's, and a rapport exists between actor and audience which the Puritan, for all of his virtues, could not comprehend.

Relatively speaking, the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are as unimportant in the history of English drama as they are significant in the development of, say, the novel and poetry. This is not to say that there was no theater; it is to say that the playwrights of first rank in that long period can be counted on the fingers of one hand. After the excesses of the Restoration there was, not unexpectedly, a reaction. An Age of Reason could not cope with an overplay of emotion or a pyrotechnic display of double meanings. It took an opposite course—toward genteelism, sentiment, decorum. Sheridan (see I, 459) and Goldsmith (I, 255 and II, 52) managed to steer a middle course. Although they are capable of innuendo and not devoid of sentiment, they manage to avoid the Scylla of indecency and the Charybdis of sentimentality in the Steele (see II, 38) tradition. Both men attempted (in *The Rivals* and *She Stoops to Conquer*, for example) to keep the authentic sparkle of Restoration situation and dialogue while cleaning things up a bit, and they succeeded. The plays of both men are still revived with good effect. The minor plays of the period, experiments like Lillo's in prose tragedy, the burlesque of Fielding, the new acting methods under Garrick, and the efforts of the elder Colman in straight comedy—these and other subjects can be discussed and must be in any complete history of the stage; but their importance is secondary, and we have, regretfully, no time for them here.

The nineteenth century is a virtual void in English drama until the end of the period. The early and middle portions are marked by dramatic experiments conducted by poets. Shelley (I, 276), Byron (I, 123), Tennyson (I, 150), and Browning (I, 158), for example. Their work is either closet drama or undramatic stage drama and, however interesting to the historian, is not a major contribution. At the end of the century, however, the modern movement in the theater began. In the plays of Robertson (*Caste*), Pinero (*The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*), and Wilde (see I, 502), there was

a noticeable progression respectively toward realism in topic and setting, courage in handling forbidden subjects, and outspokenness in a revived comedy which, however, had its roots in Congreve and Sheridan. The greatest influence on the new theater was not English but Scandinavian; it remained for Ibsen to unlock the door to the forbidden room and, for the first time since the Elizabethans, to present serious plays close to life, written in no uncertain terms, presenting problems with understanding and, above all, compassion. The high poetry of the Elizabethans was gone and the captains and kings had departed in favor of tradesmen and politicians, but at long last and in a new idiom the drama was again at grips with universals.

MODERN DRAMA

The student who picks up a modern play will be aware immediately of many superficial differences between the drama of today and that of yesterday: plays do not have to be five acts long, poetry is rarely used (see Anderson, I, 567, for an exception), stage directions are more elaborate, the mechanics of staging are vastly improved. Under the surface there are differences, too: less genteelism, less sentimentalism, more coming to grips with basic problems. Sex is prominent; the new psychology has introduced a long list of clinical studies, many isms—naturalism, expressionism, impressionism—have been introduced into the jargon of the theater; one-act plays and little theaters have their day. This does not mean that the modern theater is therefore automatically great—as a matter of fact, we are too close to the picture to get a true perspective. No Shakespeares have appeared. And for all the technical improvements there have been dozens of bad plays, so trite, so poorly executed that any intelligent audience might well wonder why anyone ever wasted money on their production.

With new developments not unexpectedly came new problems. To get rid of Victorian prudery was one thing. But there was a danger in going to the other extreme, parading sex in a series of cheap, disgusting "plays" of a kind popular during the last war and still to be seen in some burlesque theaters. To introduce real issues was an excellent thing. But the danger

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was, and is, that some playwrights merely preach, and no drama results; or they reduce life to a study of test tubes, which, however interesting in the laboratory, does not always make for good theater. But honesty of approach, scientific method, and sociological criticism in the new plays were steps ahead.

Among the leaders in the new drama in England were Shaw, Barrie (see I, 529), Galsworthy, and a long list of others including Granville-Barker and Maugham; in the Irish renaissance Lord Dunsany, Lady Gregory, Yeats, Synge (see I, 539), and O'Casey were prominent. Shaw, a follower of Ibsen in the early days, is not impressive in recent plays, but in his prime, in dramas like *Arms and the Man*, *Candida*, *Major Barbara*, *Pygmalion*, and *Saint Joan*, he showed the unmistakable touch of a first-rate writer. He needled people, made them angry but made them think, and cleaned away loads of traditional rubbish almost single-handedly. He wrote long prefaces and made plays that seemed more like sermons. Even at his best he also alienated people by his egotism and his prejudices; nevertheless, like Milton (see I, 87 and II, 21), no matter what one thinks of him, Shaw was a force, the first force in the English theater for a long time. Perhaps his greatest service was making the way easier for later playwrights.¹

Barrie is still worth going back to. He was known before Shaw, went into partial eclipse, but has never quite disappeared. It is unfortunate in a way that the average man thinks of him as the author of *Peter Pan*, despite its charm, for a "typing" impression remains, in the Hollywood sense of the word. Barrie is whimsical, but tough, capable of criticizing mankind. (Some of his most revealing phrases occur in his stage directions.) Galsworthy (see II, 197), on the other hand, wrote with understanding and patrician intelligence, but today he does not get under one's skin. He recognized inequalities, pointed them out (which is enough service), but offered no solutions. He seems detached or unemotional to a modern generation fed on a diet of proletarian plays, problem plays, and satire. Nevertheless, Galsworthy knew his trade.

¹ It is to be regretted that Shaw does not allow his plays to be reprinted in anthologies designed for college and university use.

Space or proximity in time does not allow for even passing mention of other names and titles. A good play here, a capable author there—the list is long; the best procedure for the student is to consult reading lists, anthologies of the drama, and the bibliography in this text. Coward, Milne, Massfield (see I, 357), Priestley (II, 277), and others must await the test of time. The Irish school, represented here by Synge in drama and in poetry by Yeats, is a good product of a national literary renaissance. The poverty, bellicosity, faith, superstition, and humor of the Irish have been made familiar to American audiences on stage and screen by a coterie of artists since the early days of the traveling Abbey players. Such plays as *John Ferguson* and *Shadow and Substance* are typical of second-generation offerings which have pleased on both sides of the Atlantic.

THE PLAY IN AMERICA

American drama—that is, first-rate American drama—has a short history. It is possible to make a historical survey of plays from the Revolution to the present, and some authorities are apparently enthusiastic over certain early authors. For practical purposes, however, American drama begins with Eugene O'Neill in the twentieth century. In terms of worldwide reception, again as with Shaw in terms of impact, O'Neill is to our drama what Whitman (see I, 308) was to our poetry. There had been men who knew their craft—Thomas, Moody, Fitch, to name a trio—earnest men who sometimes produced well-made plays. But until O'Neill, with rare exceptions, playwrights had done what the English had done in the dramatic doldrums; they sheered away from the unpleasant, they sentimentalized, or they skimmed the surface of problems.

O'Neill, of course, can be criticized, and has been for such recent offerings as *The Iceman Cometh*. *Beyond the Horizon*, which brought his first success, now sounds foolish in places. In Greek moods like that of *Mourning Becomes Electra*, overwhelming fate is melodramatically handled so that the result may be absorbing theater, but the audience is more likely to be revolted or upset than to experience a catharsis. But with O'Neill there is generally evidence of intelligence, passion, knowledge, courage in

experiment (masks, asides, etc.). The new psychology, which has affected poetry and the novel as well, accounts for some of the power in O'Neill; it also accounts for the occasional feeling that one is reading a textbook rather than witnessing a play. A winner of many prizes, O'Neill can be given the title of first master in the American theater for *Desire Under the Elms*, *The Emperor Jones*, *The Hairy Ape* (see I, 545), *Anna Christie*, and others.

Perhaps Maxwell Anderson (see I, 567) comes closest to O'Neill in terms of output, courage in experiment (revival of verse plays), and popular success. He has been successful with historical offerings like *Mary of Scotland*, *Elizabeth the Queen*, and the relatively recent *Joan of Lorraine*. *Winterset* (I, 567), like the best of O'Neill, shows interest in conflict, and pity for the trapped human being. An evening in the theater with Anderson is more than surface entertainment.

There is a temptation to mention a fairly long list of other established modern American playwrights. Barry in drawing-room comedy, Behrman in didactic comedy, Sherwood in comedy and history (*Abe Lincoln in Illinois*); Howard in a problem play like *The Siler Cord*; Rice in social satire and expressionism (see *The Adding Machine*, I, 605). Odets in plays of the proletariat—and a host of others deserve consideration. But nothing can be said for or against authors of one or two good plays, or for the dozen writers of recent Broadway hits; again the test of time must be invoked. The brief bibliography (I, 631) should be enough for a start if any reader wants to bring his historical background up to date in detail or to make his own guesses as to who will survive and who will be forgotten.

STUDY AIDS

A student who knows his way in the theater needs no introductory helps. A beginner must look to his instructor for assistance over rough spots and for answers to specific questions. But in the isolation of the study room a few questions may be of help in organizing reading with some purpose. (See also the Glossary, I, 629.)

1. Can you, after preliminary quick reading of an assigned play, state the plot in your own words as if it were simply a story?

2. How many conventions can you recognize (soliloquies, asides, etc.)? Are there any stock or type characters?

3. Is there a marked conflict, or is the play relatively static? Can you trace rising action to a climax? How is falling action handled?

4. Can you detect any use of forecast, any hints to the audience? How is action occurring prior to the opening of the play presented?

5. If the play is a comedy, is the emphasis on making a point clear, sheer entertainment, dialogue, situation, satire, or what combination?

6. If the play is serious, do you experience any feeling of being a wiser person for having read it? In what respects?

7. If the play is a problem play, what do you think of the author's presentation and prejudices? Does the playwright have an ax to grind? How obviously does he do it? Does he take any liberties with facts?

8. Study the stage directions. Compare them with earlier or later play directions. What is their function?

9. Consider the setting. How would the play look on stage? Is the setting important in the action or could the play have occurred almost anywhere?

10. How are the characters presented (by what they say, what others say, what they do, soliloquy—or a combination of these)? Can you label each clearly?

11. Is there anything in the action or characterization which is hard to swallow? Is the main idea sound? How much use is made of coincidence?

12. If the play is not modern, what differences in reaction do you experience if you read it twice, once from today's point of view, and again from yesterday's? If some details or ideas are definitely dated, how much of the total effect is spoiled thereby?

13. Are there any language difficulties? Do allusions and historical references bother you?

14. Are there any moral problems involved which threaten to complicate your literary judgment?

15. Is there any evidence that the author knows box-office appeal as well as his art?

16. Would the play make an acceptable moving picture or radio script? What changes would have to be made?

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17. How does the method of the dramatist differ from that of a novelist handling the same theme?

18. Read two or three pages aloud with the help of some friends. What comes out in the oral exercise, amateurish though your acting

may be?

19. Would you read the play again with profit and enjoyment if it were not reassigned?

20. Has the play—apart from its value as a theater piece—taught you anything about manners, customs, language, etc.?

THE SECOND SHEPHERDS' PLAY*

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

14th Century

The Second Shepherds' Play is the work of an unknown artist sometimes called the Wakefield Master because the play belongs to the Towneley cycle, which probably was produced by the guilds of Wakefield. Along with Abraham and Isaac, a miracle play, and Everyman, a morality, Second Shepherd, a "mystery," may serve as a good example of drama in the early stage immediately after the Church handed over its overgrown stepchild to new guardians. It is distinguished from others by its comic episode involving Mak and the theft of a sheep. The blending of the serious and comic themes and the careful working-out of the symbols in Mak's unfortunate affair attest to the art of the unknown author who paved the way for full length comedy. Recent scholarship has established this artful organization especially in regard to what has hitherto been thought of only as horseplay. (See H. A. Watt, "The Dramatic Unity of the 'Secunda Pastorum,'" in Essays and Studies in Honor of Carleton Brown, New York, 1940, and, especially, C. Chidamian, "Mak and the Tossing in the Blanket," in Speculum, April, 1947.)

The FIRST SHEPHERD (PRIMUS PASTOR) enters

PRIMUS PASTOR. Lord, but this weather is cold, and I am ill wrapped!

* This text of the play, edited by Professor Child, is reproduced by permission of the Houghton Mifflin Company.

Nigh dazed, were the truth told, so long have I napped;
My legs under me fold, my fingers are chapped—

5 With such like I don't hold, for I am all lapt
In sorrow.

In storms and tempest,
Now in the east, now in the west,
Woe is him has never rest

10 Midday nor morrow!

But we seely¹ shepherds that walk on the moor,

In faith we're nigh at hand to be put out of
15 door.

No wonder, as it doth stand, if we be poor,
For the tilth of our land lies fallow as the floor,
As ye ken.

We're so burdened and banned,

20 Over-taxed and unmanned,

We're made tame to the hand
Of these gentry men.

Thus they rob us of our rest, our Lady them
25 harry!

These men bound to their lords' behest, they
make the plough tarry,

What men say is for the best, we find the
contrary,—

30 Thus are husbandmen oppressed, in point to
miscarry,
In life,

¹ poor.

THE DRAMA · THE SECOND SHEPHERDS' PLAY

Thus hold they us under
And from comfort sunder.
It were great wonder,

If ever we should thrive.

For if a man may get an embroidered sleeve or
a brooch now-a-days,

Woe is him that may him grieve, or a word
in answer says!

No blame may he receive, whatever pride he
displays;

And yet may no man believe one word that he
says,

Not a letter.

His daily needs are gained
By boasts and bragging feigned,

And in all he's maintained
By men that are greater.

Proud shall come a swain as a peacock may go, 20
He must borrow my wain,² my plough also,
Then I am full fain to grant it ere he go.

Thus live we in pain, anger, and woe
By night and day!

He must have it, if he choose,

Though I should it lose,

I were better hanged than refuse,

Or once say him nay!

It does me good as I walk thus alone
Of this world for to talk and to make my
moan.

To my sheep will I stalk, and hearken anon,
There wait on a balk,³ or sit on a stone.

Full soon,

For I trow, perdie,⁴

True men if they be,

We shall have company,

Ere it be noon.

*The FIRST SHEPHERD goes to one side. The
SECOND SHEPHERD enters*

SECUNDUS PASTOR. Ben'cite⁵ and Dominus!

What may this mean?

Why fares the world thus! The like often we've 45
seen!

Lord, but it is spiteful and grievous, this
weather so keen!

And the frost so hideous—it waters mine een!

That's no lie!

Now in dry, now in wet,
Now in snow, now in sleet,
When my shoes freeze to my feet,
It's not all easy!

5

But so far as I ken, wherever I go,
We seely weeded⁶ men suffer mickle woe,
We have sorrow once and again, it befalls oft
so.

10 Seely Capel, our hen, both to and fro
She cackles,

But if she begins to croak,
To grumble or cluck,
Then woe be to our cock,

15 For he is in the shackles!

These men that are wed have not all their
will;

When they're full hard bestead, they sigh
mightily still;

God knows the life they are led is full hard
and full ill,

Nor thereof in bower or bed may they speak
their will,

25 This tide.

My share I have found,
Know my lesson all round,
Woe is him that is bound,
For he must it abide!

30

But now late in men's lives (such a marvel
to me

That I think my heart rives such wonders to
see,

35 How that destiny drives that it should so be!)

Some men will have two wives and some men
three

In store.

Some are grieved that have any,

40 But I'll wager my penny

Woe is him that has many,
For he feels sore!

But young men as to wooing, for God's sake
that you bought,

Beware well of wedding, and hold well in
thought,

"Had I known" is a thing that serves you
nought.

50 Much silent sorrowing has a wedding home
brought,

² wagon.

⁴ by God.

³ ridge.

⁵ *Benedicite*, bless you.

⁶ married.

THE SECOND SHEPHERDS' PLAY · THE DRAMA

And grief gives,
With many a sharp shower—
For thou mayest catch in an hour
What shall taste thee full sour
As long as one lives!

For—if ever read I epistle¹—I have one by my
fire,
As sharp as a thistle, as rough as a briar,
She has brows like a bristle and a sour face by
her;

If she had once wet her whistle, she might
sing clearer and higher
Her pater-noster,
She is as big as a whale,
She has a gallon of gall,—
By him that died for us all,
I wish I had run till I had lost her!

PRIMUS PASTOR. "God look over the row!" 20
like a deaf man ye stand.

SECUNDUS PASTOR. Yea, sluggard, the devil
thy maw burn with his brand!

Didst see aught of Daw?

PRIMUS PASTOR. Yea, on the pasture-land 25
I heard him blow just before, he comes nigh
at hand

Below there.

Stand still.

SECUNDUS PASTOR. Why?

PRIMUS PASTOR. For he comes, hope I.

SECUNDUS PASTOR. He'll catch us both with
some lie

Unless we beware.

*The THIRD SHEPHERD enters, at first without
seeing them*

TERTIUS PASTOR. Christ's cross me speed
and St. Nicholas!

Thereof in sooth I had need, it is worse than 40
it was.

Whoso hath knowledge, take heed, and let the
world pass,

You may never trust it, indeed,—it's as brittle
as glass,

As it rangeth.

Never before fared this world so,

With marvels that greater grow,

Now in weal, now in woe,

And everything changeth.

seen,

Winds and rains so rude and storms so keen,
Some stammered, some stood in doubt, as I
ween,—

5 Now God turn all to good, I say as I mean!
For ponder

How these floods all drown

Both in fields and in town,

And bear all down,

And that is a wonder!

We that walk of nights our cattle to keep
[catches sight of the others]

We see startling sights when other men sleep

15 Yet my heart grows more light—I see shrews²
a-peep.

Ye are two tall wights—I will give my sheep

A turn, below.

But my mood is ill-sent;

As I walk on this bent,

I may lightly repent,

If I stub my toe.

Ah, sir, God you save and my master sweet!

25 A drink I crave, and somewhat to eat.

PRIMUS PASTOR. Christ's curse, my knave,
thou'rt a lazy cheat!

SECUNDUS PASTOR. Lo, the boy lists to rave!

Wait till later for meat,

30 We have eat it.

Ill thrift on thy pate!

Though the rogue came late,

Yet is he in state

To eat, could he get it.

35

TERTIUS PASTOR. That such servants as I,
that sweat and swink,³

Eat our bread full dry gives me reason to
think.

40 Wet and weary we sigh while our masters
wink,⁴

Yet full late we come by our dinner and drink—
But soon thereto

Our dame and sire,

45 When we've run in the mire,

Take a nip from our hire,

And pay slow as they care to.

But hear my oath, master, since you find fault
50 this way,

There was never since Noah's flood such floods

² rogues.

³ work.

⁴ sleep.

THE DRAMA · THE SECOND SHEPHERDS' PLAY

I shall do this hereafter—work to fit my pay;
I'll do just so much, sir, and now and then
 play,
For never yet supper in my stomach lay
 In the fields.
But why dispute so?
Off with staff I can go.
"Easy bargain," men say,
 "But a poor return yields."

PRIMUS PASTOR. Thou wert an ill lad for
 work to ride wooing

From a man that had but little for spending.

SECUNDUS PASTOR. Peace, boy, I bade! No
 more jangling,

Or I'll make thee full sad, by the Heaven's
 King,

 With thy gauds!¹⁰

Where are our sheep, boy? Left lorn?

TERTIUS PASTOR. Sir, this same day at morn, 20
I them left in the corn

 When they rang Lauds.

They have pasture good, they cannot go
 wrong.

PRIMUS PASTOR. That is right. By the Rood,
 these nights are long!

Ere we go now, I would someone gave us a
 song.

SECUNDUS PASTOR. So I thought as I stood, 30
 to beguile us along.

TERTIUS PASTOR. I agree.

PRIMUS PASTOR. The tenor I'll try.

SECUNDUS PASTOR. And I the treble so high.

TERTIUS PASTOR. Then the mean shall be I.

 How ye chant now, let's see! [*They*
 sing (the song is not given)]

Tunc entrat MAK, in clamide se super togam 40
 *vestitus*¹¹

MAK. Now, Lord, by thy seven names'
 spell, that made both moon and stars on
 high,

Full more than I can tell, by the will for me,
 Lord, lack I.

I am all at odds, nought goes well—that oft
 doth my temper try.

Now would God I might in heaven dwell, for 50

there no children cry,

 So still.

PRIMUS PASTOR. Who is that pipes so poor?

MAK. Would God ye knew what I endure!

5 [PRIMUS PASTOR.] Lo, a man that walks on
 the moor,

 And has not all his will!

SECUNDUS PASTOR. Mak, whither dost speed?

10 What news do you bring?

TERTIUS PASTOR. Is he come? Then take
 heed each one to his thing. [*Et accipit*
 clamidem ab ipso]¹²

MAK. What! I am a yeoman—since there's
15 need I should tell you—of the King,

That self-same, indeed, messenger from a great
 lording,

 And the like thereby.

Fie on you! Go hence

Out of my presence!

I must have reverence,

 And you ask "who am I"!

PRIMUS PASTOR. Why dress ye it up so
25 quaint? Mak, ye do ill!

SECUNDUS PASTOR. But, Mak, listen, ye saint,
 I believe what ye will!

TERTIUS PASTOR. I trow the knave can feint,
 by the neck the devil him kill!

MAK. I shall make complaint, and you'll
all get your fill,

 At a word from me—

And tell your doings, forsooth!

PRIMUS PASTOR. But, Mak, is that truth?

35 Now take out that southern tooth

 And stick in a flea!

SECUNDUS PASTOR. Mak, the devil be in your
 eye, verily! to a blow I'd fain treat you.

TERTIUS PASTOR. Mak, know you not me?
 By God, I could beat you!

MAK. God keep you all three! Me thought
 I had seen you—I greet you,

Ye are a fair company!

45 PRIMUS PASTOR. Oh, now you remember,
 you cheat, you!

SECUNDUS PASTOR. Shrew, jokes are cheap!

When thus late a man goes,

What will folk suppose?—

50 You've a bad name, God knows,

 For stealing of sheep!

¹⁰ tricks.

¹¹ Then enters Mak with a cloak over his smock.

¹² He takes the cloak from him.

THE SECOND SHEPHERDS' PLAY · THE DRAMA

- MAK. And true as steel am I, all men know
and say,
But a sickness I feel, verily, that grips me hard,
night and day.
My belly is all awry, it is out of play—
TERTIUS PASTOR. "Seldom doth the Devil lie
dead by the way—"
MAK. Therefore
Full sore am I and ill,
Though I stand stone still,
I've not eat a needle
This month and more.
- PRIMUS PASTOR. How fares thy wife, by my
hood, how fares she, ask I?
MAK. Lies asprawl, by the Rood, lo, the fire
close by,
And a house-full of home-brewed she drinks
full nigh—
Ill may speed any good thing that she will try
Else to do!—
Eats as fast as may be,
And each year there'll a day be
She brings forth a baby,
And some years two.
- But were I now kinder, d'ye hear, and far
richer in purse,
Still were I eaten clear out of house and home,
sirs.
And she's a foul-favored dear, see her close,
by God's curse!
No one knows or may hear, I trow, of a worse,
Not any!
Now will ye see what I proffer?—
To give all in my coffer,
To-morrow next to offer
Her head-mass¹³ penny.
- SECUNDUS PASTOR. Faith, so weary and
worn is there none in this shire.
I must sleep, were I shorn of a part of my
hire.
TERTIUS PASTOR. I'm naked, cold, and for-
lorn, and would fain have a fire.
PRIMUS PASTOR. I'm clean spent, for, since
morn, I've run in the mire.
Watch thou, do!
SECUNDUS PASTOR. Nay, I'll lie down hereby,
For I must sleep, truly.
TERTIUS PASTOR. As good a man's son was I,
- As any of you! [*They prepare to lie
down*]
But, Mak, come lie here in between, if you
please.
5 MAK. You'll be hindered, I fear, from talk-
ing at ease,
Indeed! [*He yields and lies down*]
From my top to my toe,
Manus tuas commendo,
10 *Poncio Pilato,*
Christ's cross me speed! [*Tunc surgit,
pastoribus dormientibus et dicit:*]¹⁴
Now 'twere time a man knew, that lacks what
he'd fain hold,
15 To steal privily through then into a fold,
And then nimbly his work do—and be not too
bold,
For his bargain he'd rue, if it were told
At the ending
20 Now 'twere time their wrath to tell!—
But he needs good counsel
That fain would fare well,
And has but little for spending.
- 25 But about you a circle as round as a moon, [*He
draws the circle*]
Till I have done what I will, till that it be noon,
That ye lie stone still, until I have done;
And I shall say thereto still, a few good words
30 soon
Of might:
Over your heads my hand I lift.
Out go your eyes! Blind be your sight!
But I must make still better shift,
35 If it's to be right.
- Lord, how hard they sleep—that may ye all
hear!
I never herded sheep, but I'll learn now, that's
40 clear.
Though the flock be scared a heap, yet shall I
slip near. [*He captures a sheep*]
Hey—hitherward creep! Now that betters our
cheer
45 From sorrow.
A fat sheep, I dare say!
A good fleece, swear I may!
When I can, then I'll pay,
But this I will borrow! [*MAK goes to his
house, and knocks at the door*]
50
- ¹⁴ Then he gets up, the shepherds being asleep,
and speaks.

¹³ money for funeral service.

THE DRAMA · THE SECOND SHEPHERDS' PLAY

MAK. Ho, Gill, art thou in? Get us a light!
 UXOR EIUS.¹⁵ Who makes such a din at this
 time of night?
 I am set for to spin, I think not I might
 Rise a penny to win! Curses loud on them light
 Trouble cause!
 A busy house-wife all day
 To be called thus away!
 No work's done, I say,
 Because of such small chores!

MAK. The door open, good Gill. See'st thou
 not what I bring?
 UXOR. Draw the latch, an thou will. Ah,
 come in, my sweeting!
 MAK. Yea, thou need'st not care didst thou
 kill me with such long standing!
 UXOR. By the naked neck still thou art likely
 to swing.
 MAK. Oh, get away!
 I am worthy of my meat,
 For at a pinch I can get
 More than they that swink and sweat
 All the long day.

Thus it fell to my lot, Gill! Such luck came my
 way!
 UXOR. It were a foul blot to be hanged for
 it some day.
 MAK. I have often escaped, Gillot, as risky
 a play.
 UXOR. But "though long goes the pot to the
 water," men say,
 "At last
 Comes it home broken."
 MAK. Well know I the token,
 But let it never be spoken—
 But come and help fast!

I would he were slain, I would like well to eat, 40
 This twelvemonth was I not so fain to have
 some sheep's meat.
 UXOR. Should they come ere he's slain and
 hear the sheep bleat—
 MAK. Then might I be ta'en. That were a 45
 cold sweat!
 The door—
 Go close it!
 UXOR. Yes, Mak,—
 For if they come at thy back—

MAK. Then might I suffer from the whole
 pack
 The devil, and more!

5 UXOR. A good trick have I spied, since thou
 thinkest of none,
 Here shall we him hide until they be gone—
 In my cradle he'll bide—just you let me
 alone—
 10 And I shall lie beside in childbed and groan.
 MAK. Well said!
 And I shall say that this night
 A boy child saw the light.
 UXOR. Now that day was bright
 15 That saw me born and bred!

This is a good device and a far cast.
 Ever a woman's advice gives help at the last!
 I care not who spies! Now go thou back fast!
 20 MAK. Save I come ere they rise, there'll
 blow a cold blast! [MAK goes back to the
 moor, and prepares to lie down]
 I will go sleep.
 Still sleeps all this company,
 25 And I shall slip in privily
 As it had never been I
 That carried off their sheep.

PRIMUS PASTOR. *Resurrex a mortuis!* Reach
 me a hand!
*Judas carnas dominus!*¹⁶ I can hardly stand!
 My foot's asleep, by Jesus, and my mouth's
 dry as sand.
 I thought we had laid us full nigh to England!
 35 SECUNDUS PASTOR. Yea, verily!
 Lord, but I have slept well.
 As fresh as an eel,
 As light do I feel,
 As leaf on the tree.

TERTIUS PASTOR. Ben'cite be herein! So my
 body is quaking,
 My heart is out of my skin with the to-do it's
 making.
 45 Who's making all this din, so my head's set to
 aching?
 To the doer I'll win! Hark, you fellows, be
 waking!
 Four we were—
 50 See ye aught of Mak now?

¹⁵ his wife.

¹⁶ pig Latin.

THE DRAMA · THE SECOND SHEPHERDS' PLAY

And raise a great bellow,
And cry out upon me.

But thou must use thy sleight.

UXOR. Yea, I think it not ill.
I shall swaddle him aright in my cradle with
skill.

Were it yet a worse plight, yet a way I'd find
still. [*GILL meanwhile swaddles the sheep
and places him in the cradle*]

I will lie down forthright. Come tuck me up.

MAK. That I will.

UXOR. Behind! [*MAK tucks her in at the
back*]

If Coll come and his marrow,²¹

They will nip us full narrow.

MAK. But I may cry out "Haro,"

The sheep if they find.

UXOR. Hearken close till they call—they
will come anon.

Come and make ready all, and sing thou
alone—

Sing lullaby, thou shalt, for I must groan

And cry out by the wall on Mary and John

Full sore.

Sing lullaby on fast.

When thou hear'st them at last,

And, save I play a shrewd cast,

Trust me no more.

The SHEPHERDS enter on the moor and meet

TERTIUS PASTOR. Ah, Coll, good morn! Why
sleepest thou not?

PRIMUS PASTOR. Alas, that ever I was born!

We have a foul blot.

A fat wether have we lorn.

TERTIUS PASTOR. Marry, God forbid, say it
not!

SECUNDUS PASTOR. Who should do us that
scorn? That were a foul spot.

PRIMUS PASTOR. Some shrew.

I have sought with my dogs

All Horburv Shrogs,

And of fifteen hogs

Found I all but one ewe.

TERTIUS PASTOR. Now trust me, if you will,
by Saint Thomas of Kent,

Either Mak or Gill their aid thereto lent!

PRIMUS PASTOR. Peace, man, be still! I saw

when he went.

Thou dost slander him ill. Thou shouldest
repent

At once, indeed!

5 SECUNDUS PASTOR. So may I thrive, perdie,
Should I die here where I be,

I would say it was he

That did that same deed!

10 TERTIUS PASTOR. Go we thither, quick
sped, and run on our feet,

I shall never eat bread till I know all com-
plete!

PRIMUS PASTOR. Nor drink in my head till
with him I meet.

15 SECUNDUS PASTOR. In no place will I bed
until I him greet,

My brother!

One vow I will plight,

20 Till I see him in sight,

I will ne'er sleep one night

Where I do another! [*They go to MAK's
house. MAK, hearing them coming,
begins to sing lullaby at the top of his
voice, while GILL groans in concert*]

25

TERTIUS PASTOR. Hark the row they make!
List our sire there croon!

PRIMUS PASTOR. Never heard I voice break
so clear out of tune.

30

Call to him.

SECUNDUS PASTOR. Mak, wake there! Undo
your door soon!

MAK. Who is that spake as if it were noon?
Aloft?

35

Who is that, I say?

TERTIUS PASTOR. Good fellows, if it were
day— [*mocking MAK*]

MAK. As far as ye may,
40 Kindly, speak soft;

O'er a sick woman's head in such grievous
throes!

I were liefer dead than she should suffer such
woes.

45

UXOR. Go elsewhere, well sped. Oh, how
my pain grows—

Each footfall ye tread goes straight through
my nose

So loud, woe's me!

PRIMUS PASTOR. Tell us, Mak, if ye may,
How fare ye, I say?

²¹ companion.

THE SECOND SHEPHERDS' PLAY · THE DRAMA

MAK. But are ye in this town to-day—
Now how fare ye?

Ye have run in the mire and are wet still a bit,
I will make you a fire, if ye will sit.
A nurse I would hire—can you help me in it?
Well quit is my hire—my dream the truth
hit—
In season.
I have bairns, if ye knew,
Plenty more than will do,
But we must drink as we brew,
And that is but reason.

I would ye would eat ere ye go. Methinks that
ye sweat.

SECUNDUS PASTOR. Nay, no help could we
know in what's drunken or eat.

MAK. Why, sir, ails you aught but good,
though?

TERTIUS PASTOR. Yea, our sheep that we get
Are stolen as they go; our loss is great.

MAK. Sirs, drink!
Had I been there,
Some one had bought it sore, I swear.

PRIMUS PASTOR. Marry, some men trow that
ye were,
And that makes us think!

SECUNDUS PASTOR. Mak, one and another
trows it should be ye.

TERTIUS PASTOR. Either ye or your spouse,
so say we.

MAK. Now if aught suspicion throws on
Gill or me,
Come and search our house, and then may ye
see
Who had her—
If I any sheep got,
Or cow or stot;²²
And Gill, my wife, rose not,
Here since we laid her.

As I am true and leal,²⁴ to God, here I pray
That this is the first meal that I shall eat this
day.

PRIMUS PASTOR. Mak, as may I have weal,
advise thee, I say—
"He learned timely to steal that could not say
nay."

UXOR. Me, my death you've dealt!
Out, ye thieves, nor come again,
Ye've come just to rob us, that's plain.

MAK. Hear ye not how she groans amain—
Your hearts should melt!

UXOR. From my child, thieves, begone. Go
nigh him not,—there's the door!

MAK. If ye knew all she's borne, your hearts
would be sore.

Ye do wrong, I you warn, thus to come in
before
A woman that has borne—but I say no more.

UXOR. Oh, my middle—I die!
I vow to God so mild,
If ever I you beguiled,
That I will eat this child
That doth in this cradle lie!

MAK. Peace, woman, by God's pain, and
cry not so.
Thou dost hurt thy brain and fill me with woe

SECUNDUS PASTOR. I trow our sheep is slain.
What find ye two, though?

Our work's all in vain. We may as well go.
Save clothes and such matters
I can find no flesh
Hard or nesh,²⁴
Salt nor fresh,
Except two empty platters.

Of any "cattle" but this, tame or wild, that we
see,
None, as may I have bliss, smelled as loud as
he.

UXOR. No, so God joy and bliss of my child
may give me!

PRIMUS PASTOR. We have aimed amiss; de-
ceived, I trow, were we.

SECUNDUS PASTOR. Sir, wholly each one.
Sir, Our Lady him save!
Is your child a knave?

MAK. Any lord might him have,
This child, for his son.

When he wakes, so he grips, it's a pleasure
to see.

TERTIUS PASTOR. Good luck to his hips, and
blessing, say we!

But who were his gossips,²⁵ now tell who they
be?

²² steer.

²³ loyal.

²⁴ soft.

²⁵ godparents.

THE DRAMA · THE SECOND SHEPHERDS' PLAY

MAK. Blest be their lips—— [*hesitates, at a loss*]
 PRIMUS PASTOR. [*aside*] Hark a lie now, trust me!
 MAK. So may God them thank, Parkin and Gibbon Waller, I say, And gentle John Horn, in good fey— He made all the fun and play— With the great shank.
 SECUNDUS PASTOR. Mak, friends will we be, for we are at one.
 MAK. Wel—nay, count not on me, for amends get I none.
 Farewell, all three! Glad 'twill be when ye're gone! [*The SHEPHERDS go*]
 TERTIUS PASTOR. "Fair words there may be, but love there is none This year."
 PRIMUS PASTOR. Gave ye the child any-thing?
 SECUNDUS PASTOR. I trow, not one farthing.
 TERTIUS PASTOR. Fast back I will fling.
 Await ye me here. [*daw goes back. The other SHEPHERDS turn and follow him slowly, entering while he is talking with MAK*]
 [TERTIUS PASTOR.] Mak, I trust thou'lt not grieve, if I go to thy child.
 MAK. Nay, great hurt I receive,—thou hast acted full wild.
 TERTIUS PASTOR. Thy bairn 'twill not grieve, little day-star so mild.
 Mak, by your leave, let me give your child But six-pence. [*daw goes to cradle, and starts to draw away the covering*]
 MAK. Nay, stop it—he sleeps!
 TERTIUS PASTOR. Methinks he peeps—
 MAK. When he wakens, he weeps;
 I pray you go hence! [*The other SHEPHERDS return*]
 TERTIUS PASTOR. Give me leave him to kiss, and lift up the clout.
 What the devil is this?—he has a long snout!
 PRIMUS PASTOR. He's birth-marked amiss. We waste time hereabout.
 SECUNDUS PASTOR. "A weft²⁶ that ill-spun is comes ever foul out." [*He sees the sheep*]
 Aye—so!
 He is like to our sheep!
 TERTIUS PASTOR. Ho, Gib, may I peep?
 PRIMUS PASTOR. I trow "Nature will creep Where it may not go."²⁷
 SECUNDUS PASTOR. This was a quaint gaud and a far cast.
 It was a high fraud.
 TERTIUS PASTOR. Yea, sirs, that was't.
 Let's burn this bawd, and bind her fast.
 "A false scold," by the Lord, "will hang at the last!"
 So shalt thou!
 Will ye see how they swaddle
 His four feet in the middle!
 Saw I never in the cradle
 A horned lad ere now!
 MAK. Peace, I say! Tell ye what, this to-do ye can spare! [*pretending anger*]
 It was I him begot and yon woman him bare.
 PRIMUS PASTOR. What the devil for name has he got? Mak?—Lo, God, Mak's heir!
 SECUNDUS PASTOR. Come, joke with him not. Now, may God give him care,
 I say!
 UXOR. A pretty child is he
 As sits on a woman's knee,
 A dilly-down, perdie,
 To make a man gay.
 TERTIUS PASTOR. I know him by the earmark—that is a good token.
 MAK. I tell you, sirs, hark, his nose was broken—
 Then there told me a clerk he'd been mis-spoken.²⁸
 PRIMUS PASTOR. Ye deal falsely and dark; I would fain be wroken.²⁹
 Get a weapon,—go!
 UXOR. He was taken by an elf,
 I saw it myself.
 When the clock struck twelve,
 Was he mis-shapen so.
 SECUNDUS PASTOR. Ye two are at one, that's plain, in all ye've done and said.
 PRIMUS PASTOR. Since their theft they maintain, let us leave them dead!
 MAK. If I trespass again, strike off my head!
 At your will I remain.
 TERTIUS PASTOR. Sirs, take my counsel in-

²⁶ woof.

²⁷ walk.

²⁸ bewitched. ²⁹ avenged.

THE SECOND SHEPHERDS' PLAY · THE DRAMA

stead.

For this trespass
We'll neither curse nor wrangle in spite,
Chide nor fight,
But have done forthright,

And toss him in canvas. [*They toss MAK
in one of GILL's canvas sheets till they are
tired. He disappears groaning into his
house. The SHEPHERDS pass over to the
moor on the other side of the stage*] 10

PRIMUS PASTOR. Lord, lo! but I am sore, like
to burst, in back and breast.
In faith, I may no more, therefore will I rest.

SECUNDUS PASTOR. Like a sheep of seven 15
score he weighed in my fist.
To sleep anywhere, therefore seemeth now
best.

TERTIUS PASTOR. Now I you pray,
On this green let us lie.

PRIMUS PASTOR. O'er those thieves yet
chafe I.

TERTIUS PASTOR. Let your anger go by,—
Come do as I say.

As they are about to lie down THE ANGEL ap-
pears

[ANGELUS cantat "*Gloria in excelsis*." *Postea
dicat:*]³⁰

ANGELUS. Rise, herdsmen gentle, attend ye, 30
for now is he born
From the fiend that shall rend what Adam had
lorn,

That warlock to shend,³¹ this night is he born,
God is made your friend now on this morn. 35

Lo! thus doth he command—

Go to Bethlehem, see
Where he lieth so free,³²
In a manger full lowly

'Twixt where twain beasts stand. [THE 40
ANGEL goes]

PRIMUS PASTOR. This was a fine voice, even
as ever I heard.
It is a marvel, by St. Stephen, thus with dread 45
to be stirred.

SECUNDUS PASTOR. 'Twas of God's Son from
heaven he these tidings averred.
All the wood with a levin,³³ methought at his

³⁰ The angel sings "Glory in the highest," next
is to say.

³¹ That devil to destroy.

³³ lightning flash.

³² noble.

word

Shone fair.

TERTIUS PASTOR. Of a Child did he tell,
In Bethlehem, mark ye well.

5 PRIMUS PASTOR. That this star yonder doth
spell—

Let us seek him there.

SECUNDUS PASTOR. Say, what was his song—
how it went, did ye hear?

Three breves³⁴ to a long—

TERTIUS PASTOR. Marry, yes, to my ear
There was no crotchet³⁵ wrong, naught it
lacked and full clear!

PRIMUS PASTOR. To sing it here, us among,
as he nickered it, full near,

I know how—

SECUNDUS PASTOR. Let's see how you croon!
Can you bark at the moon?

20 TERTIUS PASTOR. Hold your tongues, have
done!

Hark after me now! [*They sing*]

SECUNDUS PASTOR. To Bethlehem he bade
that we should go.

I am sore adrad that we tarry too slow.

TERTIUS PASTOR. Be merry, and not sad—
our song's of mirth not of woe,

To be forever glad as our meed may we know,
Without noise.

PRIMUS PASTOR. Hie we thither, then,
speedily,

Though we be wet and weary,
To that Child and that Lady!—

We must not lose those joys!

SECUNDUS PASTOR. We find by the prophecy
—let be your din!—

David and Isaiah, and more that I mind me
therein,

They prophesied by clergy, that in a virgin,
Should be alight and lie, to assuage our sin,

And slake it,

Our nature, from woe,

For it was Isaiah said so,

"*Ecce virgo*

Concipiet"³⁶ a child that is naked.

TERTIUS PASTOR. Full glad may we be and
await that day

That lovesome one to see, that all might's doth

³⁴ short notes.

³⁵ quarter-note.

³⁶ Behold, a virgin shall conceive.

THE DRAMA · THE SECOND SHEPHERDS' PLAY

sway.
Lord, well it were with me, now and for aye,
Might I kneel on my knee some word for to
say

To that child.
But the angel said
In a crib was he laid,
He was poorly arrayed,
Both gracious and mild.

PRIMUS PASTOR. Patriarchs that have been
and prophets before,
They desired to have seen this child that
is born.

They are gone full clean,—that have they lorn. 15
We shall see him, I ween, ere it be morn,
For token.

When I see him and feel,
I shall know full well,
It is true as steel,

What prophets have spoken,

To so poor as we are that he would appear,
First find and declare by his messenger.

SECUNDUS PASTOR. Go we now, let us fare, 25
the place is us near.

TERTIUS PASTOR. I am ready and eager to be
there; let us together with cheer

To that bright one go.

Lord, if thy will it be,
Untaught are we all three,
Some kind of joy grant us, that we
Thy creature, comfort may know!

*They enter the stable and adore the infant
Savior*

PRIMUS PASTOR. Hail, thou comely and clean
one! Hail, young Child!

Hail, Maker, as I mean, from a maiden so mild!
Thou hast harried, I ween, the warlock so 40
wild,—

The false beguiler with his teen³⁷ now goes be-
guiled.

Lo, he merries,
Lo, he laughs, my sweeting!
A happy meeting!

Here's my promised greeting,—
Have a bob³⁸ of cherries!

SECUNDUS PASTOR. Hail, sovereign Savior, 50
for thou hast us sought!
Hail, noble nursling and flower, that all things

³⁷ sorrow.

³⁸ bunch.

hast wrought!

Hail, thou, full of gracious power, that made
all from nought!

Hail, I kneel and I cower! A bird have I
5 brought

To my bairn from far.

Hail, little tiny mop!

Of our creed thou art the crop,

I fair would drink in thy cup,

10 Little day-star!

TERTIUS PASTOR. Hail, darling dear one, full
of Godhead indeed!

I pray thee be near, when I have need.

Hail, sweet is thy cheer! My heart would bleed

To see thee sit here in so poor a weed,

With no pennies.

Hail, put forth thy dall,³⁹

I bring thee but a ball,

Keep it, and play with it withal,

20 And go to the tennis.

MARIA. The Father of Heaven this night,
God omnipotent,

That setteth all things aright, his Son hath he
sent.

My name he named and did light on me ere
that he went.

I conceived him forthright through his might
as he meant,

30 And now he is born.

May he keep you from woe!

I shall pray him do so.

Tell it, forth as ye go,

And remember this morn.

PRIMUS PASTOR. Farewell, Lady, so fair to be-
hold

With thy child on thy knee!

SECUNDUS PASTOR. But he lies full cold!

40 Lord, 'tis well with me! Now we go, behold!

TERTIUS PASTOR. Forsooth, already it seems
to be told

Full oft!

PRIMUS PASTOR. What grace we have found!

45 SECUNDUS PASTOR. Now are we won safe and
sound.

TERTIUS PASTOR. Come forth, to sing are we
bound.

Make it ring then aloft! [*They depart
singing*]

*Explicit pagina Pastorum.*⁴⁰

³⁹ hand.

⁴⁰ The Shepherds' play ends.

THE FIRST PART OF KING HENRY THE FOURTH*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Shakespeare (1564–1616) was born in Stratford, where for a number of years his father was a prosperous tradesman and holder of municipal offices. Presumably Shakespeare had a local grammar-school education; we have no evidence of further formal instruction. Late in his teens he went through a sudden marriage ceremony with Anne Hathaway, several years his senior; their union produced three children. There are several unsubstantiated tales about the young Shakespeare—that he was arrested for poaching, and that he taught school, for example. Otherwise we do not know much about him until he went to London, where his rise was to be rapid

*In the London theater, Shakespeare went up the ladder by acting minor roles, helping to arrange texts, collaborating, and branching out on his own. Somehow he won the patronage of Southampton, to whom he dedicated the non-dramatic poems, *The Rape of Lucrece* and *Venus and Adonis*, and whom he probably had in mind when he wrote the sonnets, 154 of them, composed in the 1590's and published in 1609 by Thorpe. (See comment on songs and sonnets, I, 201.)*

Shakespeare was successful at the box office, prospered, bought real estate, applied for a grant of a coat of arms. As a shareholder in various acting companies the maturing dramatist wrote, produced, and shared in the

profits. It is customary to divide his plays into four periods from 1590 to 1610: early experiment in comedy, history, and tragedy, great histories and comedies; great tragedies and dark comedies; romances, weak attempts to recapture the old fire, and one last good comedy. In competition with Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher, and others Shakespeare revealed an incomparable genius which eventually was to be recognized the world around. Apparently written out, he may have retired to Stratford, where, at any rate, he was buried.

*Shakespeare's reputation does not depend on his plots, which were based largely on borrowed material, rather, his development of character and mastery of the poetic line were responsible for his rise to the heights. It is impossible to pick one of his plays for an anthology and satisfy everyone, or do more than hint at his power and universality. Your editors, like others before them, have chosen *Henry IV, Part One*, because it combines history with comedy and more than a hint of tragedy. (It is fondly to be hoped that a great comedy and a great tragedy—*Twelfth Night* and *Hamlet*, say—can be included in outside reading.) *Henry IV*, based on Holinshed and a few details from an old play, is interesting for its relationship to *Richard II*, *Henry IV, Part Two*, and *Henry V*. For action, fine major and minor characters, comedy, and all-around good theater this play is a fitting place to begin a study of the dramatist's abilities.*

* The Kittredge text of this play is here reprinted by permission of Ginn and Company, publishers.

THE DRAMA · WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Dramatis Personae

KING HENRY THE FOURTH
HENRY, PRINCE OF WALES, } *sons to the*
PRINCE JOHN OF LANCASTER, } KING
EARL OF WESTMORELAND
SIR WALTER BLUNT
THOMAS PERCY, *Earl of Worcester*
HENRY PERCY, *Earl of Northumberland*
HENRY PERCY, *surnamed HOTSPUR, his son*
EDMUND MORTIMER, *Earl of March*
RICHARD SCHOOP, *Archbishop of York*
ARCHIBALD, *Earl of Douglas*
OWEN GLENDOWER
SIR RICHARD VERNON
SIR JOHN FALSTAFF
SIR MICHAEL, *a friend to the ARCHBISHOP OF*
YORK
POINS
GADSHILL
PETO
RANDOLPH
LADY PERCY, *wife to HOTSPUR, and sister to*
MORTIMER
LADY MORTIMER, *daughter to GLENDOWER, and* 25
wife to MORTIMER
MISTRESS QUICKLY, *hostess of the Boar's Head*
in Eastcheap
Lords, Officers, Sheriff, Vintner, Chamberlain,
Drawers, two Carriers, Travellers, and At- 30
tendants

SCENE. England and Wales

ACT I

SCENE I.

London. The Palace

Enter the KING, LORD JOHN OF LANCASTER, 40
EARL OF WESTMORELAND, [SIR WALTER
BLUNT,] *with others*

KING. So shaken as we are, so wan with care,
Find we a time for frighted peace to pant
And breathe short-winded accents of new
broils
To be commenc'd in stronds¹ afar remote.
No more the thirsty entrance of this soil
Shall daub her lips with her own children's 50
blood.

¹ shores.

No more shall trenching war channel her fields,
Nor bruise her flow'rets with the armed hoofs
Of hostile paces. Those opposed eyes
Which, like the meteors of a troubled heaven,
5 All of one nature, of one substance bred,
Did lately meet in the intestine shock
And furious close of civil butchery,
Shall now in mutual well-beseeming ranks
March all one way and be no more oppos'd
10 Against acquaintance, kindred, and allies.
The edge of war, like an ill-sheathed knife,
No more shall cut his master. Therefore,
friends,
As far as to the sepulchre of Christ—
15 Whose soldier now, under whose blessed cross
We are impressed and engag'd to fight—
Forthwith a power of English shall we levy,
Whose arms were moulded in their mother's
womb
20 To chase these pagans in those holy fields
Over whose acres walk'd those blessed feet
Which fourteen hundred years ago were nail'd
For our advantage on the bitter cross.
But this our purpose now is twelvemonth old,
25 And bootless 'tis to tell you we will go.
Therefore we meet not now. Then let me hear
Of you, my gentle cousin² Westmoreland,
What yesternight our Council did decree
In forwarding this dear expedience.
30 WEST. My liege, this haste was hot in ques-
tion
And many limits of the charge set down
But yesternight; when all athwart there came
A post from Wales, loaden with heavy news;
35 Whose worst was that the noble Mortimer,
Leading the men of Herefordshire to fight
Against the irregular and wild Glendower,
Was by the rude hands of that Welshman
taken,
A thousand of his people butchered;
Upon whose dead corpse there was such mis-
use,
Such beastly shameless transformation,
By those Welshwomen done as may not be
45 Without much shame retold or spoken of.
KING. It seems then that the tidings of this
broil
Brake off our business for the Holy Land.
WEST. This, match'd with other, did, my
gracious lord;

² kinsman.

For more uneven and unwelcome news
Came from the North, and thus it did import:
On Holy-rood Day³ the gallant Hotspur there,
Young Harry Percy, and brave Archibald,
That ever-valiant and approved Scot,
At Holmedon met,
Where they did spend a sad and bloody hour;
As by discharge of their artillery
And shape of likelihood the news was told,
For he that brought them, in the very heat
And pride of their contention did take horse,
Uncertain of the issue any way.

KING. Here is a dear, a true-industrious friend,

Sir Walter Blunt, new lighted from his horse, 15
Stain'd with the variation of each soil
Betwixt that Holmedon and this seat of ours,
And he hath brought us smooth and welcome news.

The Earl of Douglas is discomfited, 20
Ten thousand bold Scots, two-and-twenty knights,

Balk'd⁴ in their own blood did Sir Walter see
On Holmedon's plains. Of prisoners, Hotspur took

Mordake Earl of Fife and eldest son
To beaten Douglas, and the Earl of Athol,
Of Murray, Angus, and Menteith.
And is not this an honourable spoil?
A gallant prize? Ha, cousin, is it not?

WEST. In faith,
It is a conquest for a prince to boast of.

KING. Yea, there thou mak'st me sad, and mak'st me sin

In envy that my Lord Northumberland
Should be the father to so blest a son—
A son who is the theme of honour's tongue,
Amongst a grove the very straightest plant,
Who is sweet Fortune's minion and her pride,
Whilst I, by looking on the praise of him,
See riot and dishonour stain the brow
Of my young Harry. O that it could be prov'd
That some night-tripping fairy had exchang'd
In cradle clothes our children where they lay,
And call'd mine Percy, his Plantagenet!
Then would I have his Harry, and he mine.
But let him from my thoughts. What think you,

coz,
Of this young Percy's pride? The prisoners
Which he in this adventure hath surpris'd
To his own use he keeps, and sends me word

I shall have none but Mordake Earl of Fife.
WEST. This is his uncle's teaching, this is Worcester,

Malevolent to you in all aspects.

5 Which makes him prune himself and bustle up

The crest of youth against your dignity.

KING. But I have sent for him to answer this,
And for this cause awhile we must neglect

10 Our holy purpose to Jerusalem.

Cousin, on Wednesday next our council we

Will hold at Windsor. So inform the lords,

But come yourself with speed to us again,

For more is to be said and to be done

15 Than out of anger can be uttered.

WEST. I will, my liege. [*exunt.*]

SCENE II.

London. A¹ apartment of the PRINCE'S

20

Enter PRINCE OF WALES and

SIR JOHN FAUSTAFF

FAL. Now, Hal, what time of day is it, lad?

25 PRINCE. Thou art so fat-witted with drinking of old sack,⁵ and unbuttoning thee after supper, and sleeping upon benches after noon, that thou hast forgotten to demand that truly which thou wouldest truly know. What a devil
30 hast thou to do with the time of the day? Unless hours were cups of sack, and minutes capons, and clocks the tongues of bawds, and dials the signs of leaping houses, and the blessed sun himself a fair hot wench in flame-
35 coloured taffeta, I see no reason why thou shouldst be so superfluous to demand the time of the day.

FAL. Indeed you come near me now, Hal; for we that take purses go by the moon and
40 the seven stars, and not by Phœbus,⁶ he, that wand'ring knight so fair. And I prithce, sweet wag, when thou art king, as, God save thy Grace—Majesty I should say, for grace thou wilt have none—

45 PRINCE. What, none?

FAL. No, by my troth; not so much as will serve to be prologue to an egg and butter.

PRINCE. Well, how then? Come, roundly, roundly.

50 FAL. Marry, then, sweet wag, when thou art

⁵ sherry, or wine of a sherry type.

⁶ the sun.

³ Sept. 14.

⁴ piled up in ridges.

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king, let not us that are squires of the night's body be called thieves of the day's beauty. Let us be Diana's Foresters, Gentlemen of the Shade, Minions of the Moon; and let men say we be men of good government, being governed as the sea is, by our noble and chaste mistress the moon, under whose countenance we steal.

PRINCE. Thou sayest well, and it holds well too; for the fortune of us that are the moon's men doth ebb and flow like the sea, being governed, as the sea is, by the moon. As, for proof now: a purse of gold most resolutely snatch'd on Monday night and most dissolutely spent on Tuesday morning; got with swearing 'Lay by,' and spent with crying 'Bring in'; now in as low an ebb as the foot of the ladder⁷ and by-and-by in as high a flow as the ridge of the gallows.

FAL. By the Lord, thou say'st true, lad—and is not my hostess of the tavern a most sweet wench?

PRINCE. As the honey of Hybla,⁸ my old lad of the castle—and is not a buff jerkin a most sweet robe of durance?

FAL. How now, how now, mad wag? What, in thy quips and thy quiddities? What a plague have I to do with a buff jerkin?

PRINCE. Why, what a pox have I to do with my hostess of the tavern?

FAL. Well, thou hast call'd her to a reckoning many a time and oft.

PRINCE. Did I ever call for thee to pay thy part?

FAL. No; I'll give thee thy due, thou hast paid all there.

PRINCE. Yea, and elsewhere, so far as my coin would stretch; and where it would not, I have used my credit.

FAL. Yea, and so us'd it that, were it not here apparent that thou art heir apparent—But I prithee, sweet wag, shall there be gallows standing in England when thou art king? and resolution thus fubb'd⁹ as it is with the rusty curb of old father antic the law? Do not thou, when thou art king, hang a thief.

PRINCE. No; thou shalt.

FAL. Shall I? O rare! By the Lord, I'll be a brave judge.

PRINCE. Thou judgest false already. I mean, thou shalt have the hanging of the thieves and

⁷ of the gallows. ⁸ in Sicily. ⁹ thwarted.

so become a rare hangman.

FAL. Well, Hal, well; and in some sort it jumps with my humour¹⁰ as well as waiting in the court, I can tell you.

5 PRINCE. For obtaining of suits?

FAL. Yea, for obtaining of suits, whereof the hangman hath no lean wardrobe. 'Sblood,¹¹ I am as melancholy as a gib cat or a lugg'd bear.¹²

10 PRINCE. Or an old lion, or a lover's lute.

FAL. Yea, or the drone of a Lincolnshire bagpipe.

PRINCE. What sayest thou to a hare, or the melancholy of Moor Ditch?

15 FAL. Thou hast the most unsavoury similes, and art indeed the most comparative, rascal-liest, sweet young prince. But, Hal, I prithee trouble me no more with vanity. I would to God thou and I knew where a commodity of 20 good names were to be bought. An old lord of the Council rated me the other day in the street about you, sir, but I mark'd him not; and yet he talk'd very wisely, but I regarded him not; and yet he talk'd wisely, and in the 25 street too.

PRINCE. Thou didst well; for wisdom cries out in the streets, and no man regards it.

FAL. O, thou hast damnable iteration, and art indeed able to corrupt a saint. Thou hast 30 done much harm upon me, Hal—God forgive thee for it! Before I knew thee, Hal, I knew nothing, and now am I, if a man should speak truly, little better than one of the wicked. I must give over this life, and I will give it over! 35 By the Lord, an I do not, I am a villain! I'll be damn'd for never a king's son in Christendom.

PRINCE. Where shall we take a purse tomorrow, Jack?

FAL. Zounds,¹³ where thou wilt, lad! I'll make one. An I do not, call me villain and baffle¹⁴ me.

PRINCE. I see a good amendment of life in thee—from praying to purse-taking.

FAL. Why, Hal, 'tis my vocation, Hal. 'Tis 45 no sin for a man to labour in his vocation.

Enter POINS

Poins! Now shall we know if Gadshill have set a match. O, if men were to be saved by merit,

¹⁰ disposition.

¹¹ God's blood.

¹² tom cat or baited bear

¹³ God's wounds.

¹⁴ disgrace.

what hole in hell were hot enough for him? This is the most omnipotent villain that ever cried 'Stand!' to a true man.

PRINCE. Good morrow, Ned.

POINS. Good morrow, sweet Hal. What says Monsieur Remorse? What says Sir John Sack and Sugar? Jack, how agrees the devil and thee about thy soul, that thou soldest him on Good Friday last for a cup of Madeira and a cold capon's leg?

PRINCE. Sir John stands to his word, the devil shall have his bargain; for he was never yet a breaker of proverbs. He will give the devil his due.

POINS. Then art thou damn'd for keeping thy word with the devil.

PRINCE. Else he had been damn'd for cozening the devil.

POINS. But, my lads, my lads, to-morrow morning, by four o'clock early, at Gadshill!¹⁵ There are pilgrims going to Canterbury with rich offerings, and traders riding to London with fat purses. I have vizards¹⁶ for you all; you have horses for yourselves. Gadshill lies to-night in Rochester. I have bespoke supper to-morrow night in Eastcheap. We may do it as secure as sleep. If you will go, I will stuff your purses full of crowns, if you will not, tarry at home and be hang'd!

FAL. Here ye, Yedward: if I tarry at home and go not, I'll hang you for going.

POINS. You will, chops?

FAL. Hal, wilt thou make one?

PRINCE. Who, I rob? I a thief? Not I, by my faith.

FAL. There's neither honesty, manhood, nor good fellowship in thee, nor thou cam'st not of the blood royal if thou darest not stand for ten shillings.¹⁷

PRINCE. Well then, once in my days I'll be a madcap.

FAL. Why, that's well said.

PRINCE. Well, come what will, I'll tarry at home.

FAL. By the Lord, I'll be a traitor then, when thou art king.

PRINCE. I care not.

POINS. Sir John, I prithee, leave the Prince and me alone. I will lay him down such reasons for this adventure that he shall go.

FAL. Well, God give thee the spirit of persuasion and him the ears of profiting, that what thou speakest may move and what he hears may be believed, that the true prince may (for recreation sake) prove a false thief, for the poor abuses of the time want countenance. Farewell, you shall find me in Eastcheap.

PRINCE. Farewell, thou latter spring! farewell, All-hallowen summer!¹⁸ [Exit FALSTAFF]

POINS. Now, my good sweet honey lord, ride with us to-morrow. I have a jest to execute that I cannot manage alone. Falstaff, Bardolph, Peto, and Gadshill shall rob those men that we have already waylaid; yourself and I will not be there; and when they have the booty, if you and I do not rob them, cut this head off from my shoulders.

PRINCE. How shall we part with them in setting forth?

POINS. Why, we will set forth before or after them and appoint them a place of meeting, wherein it is at our pleasure to fail; and then will they adventure upon the exploit themselves; which they shall have no sooner achieved, but we'll set upon them.

PRINCE. Yea, but 'tis like that they will know us by our horses, by our habits, and by every other appointment, to be ourselves.

POINS. Tut! our horses they shall not see—I'll tie them in the wood; our vizards we will change after we leave them, and, sirrah, I have cases of buckram for the nonce, to im-mask our noted outward garments.

PRINCE. Yea, but I doubt they will be too hard for us.

POINS. Well, for two of them, I know them to be as true-bred cowards as ever turn'd back; and for the third, if he fight longer than he sees reason, I'll forswear arms. The virtue of this jest will be the incomprehensible lies that this same fat rogue will tell us when we meet at supper: how thirty, at least, he fought with; what wards, what blows, what extremities he endured; and in the reproof of this lies the jest.

PRINCE. Well, I'll go with thee. Provide us

¹⁸ equivalent to our Indian summer; Falstaff has taken a new lease on life.

¹⁵ a hill near Rochester; also note, the name of a character in the play.

¹⁶ masks.

¹⁷ pun on "royal" (coin worth 10s.) and "stand for."

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all things necessary and meet me to-night in
Eastcheap. There I'll sup. Farewell.

POINS. Farewell, my lord. [exit]

PRINCE. I know you all, and will awhile up-
hold

The unyok'd humour of your idleness.
Yet herein will I imitate the sun,
Who doth permit the base contagious clouds
To smother up his beauty from the world,
That, when he please again to be himself,
Being wanted, he may be more wond'ring at
By breaking through the foul and ugly mists
Of vapours that did seem to strangle him.
If all the year were playing holidays,
To sport would be as tedious as to work;
But when they seldom come, they wish'd-for
come,

And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents.
So, when this loose behaviour I throw off
And pay the debt I never promised,
By how much better than my word I am,
By so much shall I falsify men's hopes;
And, like bright metal on a sullen ground,
My reformation, glitt'ring o'er my fault,
Shall show more goodly and attract more eyes
Than that which hath no foil to set it off.
I'll so offend to make offence a skill,
Redeeming time when men think least I will.

[exit]

SCENE III.

London. The palace

Enter the KING, NORTHUMBERLAND, WORCES-
TER, HOTSPUR, SIR WALTER BLUNT, with others

KING. My blood hath been too cold and
temperate,
Unapt to stir at these indignities,
And you have found me, for accordingly
You tread upon my patience; but be sure
I will from henceforth rather be myself,
Mighty and to be fear'd, than my condition,
Which hath been smooth as oil, soft as young
down,
And therefore lost that title of respect
Which the proud soul ne'er pays but to the
proud.

WOR. Our house, my sovereign liege, little
deserves
The scourge of greatness to be us'd on it—

And that same greatness too which our own
hands

Have help to make so portly.

NORTH. My lord—

5 KING. Worcester, get thee gone; for I do see
Danger and disobedience in thine eye.
O, sir, your presence is too bold and
peremptory,
And majesty might never yet endure
10 The moody frontier of a servant brow.
You have good leave to leave us. When we
need

Your use and counsel, we shall send for you.

[exit WORCESTER]

15

You were about to speak.

NORTH.

Yea, my good lord.

Those prisoners in your Highness' name de-
manded

20 Which Harry Percy here at Holmedon took,
Were, as he says, not with such strength de-
nied

As is delivered to your Majesty.

Either envy, therefore, or misprision

25 Is guilty of this fault, and not my son.

NOR. My liege, I did deny no prisoners.

But I remember, when the fight was done,

When I was dry with rage and extreme toil,

Breathless and faint, leaning upon my sword,

30 Came there a certain lord, neat and trimly
dress'd,

Fresh as a bridegroom; and his chin new
reap'd

Show'd like a stubble land at harvest home.

35 He was perfum'd like a milliner,
And 'twixt his finger and his thumb he held
A pouncet box¹⁹ which ever and anon

He gave his nose, and took't away again;

Who therewith angry, when it next came there,

40 Took it in snuff; and still he smil'd and
talk'd;

And as the soldiers bore dead bodies by,

He call'd them untaught knaves, unmannerly,

To bring a slovenly unhandsome corse

45 Betwixt the wind and his nobility.

With many holiday and lady terms

He questioned me, amongst the rest demanded

My prisoners in your Majesty's behalf.

I then, all smarting with my wounds being

cold,

¹⁹ a box containing something aromatic, to ward
off odors.

To be so pest'ed with a popingay,
Out of my grief and my impatience
Answer'd neglectingly, I know not what—
He should, or he should not; for he made me
mad

To see him shine so brisk, and smell so sweet,
And talk so like a waiting gentlewoman
Of guns and drums and wounds—God save the
mark!—

And telling me the sovereignest thing on earth 10
Was parmacety²⁰ for an inward bruise;
And that it was great pity, so it was,
This villanous saltpetre should be digg'd
Out of the bowels of the harmless earth,
Which many a good tall fellow had destroy'd 15
So cowardly; and but for these vile guns,
He would himself have been a soldier.
This bald unjointed chat of his, my lord,
I answered indirectly, as I said,
And I beseech you, let not his report
Come current for an accusation
Betwixt my love and your high majesty.

BLUNT. The circumstance considered, good
my lord,

Whate'er Lord Harry Percy then had said
To such a person, and in such a place,
At such a time, with all the rest retold,
May reasonably die, and never rise
To do him wrong, or any way impeach
What then he said, so he unsay it now.

KING. Why, yet he doth deny his prisoners,
But with proviso and exception,
That we at our own charge shall ransom
straight

His brother-in-law, the foolish Mortimer;²¹
Who, on my soul, hath wilfully betray'd
The lives of those that he did lead to fight
Against that great magician, damn'd
Glendower,

Whose daughter, as we hear, the Earl of
March

Hath lately married. Shall our coffers, then,
Be emptied to redeem a traitor home?
Shall we buy treason? and indent with fears
When they have lost and forfeited themselves? 45
No, on the barren mountains let him starve!
For I shall never hold that man my friend
Whose tongue shall ask me for one penny cost

To ransom home revolted Mortimer.

NOT. Revolted Mortimer?

He never did fall off, my sovereign liege,
But by the chance of war. To prove that true
5 Needs no more but one tongue for all those
wounds,

Those mouthed wounds, which valiantly he
took

When on the gentle Severn's sedgy bank,
In single opposition hand to hand,
He did confound²² the best part of an hour
In changing hardiment²³ with great
Glendower.

Three times they breath'd, and three times did
they drink,

Upon agreement, of swift Severn's flood;
Who then, affrighted with their bloody looks,
Ran fearfully among the trembling reeds
And hid his crisp head in the hollow bank,

20 Bloodstained with these valiant combatants.
Never did base and rotten policy
Colour her working with such deadly wounds;
Nor never could the noble Mortimer
Receive so many, and all willingly

25 Then let not him be slandered with revolt.

KING. Thou dost belie him, Percy, thou dost
belie him!

He never did encounter with Glendower.
I tell thee

30 He durst as well have met the devil alone
As Owen Glendower for an enemy.
Art thou not asham'd? But, sirrah, henceforth
Let me not hear you speak of Mortimer.
Send me your prisoners with the speediest

35 means,
Or you shall hear in such a kind from me
As will displease you. My Lord Northumber-
land,

We license your departure with your son.—
40 Send us your prisoners, or you will hear of it.

exunt KING, [BLUNT, and TRAIN]

NOT. An if the devil come and roar for them,
I will not send them. I will after straight

45 And tell him so; for I will ease my heart,
Albeit I make a hazard of my head.

NORTH. What, drunk with choler? Stay, and
pause awhile.

Here comes your uncle.

²⁰ spermaceti.

²¹ Shakespeare, like Holinshed, his historical
source, confuses two Edmund Mortimers, uncle
and nephew.

²² use up.

²³ matching valor.

Enter WORCESTER

HOT. Speak of Mortimer?
 Zounds, I will speak of him, and let my soul
 Want mercy if I do not join with him!
 Yea, on his part I'll empty all these veins,
 And shed my dear blood drop by drop in the
 dust,
 But I will lift the downtrod Mortimer
 As high in the air as this unthankful king,
 As this ingrate and cank'red Bolingbroke.
 NORTH. Brother, the King hath made your
 nephew mad.
 WOR. Who struck this heat up after I was
 gone?
 HOT. He will (forsooth) have all my
 prisoners;
 And when I urg'd the ransom once again
 Of my wife's brother, then his cheek look'd
 pale,
 And on my face he turn'd an eye of death,
 Trembling even at the name of Mortimer.
 WOR. I cannot blame him. Was not he
 proclaim'd
 By Richard that dead is, the next of blood?
 NORTH. He was; I heard the proclamation.
 And then it was when the unhappy King
 (Whose wrongs in us God pardon!) did set
 forth
 Upon his Irish expedition;
 From whence he intercepted did return
 To be depos'd, and shortly murdered.
 WOR. And for whose death we in the world's
 wide mouth
 Live scandaliz'd and foully spoken of.
 HOT. But soft, I pray you. Did King Richard
 then
 Proclaim my brother Edmund Mortimer
 Heir to the crown?
 NORTH. He did; myself did hear it.
 HOT. Nay, then I cannot blame his cousin
 king,
 That wish'd him on the barren mountains
 starve.
 But shall it be that you, that set the crown
 Upon the head of this forgetful man,
 And for his sake wear the detested blot
 Of murderous subornation—shall it be
 That you a world of curses undergo,
 Being the agents or base second means,
 The cords, the ladder, or the hangman rather?
 O, pardon me that I descend so low

To show the line and the predicament
 Wherein you range under this subtile king!
 Shall it for shame be spoken in these days,
 Or fill up chronicles in time to come,
 5 That men of your nobility and power
 Did gage them both in an unjust behalf
 (As both of you, God pardon it! have done)
 To put down Richard, that sweet lovely rose,
 And plant this thorn, this canker,²⁴
 10 Bolingbroke?
 And shall it in more shame be further spoken
 That you are fool'd, discarded, and shook off
 By him for whom these shames ye underwent?
 No! yet time serves wherein you may redeem
 15 Your banish'd honours and restore yourselves
 Into the good thoughts of the world again;
 Revenge the jeering and disdain'd contempt
 Of this proud king, who studies day and night
 To answer all the debt he owes to you
 20 Even with the bloody payment of your deaths.
 Therefore I say—
 WOR. Peace, cousin, say no more;
 And now I will unclasp a secret book,
 And to your quick-conceiving discontents
 I'll read you matter deep and dangerous,
 As full of peril and adventurous spirit
 As to o'erwalk a current roaring loud
 On the unsteadfast footing of a spear.
 HOT. If he fall in, good night, or sink or
 30 swim!
 Send danger from the east unto the west,
 So honour cross it from the north to south,
 And let them grapple. O, the blood more stirs
 To rouse a lion than to start a hare!
 35 NORTH. Imagination of some great exploit
 Drives him beyond the bounds of patience.
 HOT. By heaven, methinks it were an easy
 leap
 To pluck bright honour from the pale-fac'd
 moon,
 Or dive into the bottom of the deep,
 Where fadom line could never touch the
 ground,
 And pluck up drowned honour by the locks,
 45 So he that doth redeem her thence might wear
 Without corral all her dignities;
 But out upon this half-fac'd fellowship!
 WOR. He apprehends a world of figures here,
 But not the form of what he should attend.
 50 Good cousin, give me audience for a while.

²⁴ dog rose.

- HOT. I cry you mercy.
 WOR. Those same noble Scots
 That are your prisoners—
 HOT. I'll keep them all.
 By God, he shall not have a Scot of them!
 No, if a Scot would save his soul, he shall not.
 I'll keep them, by this hand!
 WOR. You start away.
 And lend no ear unto my purposes.
 Those prisoners you shall keep.
 HOT. Nay, I will! That's flat!
 He said he would not ransom Mortimer,
 Forbade my tongue to speak of Mortimer,
 But I will find him when he lies asleep,
 And in his ears I'll holloa 'Mortimer.'
 Nay;
 I'll have a starling shall be taught to speak
 Nothing but 'Mortimer,' and give it him
 To keep his anger still in motion.
 WOR. Hear you, cousin, a word.
 HOT. All studies here I solemnly defy²⁵
 Save how to gall and pinch this Bolingbroke;
 And that same sword-and-buckler Prince of
 Wales—
 But that I think his father loves him not
 And would be glad he met with some mis-
 chance,
 I would have him poisoned with a pot of ale.
 WOR. Farewell, kinsman. I will talk to you
 When you are better temper'd to attend.
 NORTH. Why, what a wasp-stung and im-
 patient fool
 Art thou to break into this woman's mood,
 Tying thine ear to no tongue but thine own!
 HOT. Why, look you, I am whipp'd and
 scourg'd with rods,
 Nettled, and stung with pismires when I hear
 Of this vile politician, Bolingbroke.
 In Richard's time—what do you call the
 place?—
 A plague upon it! it is in Gloucestershire—
 'Twas where the madcap Duke his uncle
 kept²⁶—
 His uncle York—where I first bow'd my knee
 Unto this king of smiles, this Bolingbroke—
 'Sblood!
 When you and he came back from Ravens-
 purgh—
 NORTH. At Berkeley Castle.
 HOT. You say true.
- Why, what a candy deal of courtesy
 This fawning greyhound then did proffer me!
 Look, 'when his infant fortune came to age'
 And 'gentle Harry Percy,' and 'kind cousin'—
 5 O, the devil take such cozeners!--God forgive
 me!
 Good uncle, tell your tale, for I have done.
 WOR. Nay, if you have not, to it again.
 We will stay your leisure.
 10 HOT. I have done, i' faith
 WOR. Then once more to your Scottish pris-
 oners.
 Deliver them up without their ransom straight,
 And make the Douglas' son your only mean
 15 For powers in Scotland, which, for divers rea-
 sons
 Which I shall send you written, be assur'd
 Will easily be granted. [to NORTHUMBER-
 LAND] You, my lord,
 20 Your son in Scotland being thus employ'd,
 Shall secretly into the bosom creep
 Of that same noble prelate well-belov'd,
 The Archbishop.
 HOT. Of York, is it not?
 25 WOR. True; who bears hard
 His brother's death at Bristow, the Lord Scroop.
 I speak not this in estimation,
 As what I think might be, but what I know
 Is rummated, plotted, and set down,
 30 And only stays but to behold the face
 Of that occasion that shall bring it on.
 HOT. I smell it. Upon my life, it will do well.
 NORTH. Before the game is afoot thou still
 let'st shp.²⁷
 HOT. Why, it cannot choose but be a noble
 plot.
 And then the power of Scotland and of York
 To join with Mortimer, ha?
 WOR. And so they shall.
 40 HOT. In faith, it is exceedingly well aim'd.
 WOR. And 'tis no little reason bids us speed,
 To save our heads by raising of a head;²⁸
 For, bear ourselves as even as we can,
 The King will always think him in our debt.
 45 And think we think ourselves unsatisfied,
 Till he hath found a time to pay us home.
 And see already how he doth begin
 To make us strangers to his looks of love.
 HOT. He does, he does! We'll be reveng'd on
 50 him.

²⁵ renounce.²⁶ lived.²⁷ loose the dogs.²⁸ an army (pun).

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WOR. Cousin, farewell. No further go in this
Than I by letters shall direct your course.
When time is ripe, which will be suddenly,
I'll steal to Glendower and Lord Mortimer,
Where you and Douglas, and our pow'rs at
once,
As I will fashion it, shall happily meet,
To bear our fortunes in our own strong arms,
Which now we hold at much uncertainty.

NORTH. Farewell, good brother. We shall
thrive, I trust.

HOT. Uncle, adieu. O, let the hours be short
Till fields and blows and groans applaud our
sport! *[exeunt]*

ACT II

SCENE I.

Rochester. An inn yard

Enter a CARRIER with a lantern in his hand

1. CAR. Heigh-ho! an it be not four by the
day, I'll be hang'd. Charles' wain²⁹ is over the
new chimney, and yet our horse not pack'd.—
What, ostler!

OST. *[within]* Anon, anon.

1. CAR. I prithee, Tom, beat Cut's saddle,
put a few flocks in the point. Poor jade is
wrung in the withers out of all cess.³⁰

Enter another CARRIER

2. CAR. Peas and beans are as dank here as a
dog, and that is the next way to give poor jades
the bots. This house is turned upside down
since Robin Ostler died.

1. CAR. Poor fellow never joyed since the
price of oats rose. It was the death of him.

2. CAR. I think this be the most villanous
house in all London road for fleas. I am stung
like a tench.

1. CAR. Like a tench? By the mass, there is
ne'er a king christen³¹ could be better bit than
I have been since the first cock.

2. CAR. Why, they will allow us ne'er a jor-
dan, and then we leak in your chimney, and
your chamber-lye breeds fleas like a loach.

1. CAR. What, ostler! come away and be
hang'd! come away!

2. CAR. I have a gammon of bacon and two
razes³² of ginger, to be delivered as far as
Charing Cross.

1. CAR. God's body! the turkeys in my pan-
nier are quite starved. What, ostler! A plague
on thee! hast thou never an eye in thy head?
Canst not hear? An 'twere not as good deed
as drink to break the pate on thee, I am a very
villain. Come, and be hang'd! Hast no faith in
thee?

Enter GADSHILL

GADS. Good morrow, carriers. What's o'clock?

1. CAR. I think it be two o'clock.

15 GADS. I prithee lend me thy lantern to see
my gelding in the stable.

1. CAR. Nay, by God, soft! I know a trick
worth two of that, i' faith.

GADS. I pray thee lend me thine.

20 2. CAR. Ay, when? canst tell? Lend me thy
lantern, quoth he? Marry, I'll see thee hang'd
first!

GADS. Sirrah carrier, what time do you mean
to come to London?

2. CAR. Time enough to go to bed with a
candle. I warrant thee. Come, neighbour
Mugs, we'll call up the gentlemen. They will
along with company, for they have great
charge. *excunt [CARRIERS]*

GADS. What, ho! chamberlain!

Enter CHAMBERLAIN

CHAM. At hand, quoth pickpurse.

GADS. That's even as fair as—'at hand, quoth
the chamberlain'; for thou variest no more
from picking of purses than giving direction
doth from labouring; thou layest the plot how.

CHAM. Good morrow, Master Gadshill. It
holds current that I told you yesternight.
There's a franklin in the Wild of Kent hath
brought three hundred marks with him in gold.
I heard him tell it to one of his company last
night at supper—a kind of auditor; one that
hath abundance of charge too, God knows
what. They are up already and call for eggs
and butter. They will away presently.

GADS. Sirrah, if they meet not with Saint
Nicholas' clerks,³³ I'll give thee this neck.

CHAM. No, I'll none of it. I pray thee keep
that for the hangman; for I know thou wor-

²⁹ Big Dipper.

³⁰ measure.

³¹ Christian.

³² roots.

³³ highwaymen.

shippiest Saint Nicholas as truly as a man of falsehood may.

GADS. What talkest thou to me of the hang-man? If I hang, I'll make a fat pair of gal-lows; for if I hang, old Sir John hangs with me, and thou knowest he is no starveling. Tut! there are other Troyans that thou dream'st not of, the which for sport sake are content to do the profession some grace; that would (if mat-ters should be look'd into) for their own credit sake make all whole. I am joined with no foot landrakers, no long-staff sixpenny strikers, none of these mad mustachio purple-hued malt-worms;³⁴ but with nobility and tranquillity, burgomasters and great oneyers, such as can hold in, such as will strike sooner than speak, and speak sooner than drink, and drink sooner than pray; and yet, zounds, I lie; for they pray continually to their saint, the commonwealth, or rather, not pray to her, but prey on her, for they ride up and down on her and make her their boots.

CHAM. What, the commonwealth their boots? Will she hold out water in foul way?

GADS. She will, she will! Justice hath liq-uor'd³⁵ her. We steal as in a castle, cocksure. We have the receipt of fernseed, we walk in-visible.³⁶

CHAM. Nay, by my faith, I think you are more beholding to the night than to fernseed for your walking invisible.

GADS. Give me thy hand. Thou shalt have a share in our purchase, as I am a true man.

CHAM. Nay, rather let me have it, as you are a false thief.

GADS. Go to; 'homo' is a common name to all men. Bid the ostler bring my gelding out of the stable. Farewell, you muddy knave.

[*exeunt*]

SCENE II.

The highway near Gadshill

Enter PRINCE and POINS

POINS. Come, shelter, shelter! I have remov'd Falstaff's horse, and he frets like a gunm'd vel-vet.

PRINCE. Stand close. [*they step aside*]

³⁴ no footpads, no thugs, no drunks.

³⁵ waterproofed by greasing.

³⁶ Fern seed was supposed to be able to make people invisible.

Enter FALSTAFF

FAL. Poins! Poins, and be hang'd! Poins!

PRINCE. [*comes forward*] Peace, ye fat-kid-
5 ney'd rascal! What a brawling dost thou keep!

FAL. Where's Poins, Hal?

PRINCE. He is walk'd up to the top of the hill. I'll go seek him. [*steps aside*]

FAL. I am accurs'd to rob in that thief's com-
10 pany. The rascal hath removed my horse and tied him I know not where. If I travel but four foot by the squire³⁷ further afoot, I shall break my wind. Well, I doubt not but to die a fair death for all this, if I scape hanging for killing
15 that rogue I have forsworn his company hourly any time this two-and-twenty years, and yet I am bewitch'd with the rogue's company. If the rascal have not given me medicines to make me love him, I'll be hang'd. It could not be
20 else. I have drunk medicines. Poins! Hal! A plague uponyou both! Bardolph! Petol! I'll starve ere I'll rob a foot further. An 'twere not as good a deed as drink to turn true man and to leave these rogues, I am the veriest varlet
25 that ever chewed with a tooth. Eight yards of uneven ground is threescore and ten miles afoot with me, and the stony-hearted villains know it well enough. A plague upon it when thieves cannot be true one to another! [*they whistle*.]
30 Whew! A plague upon you all! Give me my horse, you rogues! give me my horse and be hang'd!

PRINCE. [*comes forward*] Peace, ye fat-guts! Lie down, lay thine ear close to the ground,
35 and list if thou canst hear the tread of travel-lers.

FAL. Have you any levers to lift me up again, being down? 'Sblood, I'll not bear mine own flesh so far afoot again for all the coin in
40 thy father's exchequer. What a plague mean ye to colt³⁸ me thus?

PRINCE. Thou liest; thou art not colted, thou art uncolted.

FAL. I prithee, good Prince Hal, help me to
45 my horse, good king's son.

PRINCE. Out, ye rogue! Shall I be your ostler?

FAL. Go hang thyself in thine own heir-ap-parent garters! If I be ta'en, I'll peach for this.
50 An I have not ballads made on you all, and

³⁷ carpenter's square.

³⁸ trick.

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sung to filthy tunes, let a cup of sack be my poison. When a jest is so forward—and afoot too—I hate it.

Enter GADSHILL, [BARDOLPH and PETO with him]

GADS. Stand!

FAL. So I do, against my will.

POINS. [comes forward] O, 'tis our setter.³⁰ I know his voice. Bardolph, what news?

BAR. Case ye, case ye!¹⁰ On with your vizards! There's money of the King's coming down the hill; 'tis going to the King's exchequer.

FAL. You lie, ye rogue! 'Tis going to the King's tavern.

GADS. There's enough to make us all.

FAL. To be hang'd.

PRINCE. Sirs, you four shall front them in the narrow lane; Ned Poins and I will walk lower. If they scape from your encounter, then they light on us.

PETO. How many be there of them?

GADS. Some eight or ten.

FAL. Zounds, will they not rob us?

PRINCE. What, a coward, Sir John Paunch?

FAL. Indeed, I am not John of Gaunt, your grandfather; but yet no coward, Hal.

PRINCE. Well, we leave that to the proof.

POINS. Sirrah Jack, thy horse stands behind the hedge. When thou need'st him, there thou shalt find him. Farewell and stand fast.

FAL. Now cannot I strike him, if I should be hang'd.

PRINCE. [aside to POINS] Ned, where are our disguises?

POINS. [aside to PRINCE] Here, hard by. Stand close. [exeunt PRINCE and POINS]

FAL. Now, my masters, happy man be his dole, say I. Every man to his business.

Enter the TRAVELLERS

TRAVELLER. Come, neighbour. The boy shall lead our horses down the hill; we'll walk afoot awhile and ease our legs.

THIEVES. Stand!

³⁰ member of a gang who acts as decoy, or who sets the scene by preliminary investigation; in modern slang, he "cases the job."

⁴⁰ Put on masks.

TRAVELLER. Jesus bless us!

FAL. Strike! down with them! cut the villains' throats! Ah, whoreson caterpillars! bacon-fed knaves! they hate us youth. Down with them! fleece them!

TRAVELLER. O, we are undone, both we and ours for ever!

FAL. Hang ye, gorbellied⁴¹ knaves, are ye undone? No, ye fat chuffs;⁴² I would your store were here! On, bacons, on! What, ye knaves! young men must live. You are grand-jurors, are ye? We'll jure ye, faith! [here they rob and bind them; exeunt]

¹⁵ Enter the PRINCE and POINS [in buckram suits]

PRINCE. The thieves have bound the true men. Now could thou and I rob the thieves and go merrily to London, it would be argument for a week, laughter for a month, and a good jest for ever.

POINS. Stand close! I hear them coming. [they stand aside]

²⁵ Enter the THIEVES again

FAL. Come, my masters, let us share, and then to horse before day. An the Prince and Poins be not two arrant cowards, there's no equity stirring. There's no more valour in that Poins than in a wild duck.

³⁵

PRINCE. Your money!
POINS. Villains!

as they are sharing, the PRINCE and POINS set upon them. They all run away, and FALSTAFF, after a blow or two, runs away too, leaving the booty behind them.

PRINCE. Got with much ease. Now merrily to horse.

The thieves are scattered, and possess'd with fear

⁴⁵ So strongly that they dare not meet each other. Each takes his fellow for an officer.

Away, good Ned. Falstaff sweats to death And lards the lean earth as he walks along. Were't not for laughing, I should pity him.

⁵⁰ POINS. How the rogue roar'd! [exeunt]

⁴¹ fat.

⁴² misers.

SCENE III.

Warkworth Castle

Enter HOTSPUR solus, reading a letter

HOT. 'But, for mine own part, my lord, I could be well contented to be there, in respect of the love I bear your house.' He could be contented—why is he not then? In respect of the love he bears our house! He shows in this he loves his own barn better than he loves our house. Let me see some more. 'The purpose you undertake is dangerous'—Why, that's certain! 'Tis dangerous to take a cold, to sleep, to drink; but I tell you, my lord fool, out of this nettle, danger, we pluck this flower, safety. 'The purpose you undertake is dangerous, the friends you have named uncertain, the time itself unsorted, and your whole plot too light for the counterpoise of so great an opposition.' Say you so, say you so? I say unto you again, you are a shallow, cowardly hind, and you lie. What a lack-brain is this! By the Lord, our plot is a good plot as ever was laid; our friends true and constant: a good plot, good friends, and full of expectation; an excellent plot, very good friends. What a frosty-spirited rogue is this! Why, my Lord of York commends the plot and the general course of the action. Zounds, an I were now by this rascal, I could brain him with his lady's fan. Is there not my father, my uncle, and myself, Lord Edmund Mortimer, my Lord of York, and Owen Glendower? Is there not, besides, the Douglas? Have I not all their letters to meet me in arms by the ninth of the next month, and are they not some of them set forward already? What a pagan rascal is this! an infidel! Ha! you shall see now, in very sincerity of fear and cold heart will he to the King and lay open all our proceedings. O, I could divide myself and go to buffets for moving such a dish of skim milk with so honourable an action! Hang him, let him tell the King! we are prepared. I will set forward to-night.

Enter his LADY

How now, Kate? I must leave you within these two hours.

LADY. O my good lord, why are you thus alone?

For what offence have I this fortnight been

A banish'd woman from my Harry's bed?

Tell me, sweet lord, what is't that takes from thee

Thy stomach, pleasure, and thy golden sleep?

5 Why dost thou bend thine eyes upon the earth, And start so often when thou sit'st alone?

Why hast thou lost the fresh blood in thy cheeks

And given my treasures and my rights of thee

10 To thick-ey'd musing and curs'd melancholy?

In thy faint slumbers I by thee have watch'd,

And heard thee murmur tales of iron wars,

Speak terms of manage to thy bounding steed,

15 Cry 'Courage! to the field!' And thou hast talk'd

Of sallies and retires, of trenches, tents,

Of palisadoes, frontiers, parapets,

Of basilisks,⁴³ of cannon, culverin,⁴⁴

Of prisoners' ransom, and of soldiers slain,

20 And all the currents of a heady fight.

Thy spirit within thee hath been so at war,

And thus hath so bestin'd thee in thy sleep,

That beads of sweat have stood upon thy brow

Like bubbles in a late-disturbed stream,

25 And in thy face strange motions have appear'd,

Such as we see when men restrain their breath

On some great sudden hest.⁴⁵ O, what portents are these?

Some heavy business hath my lord in hand,

30 And I must know it, else he loves me not.

HOT. What, ho!

Enter a SERVANT

Is Gilliams with the packet gone?

35 SERV. He is, my lord, an hour ago.

HOT. Hath Butler brought those horses from the sheriff?

SERV. One horse, my lord, he brought even now.

40 HOT. What horse? A roan, a crop-ear, is it not?

SERV. It is, my lord.

HOT. That roan shall be my throne.

Well, I will back him straight. O desperation!⁴⁶

45 Bid Butler lead him forth into the park.

[*exit SERVANT*]

LADY. But hear you, my lord.

HOT. What say'st thou, my lady?

LADY. What is it carries you away?

⁴³ heavy cannon.

⁴⁵ emergency.

⁴⁴ light cannon.

⁴⁶ hope.

HOT. Why, my horse, my love—my horse!

LADY. Out, you mad-headed ape!

A weasel hath not such a deal of spleen

As you are toss'd with. In faith,

I'll know your business, Harry; that I will!

I fear my brother Mortimer doth stir

About his title and hath sent for you

To line his enterprise; but if you go—

HOT. So far afoot, I shall be weary, love.

LADY. Come, come, you paraquito, answer me

Directly unto this question that I ask.

In faith, I'll break thy little finger, Harry,

An if thou wilt not tell me all things true.

HOT. Away,

Away, you trifle! Love? I love thee not;

I care not for thee, Kate. This is no world

To play with mammet⁴⁷ and to tilt with lips.

We must have bloody noses and crack'd crowns,

And pass them current too. Gods me,⁴⁸ my horse!

What say'st thou, Kate? What wouldst thou have with me?

LADY. Do you not love me? do you not indeed?

Well, do not then; for since you love me not,

I will not love myself. Do you not love me?

Nay, tell me if you speak in jest or no.

HOT. Come, wilt thou see me ride?

And when I am a-horseback, I will swear

I love thee infinitely. But hark you, Kate:

I must not have you henceforth question me

Whither I go, nor reason whereabout.

Whither I must, I must; and to conclude,

This evening must I leave you, gentle Kate.

I know you wise; but yet no farther wise

Than Harry Percy's wife; constant you are,

But yet a woman and for secrecy.

No lady closer, for I well believe

Thou wilt not utter what thou dost not know,

And so far will I trust thee, gentle Kate.

LADY. How? so far?

HOT. Not an inch further. But hark you,

Kate:

Whither I go, thither shall you go too;

To-day will I set forth, to-morrow you.

Will this content you, Kate?

LADY.

It must of force.

[*exeunt*] 50

⁴⁷ dolls.

⁴⁸ God save me.

SCENE IV.

Eastcheap. The Boar's Head Tavern

Enter PRINCE and POINS

PRINCE. Ned, prithee come out of that fat-room⁴⁹ and lend me thy hand to laugh a little.

POINS. Where hast been, Hal?

PRINCE. With three or four loggerheads amongst three or fourscore hogsheads. I have sounded the very bass-string of humility. Sirrah, I am sworn brother to a leash of drawers⁵⁰ and can call them all by their christen names, as Tom, Dick, and Francis. They take it al-

15 ready upon their salvation that, though I be but Prince of Wales, yet I am the king of courtesy; and tell me flatly I am no proud Jack like Falstaff, but a Corinthian,⁵¹ a lad of mettle, a good boy (by the Lord, so they call me!),

20 and when I am King of England I shall command all the good lads in Eastcheap. They call drinking deep, dying scarlet; and when you breathe in your watering, they cry 'hem!' and bid you play it off. To conclude, I am so good

25 a proficient in one quarter of an hour that I can drink with any tinker in his own language during my life. I tell thee, Ned, thou hast lost much honour that thou wert not with me in this action. But, sweet Ned—to sweeten which

30 name of Ned, I give thee this pennyworth of sugar, clapp'd even now into my hand by an under-skinker,⁵² one that never spake other English in his life than 'Eight shillings and sixpence,' and 'You are welcome,' with this shrill

35 addition, 'Anon, anon, sir! Score a pint of bastard in the Half-moon,'⁵³ or so—but, Ned, to drive away the time till Falstaff come, I prithee do thou stand in some by-room while I question my puny drawer to what end he gave

40 me the sugar; and do thou never leave calling 'Francis!' that his tale to me may be nothing but 'Anon!' Step aside, and I'll show thee a precedent.

POINS. Francis!

45 PRINCE. Thou art perfect.

POINS. Francis!

[*exit POINS*]

⁴⁹ vat room.

⁵⁰ a set of tapsters.

⁵¹ a drunk or sport.

⁵² assistant tapster.

⁵³ Charge a pint of sweet Spanish wine (to the customer) in the Half-moon Room.

Enter [FRANCIS, a] *Drawer*

FRAN. Anon, anon, sir.—Look down into the Pomgarnet,⁵⁴ Ralph.

PRINCE. Come hither, Francis.

FRAN. My lord?

PRINCE. How long hast thou to serve, Francis?

FRAN. Forsooth, five years, and as much as to—

POINS. [*within*] Francis!

FRAN. Anon, anon, sir.

PRINCE. Five year! by'r Lady, a long lease for the clinking of pewter. But, Francis, darrest thou be so valiant as to play the coward with thy indenture and show it a fair pair of heels and run from it?

FRAN. O Lord, sir, I'll be sworn upon all the books in England I could find in my heart—

POINS. [*within*] Francis!

FRAN. Anon, sir.

PRINCE. How old art thou, Francis?

FRAN. Let me see. About Michaelmas⁵⁵ next I shall be—

POINS. [*within*] Francis!

FRAN. Anon, sir. Pray stay a little, my lord.

PRINCE. Nay, but hark you, Francis. For the sugar thou gavest me—'twas a pennyworth, was't not?

FRAN. O Lord! I would it had been two!

PRINCE. I will give thee for it a thousand pound. Ask me when thou wilt, and thou shalt have it.

POINS. [*within*] Francis!

FRAN. Anon, anon.

PRINCE. Anon, Francis? No, Francis; but to-morrow, Francis; or, Francis, a Thursday; or indeed, Francis, when thou wilt. But Francis—

FRAN. My lord?

PRINCE. Wilt thou rob this leathern-jerkin, crystal-button, not-pated,⁵⁶ agate-ring, puke-stocking,⁵⁷ caddis-garter,⁵⁸ smooth-tongue, Spanish-pouch—

FRAN. O Lord, sir, who do you mean?

PRINCE. Why then, your brown bastard is your only drink; for look you, Francis, your white canvas doublet will sully. In Barbary, sir, it cannot come to so much.

FRAN. What, sir?

POINS. [*within*] Francis!

PRINCE. Away, you rogue! Dost thou not hear them call? [*here they both call him The Drawer stands amazed, not knowing which way to go*]

Enter VINTNER

VINT. What, stand'st thou still, and hear'st such a calling? Look to the guests within. [*exit FRANCIS*] My lord, old Sir John, with half-a-dozen more, are at the door. Shall I let them in?

PRINCE. Let them alone awhile, and then open the door. [*exit VINTNER*] Poins!

POINS. [*within*] Anon, anon, sir.

Enter POINS

PRINCE. Sirrah, Falstaff and the rest of the thieves are at the door. Shall we be merry?

POINS. As merry as crickets, my lad. But hark ye; what cunning match have you made with this jest of the drawer? Come, what's the issue?

PRINCE. I am now of all humours that have showed themselves humours since the old days of goodman Adam to the pupil age of this present twelve o'clock at midnight.

[*Enter* FRANCIS]

What's o'clock, Francis?

FRAN. Anon, anon, sir. [*exit*]

PRINCE. That ever this fellow should have fewer words than a parrot, and yet the son of a woman! His industry is upstairs and downstairs, his eloquence the parcel of a reckoning. I am not yet of Percy's mind, the Hotspur of the North, he that kills me some six or seven dozen of Scots at a breakfast, washes his hands, and says to his wife, 'Fie upon this quiet life! I want work.' 'O my sweet Harry,' says she, 'how many hast thou kill'd to-day?' 'Give my roan horse a drench,'⁵⁹ says he, and answers 'Some fourteen,' an hour after, 'a trifle, a trifle.' I prithee call in Falstaff. I'll play Percy, and that damn'd brawn shall play Dame Mortimer his wife. 'Rivol'⁶⁰ says the drunkard. Call in ribs, call in tallow.

Enter FALSTAFF, [GADSHILL, BARDOLPH and PETO; FRANCIS follows with wine]

⁵⁴ another room in the inn.

⁵⁵ Sept. 29.

⁵⁷ dark gray stocking.

⁵⁶ short-haired.

⁵⁸ tape garter.

⁵⁹ a dose of medicine

⁶⁰ a drinker's cry.

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POINS. Welcome, Jack. Where hast thou been?

FAL. A plague of all cowards, I say, and a vengeance too! Marry and amen! Give me a cup of sack, boy. Ere I lead this life long, I'll sew nether-stocks,⁶¹ and mend them and foot them too. A plague of all cowards! Give me a cup of sack, rogue. Is there no virtue extant?

[*he drinketh*]

PRINCE. Didst thou never see Titan⁶² kiss a dish of butter? Pitiful-hearted butter, that melted at the sweet tale of the sun! If thou didst, then behold that compound.⁶³

FAL. You rogue, here's lime in this sack too! There is nothing but roguery to be found in villanous man. Yet a coward is worse than a cup of sack with lime in it—a villanous coward! Go thy ways, old Jack, die when thou wilt; if manhood, good manhood, be not forgot upon the face of the earth, then am I a shotten herring.⁶⁴ There lives not three good men unhang'd in England; and one of them is fat, and grows old. God help the while! A bad world, I say. I would I were a weaver; I could sing psalms or anything. A plague of all cowards I say still!

PRINCE. How now, woolsack? What mutter you?

FAL. A king's son! If I do not beat thee out of thy kingdom with a dagger of lath and drive all thy subjects afore thee like a flock of wild geese, I'll never wear hair on my face more. You Prince of Wales?

PRINCE. Why, you whoreson round man, what's the matter?

FAL. Are not you a coward? Answer me to that—and Poins there?

POINS. Zounds, ye fat paunch, an ye call me coward, by the Lord, I'll stab thee.

FAL. I call thee coward? I'll see thee damn'd ere I call thee coward, but I would give a thousand pound I could run as fast as thou canst. You are straight enough in the shoulders; you care not who sees your back. Call you that backing of your friends? A plague upon such backing! Give me them that will face me. Give me a cup of sack. I am a rogue if I drunk to-day.

PRINCE. O villain! thy lips are scarce wip'd since thou drunk'st last.

FAL. All is one for that. [*he drinketh*] A plague of all cowards still say I.

5 PRINCE. What's the matter?

FAL. What's the matter? There be four of us here have ta'en a thousand pound this day morning.

PRINCE. Where is it, Jack? Where is it?

10 FAL. Where is it? Taken from us it is. A hundred upon poor four of us!

PRINCE. What, a hundred, man?

FAL. I am a rogue if I were not at half-sword with a dozen of them two hours together. I have scap'd by miracle. I am eight times thrust through the doublet, four through the hose; my buckler cut through and through; my sword hack'd like a hand-saw—ecce signum!⁶⁵ I never dealt better since
20 I was a man. All would not do. A plague of all cowards! Let them speak. If they speak more or less than truth, they are villains and the sons of darkness.

PRINCE. Speak, sirs. How was it?

25 GADS. We four set upon some dozen—

FAL. Sixteen at least, my lord.

GADS. And bound them.

PETO. No, no, they were not bound.

FAL. You rogue, they were bound, every
30 man of them, or I am a Jew else—an Ebrew Jew.

GADS. As we were sharing, some six or seven fresh men set upon us—

FAL. And unbound the rest, and then come
35 in the other.

PRINCE. What, fought you with them all?

FAL. All? I know not what you call all, but if I fought not with fifty of them, I am a bunch of radish! If there were not two or
40 three and fifty upon poor old Jack, then am I no two-legg'd creature.

PRINCE. Pray God you have not murd'ered some of them.

FAL. Nay, that's past praying for. I have
45 pepper'd two of them. Two I am sure I have paid, two rogues in buckram suits. I tell thee what, Hal—if I tell thee a lie, spit in my face, call me horse. Thou knowest my old ward. Here I lay, and thus I bore my point. Four
50 rogues in buckram let drive at me.

⁶¹ stockings.

⁶² the sun.

⁶³ Falstaff.

⁶⁴ a herring that has cast its roe.

⁶⁵ behold the evidence.

PRINCE. What, four? Thou saidst but two even now.

FAL. Four, Hal. I told thee four.

POINS. Ay, ay, he said four.

FAL. These four came all afront and mainly thrust at me. I made me no more ado but took all their seven points in my target,⁶⁶ thus.

PRINCE. Seven? Why, there were but four even now.

FAL. In buckram?

POINS. Ay, four, in buckram suits.

FAL. Seven, by these hilts, or I am a villain else.

PRINCE. [*aside to POINS*] Pithee let him alone. We shall have more anon.

FAL. Dost thou hear me, Hal?

PRINCE. Ay, and mark thee too, Jack.

FAL. Do so, for it is worth the list'ning to. These nine in buckram that I told thee of—

PRINCE. So, two more already.

FAL. Their points being broken—

POINS. Down fell their hose.

FAL. Began to give me ground, but I followed me close, came in, foot and hand, and with a thought seven of the eleven I paid.

PRINCE. O monstrous! Eleven buckram men grown out of two!

FAL. But, as the devil would have it, three misbegotten knaves in Kendal green came at my back and let drive at me; for it was so dark, Hal, that thou couldst not see thy hand.

PRINCE. These lies are like their father that begets them—gross as a mountain, open, palpable. Why, thou clay-brain'd guts, thou knotty-pated fool, thou whoreson obscene greasy tallow-catch⁶⁷—

FAL. What, art thou mad? art thou mad? Is not the truth the truth?

PRINCE. Why, how couldst thou know these men in Kendal green when it was so dark thou couldst not see thy hand? Come, tell us your reason. What sayest thou to this?

POINS. Come, your reason, Jack, your reason.

FAL. What, upon compulsion? Zounds, an I were at the strappado or all the racks in the world, I would not tell you on compulsion. Give you a reason on compulsion? If reasons were as plentiful as blackberries, I would give no man a reason upon compulsion, I.

PRINCE. I'll be no longer guilty of this sin; this sanguine coward, this bed-presser, this horseback-breaker, this huge hill of flesh—

FAL. 'Sblood, you starveling, you elf-skin, 5 you dried neat's-tongue, you bull's pizzle, you stockfish⁶⁸—O for breath to utter what is like thee!—you tailor's yard, you sheath, you bow-case, you vile standing tuck!⁶⁹

PRINCE. Well, breathe awhile, and then to it 10 again; and when thou hast tried thyself in base comparisons, hear me speak but this.

POINS. Mark, Jack.

PRINCE. We two saw you four set on four, and bound them and were masters of their 15 wealth. Mark now how a plain tale shall put you down. Then did we two set on you four and, with a word, outfac'd you from your prize, and have it, yea, and can show it you here in the house. And, Falstaff, you carried 20 your guts away as nimbly, with as quick dexterity, and roar'd for mercy, and still run and roar'd, as ever I heard bulle-d. What a slave art thou to hack thy sword as thou hast done, and then say it was in fight! What trick, what 25 device, what starting hole canst thou now find out to hide thee from this open and apparent shame?

POINS. Come, let's hear, Jack. What trick hast thou now?

FAL. By the Lord, I knew ye as well as he 30 that made ye. Why, hear you, my masters. Was it for me to kill the heir apparent? Should I turn upon the true prince? Why, thou knowest I am as valiant as Hercules; but 35 beware instinct. The lion will not touch the true prince. Instinct is a great matter. I was now a coward on instinct. I shall think the better of myself, and thee, during my life—I for a valiant lion, and thou for a true prince. But, by the Lord, lads, I am glad you have the money. Hostess, clap to the doors. Watch to- 40 night, pray to-morrow. Gallants, lads, boys, hearts of gold, all the titles of good fellowship come to you! What, shall we be merry? Shall we have a play extempore?

PRINCE. Content—and the argument shall be thy running away.

FAL. Ah, no more of that, Hal, an thou lovest me!

⁶⁶ shield.

⁶⁷ either a tub to hold tallow or, simply, a lump of fat.

⁶⁸ dried cod.

⁶⁹ rapier.

Enter HOSTESS

HOST. O Jesu, my lord the Prince!

PRINCE. How now, my lady the hostess?
What say'st thou to me?

HOST. Marry, my lord, there is a nobleman
of the court at door would speak with you.
He says he comes from your father.

PRINCE. Give him as much as will make him
a royal man, and send him back again to my
mother.

FAL. What manner of man is he?

HOST. An old man.

FAL. What doth gravity out of his bed at
midnight? Shall I give him his answer?

PRINCE. Prithce do, Jack.

FAL. Faith, and I'll send him packing. [exit]

PRINCE. Now, sirs. By'r lady, you fought
fair; so did you, Peto; so did you, Bardolph.
You are lions too, you ran away upon instinct,
you will not touch the true prince; no—fie!

BARD. Faith, I ran when I saw others run.

PRINCE. Tell me now in earnest, how came
Falstaff's sword so hack'd?

PETO. Why, he hack'd it with his dagger,
and said he would swear truth out of England
but he would make you believe it was done
in fight, and persuaded us to do the like.

BARD. Yea, and to tickle our noses with
spear-grass to make them bleed, and then to
beslobber our garments with it and swear it
was the blood of true men. I did that I did not
this seven year before—I blush'd to hear his
monstrous devices.

PRINCE. O villain! thou stolest a cup of sack
eighteen years ago and wert taken with the
manner, and ever since thou hast blush'd ex-
tempore. Thou hadst fire and sword on thy
side, and yet thou ran'st away. What instinct
hadst thou for it?

BARD. My lord, do you see these meteors?
Do you behold these exhalations?

PRINCE. I do.

BARD. What think you they portend?

PRINCE. Hot livers and cold purses.

BARD. Choler, my lord, if rightly taken.

PRINCE. No, if rightly taken, halter.

Enter FALSTAFF

Here comes lean Jack; here comes bare-bone.
How now, my sweet creature of bombast?
How long is't ago, Jack, since thou sawest

thine own knee?

FAL. My own knee? When I was about thy
years, Hal, I was not an eagle's talent⁷⁰ in the
waist; I could have crept into any alderman's
thumb-ring. A plague of sighing and grief! It
blows a man up like a bladder. There's vil-
lanous news abroad. Here was Sir John Bracy
from your father. You must to the court in the
morning. That same mad fellow of the North,
Percy, and he of Wales that gave Amamon⁷¹
the bastinado, and made Lucifer cuckold, and
swore the devil his true liegeman upon the
cross of a Welsh hook—what a plague call
you him?

POINS. O, Glendower.

FAL. Owen, Owen—the same; and his son-
in-law Mortimer, and old Northumberland,
and that sprightly Scot of Scots, Douglas, that
runs a-horseback up a hill perpendicular—

PRINCE. He that rides at high speed and
with his pistol kills a sparrow flying.

FAL. You have hit it.

PRINCE. So did he never the sparrow.

FAL. Well, that rascal hath good metal in
him; he will not run.

PRINCE. Why, what a rascal art thou then, to
praise him so for running!

FAL. A-horseback, ye cuckoo! but afoot he
will not budge a foot.

PRINCE. Yes, Jack, upon instinct.

FAL. I grant ye, upon instinct. Well, he is
there too, and one Mordake, and a thousand
bluecaps⁷² more. Worcester is stol'n away to-
night; thy father's beard is turn'd white with
the news; you may buy land now as cheap as
stinking mack'rel.

PRINCE. Why then, it is like, if there come a
hot June, and this civil buffeting hold, we
shall buy maidenheads as they buy hobnails,
by the hundreds.

FAL. By the mass, lad, thou sayest true; it is
like we shall have good trading that way. But
tell me, Hal, art not thou horrible afraid?
Thou being heir apparent, could the world
pick thee out three such enemies again as that
fiend Douglas, that spirit Percy, and that devil
Glendower? Art thou not horribly afraid? Doth
not thy blood thrill at it?

PRINCE. Not a whit, i' faith. I lack some of
thy instinct.

⁷⁰ talon.

⁷¹ a devil.

⁷² Scots.

FAL. Well, thou wilt be horribly chid to-morrow when thou comest to thy father. If thou love me, practise an answer.

PRINCE. Do thou stand for my father and examine me upon the particulars of my life.

FAL. Shall I? Content. This chair shall be my state, this dagger my sceptre, and this cushion my crown.

PRINCE. Thy state is taken for a join'd-stool, thy golden sceptre for a leaden dagger, and thy precious rich crown for a pitiful bald crown.

FAL. Well, an the fire of grace be not quite out of thee, now shalt thou be moved. Give me a cup of sack to make my eyes look red, that it may be thought I have wept; for I must speak in passion, and I will do it in King Cambyeses' vein.⁷³

PRINCE. Well, here is my leg.⁷⁴

FAL. And here is my speech. Stand aside, nobility.

HOST. O Jesu, this is excellent sport, i' faith!

FAL. Weep not, sweet queen, for trickling tears are vain.

HOST. O, the Father, how he holds his countenance!

FAL. For God's sake, lords convey my tristful queen!

For tears do stop the floodgates of her eyes.

HOST. O Jesu, he doth it as like one of these harlotry⁷⁵ players as ever I see!

FAL. Peace, good pintpot. Peace, good tickle-brain.⁷⁶—Harry, I do not only marvel where thou spendest thy time, but also how thou art accompanied. For though the camomile, the more it is trodden on, the faster it grows, yet youth, the more it is wasted, the sooner it wears. That thou art my son I have partly thy mother's word, partly my own opinion, but chiefly a villanous trick of thine eye and a foolish hanging of thy nether lip that doth warrant me. If then thou be son to me, here lies the point: why, being son to me, art thou so pointed at? Shall the blessed sun of heaven prove a micher⁷⁷ and eat blackberries? A question not to be ask'd. Shall the son of England prove a thief and take purses? A question to be ask'd. There is a thing, Harry, which thou

hast often heard of, and it is known to many in our land by the name of pitch. This pitch, as ancient writers do report, doth defile, so doth the company thou keepest. For, Harry, now I do not speak to thee in drink, but in tears; not in pleasure, but in passion; not in words only, but in woes also: and yet there is a virtuous man whom I have often noted in thy company, but I know not his name.

PRINCE. What manner of man, an it like your Majesty?

FAL. A goodly portly man, i' faith, and a corpulent; of a cheerful look, a pleasing eye, and a most noble carriage; and, as I think, his age some fifty, or, by'r Lady, inclining to threescore; and now I remember me, his name is Falstaff. If that man should be lewdly given, he deceiveth me; for, Harry, I see virtue in his looks. If then the tree may be known by the fruit, as the fruit by the tree, then, peremptorily I speak it, there is virtue in that Falstaff. Him keep with, the rest banish. And tell me now, thou naughty varlet, tell me where hast thou been this month?

PRINCE. Dost thou speak like a king? Do thou stand for me, and I'll play my father.

FAL. Depose me? If thou dost it half so gravely, so majestically, both in word and matter, hang me up by the heels for a rabbit-sucker or a poultier's hare.

PRINCE. Well, here I am set.

FAL. And here I stand. Judge, my masters.

PRINCE. Now, Harry, whence come you?

FAL. My noble lord, from Eastcheap.

PRINCE. The complaints I hear of thee are grievous.

FAL. 'Shblood, my lord, they are false! Nay, I'll tickle ye for a young prince, i' faith.

PRINCE. Swearest thou, ungracious boy? Henceforth ne'er look on me. Thou art violently carried away from grace. There is a devil haunts thee in the likeness of an old fat man; a tun of man is thy companion. Why dost thou converse with that trunk of humours, that bolting hutch⁷⁸ of beastliness, that swoll'n parcel of dropsies, that huge bombard⁷⁹ of sack, that stuff'd cloakbag of guts, that roasted Manningtree ox⁸⁰ with the pudding in his belly, that reverend vice, that grey iniquity, that

⁷³ in a ranting manner like that of the character in Preston's play of *Cambyse*.

⁷⁴ (He bows). ⁷⁵ rascally.

⁷⁶ strong drink.

⁷⁷ truant.

⁷⁸ flour bin.

⁷⁹ leather drinking vessel.

⁸⁰ Manningtree in Essex was famous for oxen.

THE DRAMA · WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

father ruffian, that vanity in years? Wherein is he good, but to taste sack and drink it? wherein neat and cleanly, but to carve a capon and eat it? wherein cunning, but in craft? wherein crafty, but in villany? wherein villainous, but in all things? wherein worthy, but in nothing?

FAL. I would your Grace would take me with you. Whom means your Grace?

PRINCE. That villainous abominable misleader of youth, Falstaff, that old whitebearded Satan.

FAL. My lord, the man I know.

PRINCE. I know thou dost.

FAL. But to say I know more harm in him than in myself were to say more than I know. That he is old (the more the pity) his white hairs do witness it; but that he is (saving your reverence) a whoremaster, that I utterly deny. If sack and sugar be a fault, God help the wicked! If to be old and merry be a sin, then many an old host that I know is damn'd. If to be fat be to be hated, then Pharaoh's lean kine are to be loved. No, my good lord. Banish Peto, banish Bardolph, banish Poms; but for sweet Jack Falstaff, kind Jack Falstaff, true Jack Falstaff, valiant Jack Falstaff, and therefore more valiant being, as he is, old Jack Falstaff, banish not him thy Harry's company, banish not him thy Harry's company. Banish plump Jack, and banish all the world!

PRINCE. I do, I will. [*a knocking heard.*
Exeunt HOSTESS, FRANCIS, and BARDOLPH.]

Enter BARDOLPH, running

BARD. O, my lord, my lord! the sheriff with a most monstrous watch is at the door.

FAL. Out, ye rogue! Play out the play. I have much to say in the behalf of that Falstaff.

Enter the HOSTESS

HOST. O Jesu, my lord, my lord!

PRINCE. Heigh, heigh, the devil rides upon a fiddlestick! What's the matter?

HOST. The sheriff and all the watch are at the door. They are come to search the house. Shall I let them in?

FAL. Dost thou hear, Hal? Never call a true piece of gold a counterfeit. Thou art essentially mad without seeming so.

PRINCE. And thou a natural coward without instinct.

FAL. I deny your major.⁸¹ If you will deny the sheriff, so; if not, let him enter. If I become not a cart as well as another man, a plague on my bringing up! I hope I shall as soon be strangled with a halter as another.

PRINCE. Go hide thee behind the arras. The rest walk up above. Now, my masters, for a true face and good conscience.

FAL. Both which I have had; but their date is out, and therefore I'll hide me. [*exit*]

PRINCE. Call in the sheriff. [*exeunt; manent the PRINCE and PETO*]

Enter SHERIFF and the CARRIER

Now, Master Sheriff, what is your will with me?

SHER. First, pardon me, my lord. A hue and cry

Hath followed certain men unto this house.

PRINCE. What men?

SHER. One of them is well known, my gracious lord—

A gross fat man.

CARRIER. As fat as butter.

PRINCE. The man, I do assure you, is not here,

For I myself at this time have employ'd him. And, sheriff, I will engage my word to thee That I will by to-morrow dinner time Send him to answer thee, or any man, For anything he shall be charg'd withal; And so let me entreat you leave the house.

SHER. I will, my lord. There are two gentlemen

Have in this robbery lost three hundred marks.

PRINCE. It may be so. If he have robb'd these men,

He shall be answerable; and so farewell.

SHER. Good night, my noble lord.

PRINCE. I think it is good morrow, is it not?

SHER. Indeed, my lord, I think it be two o'clock. *exit* [*with* CARRIER]

PRINCE. This oily rascal is known as well as Paul's.⁸² Go call him forth.

PETO. Falstaff! Fast asleep behind the arras, and snorting like a horse.

PRINCE. Hark how hard he fetches breath. Search his pockets. [*he searcheth his pockets*]

⁸¹ major premise.

⁸² St. Paul's Cathedral.

and findeth certain papers]

What hast thou found?

PETO. Nothing but papers, my lord.

PRINCE. Let's see what they be. Read them.

PETO. [reads]

Item, A capon ii s. ii d.

Item, Sauce iii d.

Item, Sack two gallons v s. viii d.

Item, Anchovies and

Sack after supper ii s. vi d.

Item, Bread ob.⁸⁸

PRINCE. O monstrous! but one halfpenny-worth of bread to this intolerable deal of sack! What there is else, keep close, we'll read it at more advantage. There let him sleep till day. I'll to the court in the morning. We must all to the wars, and thy place shall be honourable. I'll procure this fat rogue a charge of foot; and I know his death will be a march of twelve score. The money shall be paid back again with advantage. Be with me betimes in the morning, and so good morrow, Peto.

PETO. Good morrow, good my lord. [exunt]

ACT III

SCENE I.

Bangor. The Archdeacon's house

Enter HOTSPUR, WORCESTER, LORD MORTIMER,
OWEN GLENDOWER

MORT. These promises are fair, the parties sure,
And our induction full of prosperous hope.

HOT. Lord Mortimer, and cousin Glendower,
Will you sit down?

And uncle Worcester. A plague upon it!
I have forgot the map.

GLEND. No, here it is.
Sit, cousin Percy; sit, good cousin Hotspur,
For by that name as oft as Lancaster
Doth speak of you, his cheek looks pale, and
with

A rising sigh he wisheth you in heaven.

HOT. And you in hell, as oft as he hears
Owen Glendower spoke of.

GLEND. I cannot blame him. At my nativity
The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes

Of burning cressets,⁸⁹ and at my birth
The frame and huge foundation of the earth
Shak'd like a coward.

HOT. Why, so it would have done at the
5 same season, if your mother's cat had but
kitten'd though yourself had never been born.

GLEND. I say the earth did shake when I was
born.

HOT. And I say the earth was not of my
10 mind.

If you suppose as fearing you it shook.

GLEND. The heavens were all on fire, the
earth did tremble.

HOT. O, then the earth shook to see the
15 heavens on fire.

And not in fear of your nativity.

Diseased nature oftentimes breaks forth
In strange eruptions; oft the teeming earth
Is with a kind of colic pinch'd and vex'd

20 By the imprisoning of unruly wind
Within her womb, which, for enlargement
striving,

Shakes the old beldame earth and topples down
Steeple and mossgrown towers. At your birth
25 Our grandam earth, having this distemp'rance,
In passion shook.

GLEND. Cousin, of many men
I do not bear these crossings. Give me leave
To tell you once again that at my birth
30 The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes,
The goats ran from the mountains, and the
herds

Were strangely clamorous to the frightened fields.
These signs have mark'd me extraordinary.

35 And all the courses of my life do show
I am not in the roll of common men.
Where is he living, clipp'd in with the sea
That chides the banks of England, Scotland,
Wales,

40 Which calls me pupil or hath read to me?
And bring him out that is but woman's son
Can trace me in the tedious ways of art
And hold me pace in deep experiments.

HOT. I think there's no man speaks better
45 Welsh. I'll to dinner.

MORT. Peace, cousin Percy; you will make
him mad.

GLEND. I can call spirits from the vasty deep.

HOT. Why, so can I, or so can any man;
50 But will they come when you do call for them?

⁸⁸ ob. equals *obolus*, halfpenny.

⁸⁹ torches.

GLEND. Why, I can teach you, cousin, to
 command
 The devil.
 HOT. And I can teach thee, coz, to shame
 the devil—
 By telling truth. Tell truth and shame the
 devil.
 If thou have power to raise him, bring him
 hither,
 And I'll be sworn I have power to shame him
 hence.
 O, while you live, tell truth and shame the
 devill
 MORT. Come, come, no more of this unprof-
 itable chat.
 GLEND. Three times hath Henry Bolingbroke
 made head
 Against my power; thrice from the banks of
 Wye
 And sandy-bottom'd Severn have I sent him
 Bootless home and weather-beaten back.
 HOT. Home without boots, and in foul
 weather too?
 How scapes he agues, in the devil's name?
 GLEND. Come, here's the map. Shall we di-
 vide our right
 According to our threefold order ta'en?
 MORT. The Archdeacon hath divided it
 Into three limits very equally.
 England, from Trent and Severn hitherto,
 By south and east is to my part assign'd;
 All westward, Wales beyond the Severn shore,
 And all the fertile land within that bound,
 To Owen Glendower; and, dear coz, to you
 The remnant northward lying off from Trent.
 And our indentures tripartite are drawn;
 Which being sealed interchangeably
 (A business that this night may execute),
 To-morrow, cousin Percy, you and I
 And my good Lord of Worcester will set forth
 To meet your father and the Scottish power,
 As is appointed us, at Shrewsbury.
 My father Glendower is not ready yet,
 Nor shall we need his help these fourteen
 days.
 [To GLEND.] Within that space you may have
 drawn together
 Your tenants, friends, and neighbouring gen-
 tlemen.
 GLEND. A shorter time shall send me to you,
 lords;
 And in my conduct shall your ladies come,
 From whom you now must steal and take no
 leave,
 For there will be a world of water shed
 Upon the parting of your wives and you.
 5 HOT. Methinks my moiety,⁸⁵ north from
 Burton here,
 In quantity equals not one of yours.
 See how this river comes me cranking in
 And cuts me from the best of all my land
 10 A huge half-moon, a monstrous cantle⁸⁶ out.
 I'll have the current in this place damm'd up,
 And here the smug and silver Trent shall run
 In a new channel fair and evenly.
 It shall not wind with such a deep indent
 15 To rob me of so rich a bottom here.
 GLEND. Not wind? It shall, it must! You see
 it doth.
 MORT. Yea, but
 Mark how he bears his course, and runs me
 20 up
 With like advantage on the other side,
 Gelding the opposed continent as much
 As on the other side it takes from you.
 wor. Yea, but a little charge will trench him
 here
 And on this north side win this cape of land;
 And then he runs straight and even.
 HOT. I'll have it so. A little charge will do it.
 GLEND. I will not have it alt'red.
 30 HOT. Will not you?
 GLEND. No, nor you shall not.
 HOT. Who shall say me nay?
 GLEND. Why, that will I.
 HOT. Let me not understand you then;
 35 speak it in Welsh.
 GLEND. I can speak English, lord, as well as
 you;
 For I was train'd up in the English court,
 Where, being but young, I framed to the harp
 40 Many an English ditty lovely well,
 And gave the tongue a helpful ornament—
 A virtue that was never seen in you.
 HOT. Marry,
 And I am glad of it with all my heart!
 45 I had rather be a kitten and cry mew
 Than one of these same metre ballet-mongers.⁸⁷
 I had rather hear a brazen canstick⁸⁸ turn'd
 Or a dry wheel grate on the axletree,
 And that would set my teeth nothing on edge,
 50 _____
⁸⁵ share.
⁸⁷ ballad writers or singers.
⁸⁶ piece.
⁸⁸ candlestick.

Nothing so much as mincing poetry.

'Tis like the forc'd gait of a shuffling nag.

GLEND. Come, you shall have Trent turn'd.

HOT. I do not care. I'll give thrice so much land

To any well-deserving friend;

But in the way of bargain, mark ye me,

I'll cavil on the ninth part of a hair.

Are the indentures drawn? Shall we be gone?

GLEND. The moon shines fair; you may away by night.

I'll haste the writer, and withal

Break with your wives of your departure hence.

I am afraid my daughter will run mad,

So much she doteth on her Mortimer. [*exit*]

MORT. Fie, cousin Percy! how you cross my father!

HOT. I cannot choose. Sometime he angers me

With telling me of the moldwarp⁸⁹ and the ant,

Of the dreamer Merlin and his prophecies,

And of a dragon and a finless fish,

A clip-wing'd griffin and a moulten raven,

A couching lion and a ramping cat,

And such a deal of skimble-skamble stuff

As puts me from my faith. I tell you what—

He held me last night at least nine hours

In reckoning up the several devils' names

That were his lackeys. I cried 'hum,' and 'Well, go to!'

But mark'd him not a word. O, he is as tedious

As a tired horse, a railing wife;

Worse than a smoky house. I had rather live

With cheese and garlic in a windmill far

Than feed on cates and have him talk to me

In any summer house in Christendom.

MORT. In faith, he is a worthy gentleman,

Exceedingly well read, and profited

In strange concealments, valiant as a lion,

And wondrous affable, and as bountiful

As mines of India. Shall I tell you, cousin?

He holds your temper in a high respect

And curbs himself even of his natural scope

When you come 'cross his humour. Faith, he does.

I warrant you that man is not alive

Might so have tempted him as you have done

Without the taste of danger and reproof.

But do not use it oft, let me entreat you.

WOR. In faith, my lord, you are too willful-blame,

And since your coming hither have done enough

5 To put him quite besides his patience.

You must needs learn, lord, to amend this fault.

Though sometimes it show greatness, courage, blood—

10 And that's the dearest grace it renders you—

Yet oftentimes it doth present harsh rage,

Defect of manners, want of government,

Pride, haughtiness, opinion, and disdain;

The least of which haunting a nobleman

15 Loseth men's hearts, and leaves behind a stain

Upon the beauty of all parts besides,

Beguiling them of commendation.

HOT. Well, I am school'd. Good manners be your speed!

20 Here come our wives, and let us take our leave.

Enter GLENDOWER with the LADIES

MORT. This is the deadly spite that angers me—

25 My wife can speak no English, I no Welsh.

GLEND. My daughter weeps; she will not part with you;

She'll be a soldier too, she'll to the wars.

MORT. Good father, tell her that she and my aunt Percy

30 Shall follow in your conduct speedily. [*GLENDOWER speaks to her in Welsh, and she answers him in the same*]

GLEND. She is desperate here. A peevish self-will'd harlotry,⁹⁰

35 One that no persuasion can do good upon. [*the LADY speaks in Welsh*]

MORT. I understand thy looks. That pretty Welsh

40 Which thou pourest down from these swelling heavens

I am too perfect in; and, but for shame,

In such a parley should I answer thee. [*the LADY again in Welsh*]

45 I understand thy kisses, and thou mine,

And that's a feeling disputation.

But I will never be a truant, love,

Till I have learnt thy language; for thy tongue

50 Sung by a fair queen in a summer's bow'r,

⁸⁹ mole.

⁹⁰ wench.

With ravishing division, to her lute.

GLEND. Nay, if you melt, then will she run mad. [*the LADY speaks again in Welsh*]

MORT. O, I am ignorance itself in this!

GLEND. She bids you on the wanton⁹¹ rushes lay you down

And rest your gentle head upon her lap,
And she will sing the song that pleaseth you
And on your eyelids crown the god of sleep,
Charming your blood with pleasing heaviness,
Making such difference 'twixt wake and sleep
As is the difference betwixt day and night
The hour before the heavenly-harness'd team
Begins his golden progress in the East.

MORT. With all my heart I'll sit and hear her sing.

By that time will our book, I think, be drawn.

GLEND. Do so,
And those musicians that shall play to you
Hang in the air a thousand leagues from hence,
And straight they shall be here. Sit, and attend.

HOT. Come, Kate, thou art perfect in lying down. Come, quick, quick, that I may lay my head in thy lap.

LADY. Go, ye giddy goose. [*the music plays*]

HOT. Now I perceive the devil understands Welsh;

And 'tis no marvel, he is so humorous.⁹²

By'r Lady, he is a good musician.

LADY P. Then should you be nothing but musical; for you are altogether govern'd by humours. Lie till, ye thief, and hear the lady sing in Welsh.

HOT. I had rather hear Lady, my brach,⁹³ howl in Irish.

LADY P. Wouldst thou have thy head broken?

HOT. No.

LADY P. Then be still.

HOT. Neither! 'Tis a woman's fault.

LADY P. Now God help thee!

HOT. To the Welsh lady's bed.

LADY P. What's that?

HOT. Peace! she sings. [*here the LADY sings a Welsh song*]

Come, Kate, I'll have your song too.

LADY P. Not mine, in good sooth.

HOT. Not yours, in good sooth? Heart! you swear like a comfit-maker's⁹⁴ wife. 'Not you, 50

in good sooth!' and 'as true as I live!' and 'as God shall mend me!' and 'as sure as day!' And givest such sarcenet⁹⁵ surety for thy oaths As if thou ne'er walk'st further than Finsbury.

5 Swear me, Kate, like a lady as thou art,
A good mouth-filling oath; and leave 'in sooth'
And such protest of pepper gingerbread
To velvet guards⁹⁶ and Sunday citizens.
Come, sing.

10 LADY P. I will not sing.

HOT. 'Tis the next way to turn tailor or be redbreast-teacher. An the indentures be drawn, I'll away within these two hours; and so come in when ye will. [*exit*]

15 GLEND. Come, come, Lord Mortimer. You are as slow

As hot Lord Percy is on fire to go.

By this our book is drawn; we'll but seal,
And then to horse immediately.

20 MORT. With all my heart. [*exeunt*]

SCENE II.

London. The palace

25 *Enter the KING, PRINCE OF WALES, and others*

KING. Lords, give us leave. The Prince of Wales and I

Must have some private conference; but be 30 near at hand,

For we shall presently have need of you.

[*exeunt Lords*]

I know not whether God will have it so,
For some displeasing service I have done,
That, in his secret doom, out of my blood
He'll breed revenge and a scourge for me;

But thou dost in thy passages of life
Make me believe that thou art only mark'd
For the hot vengeance and the rod of heaven

40 To punish my mistreadings. Tell me else,
Could such inordinate and low desires,
Such poor, such bare, such lewd, such mean attempts,

Such barren pleasures, rude society,
As thou art match'd withal and grafted to,
Accompany the greatness of thy blood
And hold their level with thy princely heart?

PRINCE. So please your Majesty, I would I could

⁹¹ luxuriant.

⁹³ hound.

⁹² moody.

⁹⁴ confectioner's.

⁹⁵ flimsy.

⁹⁶ women wearing velvet-trimmed dresses.

Quit all offences with as clear excuse
As well as I am doubtless I can purge
Myself of many I am charg'd withal.
Yet such extenuation let me bog
As, in reproof of many tales devis'd,
Which oft the ear of greatness needs must hear
By smiling pickthanks⁹⁷ and base news-mon-
gers,

I may, for some things true wherein my youth
Hath faulty wand'red and irregular,
Find pardon on my true submission.

KING. God pardon thee! Yet let me wonder,
Harry,

At thy affections, which do hold a wing
Quite from the flight of all thy ancestors.
Thy place in Council thou hast rudely lost,
Which by thy younger brother is supplied,
And art almost an alien to the hearts
Of all the court and princes of my blood.
The hope and expectation of thy time
Is ruin'd and the soul of every man
Prophetically do forethink thy fall.
Had I so lavish of my presence been,
So common-hackney'd in the eyes of men,
So stale and cheap to vulgar company,
Opinion, that did help me to the crown,
Had still kept loyal to possession
And left me in reputeless banishment,
A fellow of no mark nor likelihood.
By being seldom seen, I could not stir
But, like a comet, I was wond'ring at,
That men would tell their children, 'This is he!'
Others would say, 'Where? Which is Boling-
broke?'

And then I stole all courtesy from heaven,
And dress'd myself in such humility
That I did pluck allegiance from men's hearts,
Loud shouts and salutations from their mouths
Even in the presence of the crowned King.
Thus did I keep my person fresh and new,
My presence, like a robe pontifical,
Ne'er seen but wond'ring at; and so my state,
Seldom but sumptuous, show'd like a feast
And won by rareness such solemnity.
The skipping King, he ambled up and down
With shallow jesters and rash bavin⁹⁸ wits,
Soon kindled and soon burnt, carded⁹⁹ his
state;

⁹⁷ parasites.

⁹⁸ superficial (literally brushwood which ignites
easily and burns out at once).

⁹⁹ debased his rank.

Mingled his royalty with cap'ring fools;
Had his great name profaned with then scorns
And gave his countenance, against his name,
To laugh at gibing boys and stand the push
5 Of every beardless vain comparative,
Grew a companion to the common streets,
Enteoff'd¹⁰⁰ himself to popularity;
That, being daily swallowed by men's eyes,
They surfeited with honey and began
10 To loathe the taste of sweetness, whereof a
little

More than a little is by much too much.
So, when he had occasion to be seen,
He was but as the cuckoo is in June,
15 Heard, not regarded—seen, but with such eyes
As, sick and blunted with community,
Afford no extraordinary gaze,
Such as is bent on sunlight majesty
When it shames seldom in admiring eyes;
20 But rather drows'd and hung their eyelids
down,

Slept in his face, and rend'ring such aspect
As cloudy men use to their adversaries,
Being with his presence glutted, gorg'd and
25 full.

And in that very line, Harry, standest thou;
For thou hast lost thy princely privilege
With vile participation. Not an eye
But is weary of thy common sight,
30 Save mine, which hath desu'd to see thee
more;

Which now doth that I would not have it do—
Make blind itself with foolish tenderness.

PRINCE. I shall hereafter, my thrice-gracious
35 lord,
Be more myself.

KING. For all the world,
As thou art to this hour, was Richard then
When I from France set foot at Ravenspurgh;
40 And even as I was then is Percy now.
Now, by my sceptre, and my soul to boot,
He hath more worthy interest to the state
Than thou, the shadow of succession;
For of no right, nor colour like to right,
45 He doth fill fields with harness¹⁰¹ in the realm,
Turns head against the lion's armed jaws,
And, being no more in debt to years than
thou,

Leads ancient lords and reverend bishops on
50 To bloody battles and to bruising arms.

¹⁰⁰ surrendered.

¹⁰¹ men in armor.

What never-dying honour hath he got
Against renowned Douglas! whose high deeds,
Whose hot incursions and great name in arms
Holds from all soldiers chief majority
And military title capital
Through all the kingdoms that acknowledge
Christ.

Thrice hath this Hotspur, Mars in swathling
clothes,

This infant warrior, in his enterprises
Discomfited great Douglas; ta'en him once,
Enlarged him, and made a friend of him,
To fill the mouth of deep defiance up
And shake the peace and safety of our throne.
And what say you to this? Percy, Northumber- 15
land,

The Archbishop's Grace of York, Douglas,
Mortimer

Capitulate against us and are up.
But wherefore do I tell these news to thee?
Why, Harry, do I tell thee of my foes,
Which art my nearest and dearest enemy?
Thou that art like enough, through vassal fear,
Base inclination, and the start of spleen,
To fight against me under Percy's pay,
To dog his heels and curtsy at his frowns,
To show how much thou art degenerate.

PRINCE. Do not think so. You shall not find
it so.

And God forgive them that so much have
sway'd

Your Majesty's good thoughts away from me!
I will redeem all this on Percy's head
And, in the closing of some glorious day,
Be bold to tell you that I am your son,
When I will wear a garment all of blood,
And stain my favours¹⁰² in a bloody mask,
Which, wash'd away, shall scour my shame
with it.

And that shall be the day, whene'er it lights.
That this same child of honour and renown,
This gallant Hotspur, this all-praised knight,
And your unthought-of Harry chance to meet.
For every honour sitting on his helm,
Would they were multitudes, and on my head 45
My shames redoubled! For the time will come
That I shall make this Northern youth ex-
change

His glorious deeds for my indignities.
Percy is but my factor, good my lord,

¹⁰² features.

To engross up glorious deeds on my behalf;
And I will call him to so strict account
That he shall render every glory up,
Yea, even the slightest worship of his time,
5 Or I will tear the reckoning from his heart.
This in the name of God I promise here;
The which if he be pleas'd I shall perform,
I do beseech your Majesty may save
The long-grown wounds of my intemperance.
10 If not, the end of life cancels all bands,
And I will die a hundred thousand deaths
Ere break the smallest parcel of this vow.

KING. A hundred thousand rebels die in this!
Thou shalt have charge and sovereign trust
herein.

Enter BLUNT

How now, good Blunt? Thy looks are full of
speed.

20 BLUNT. So hath the business that I come to
speak of.

Lord Mortimer of Scotland hath sent word
That Douglas and the English rebels met
The eleventh of this month at Shrewsbury.

25 A mighty and a fearful head they are,
If promises be kept on every hand,
As ever offred foul play in a state.

KING. The Earl of Westmoreland set forth
to-day;

30 With him my son, Lord John of Lancaster;
For this advertisement is five days old.

On Wednesday next, Harry, you shall set for-
ward;

On Thursday we ourselves will march. Our
35 meeting

Is Bridgenorth; and, Harry, you shall march
Through Gloucestershire; by which account,
Our business valued, some twelve days hence
Our general forces at Bridgenorth shall meet.

40 Our hands are full of business. Let's away.
Advantage feeds him fat while men delay.

[*exeunt*]

SCENE III.

Eastcheap. The Boar's Head Tavern

Enter FALSTAFF and BARDOLPH

FAL. Bardolph, am I not fall'n away vilely
50 since this last action? Do I not bate? Do I not
dwindle? Why, my skin hangs about me like an
old lady's loose gown! I am withered like an

old apple John.¹⁰³ Well, I'll repent, and that suddenly, while I am in some liking. I shall be out of heart shortly, and then I shall have no strength to repent. An I have not forgotten what the inside of a church is made of, I am a peppercorn, a brewer's horse. The inside of a church! Company, villanous company, hath been the spoil of me.

BARD. Sir John, you are so fretful you cannot live long.

FAL. Why, there is it! Come, sing me a bawdy song; make me merry. I was as virtuously given as a gentleman need to be, virtuous enough: swore little, dic'd not above seven times a week, went to a bawdy house not above once in a quarter—of an hour, paid money that I borrowed—three or four times, lived well, and in good compass; and now I live out of all order, out of all compass.

BARD. Why, you are so fat, Sir John, that you must needs be out of all compass—out of all reasonable compass, Sir John.

FAL. Do thou amend thy face, and I'll amend my life. Thou art our admiral, thou bearest the lantern in the poop—but 'tis in the nose of thee. Thou art the Knight of the Burning Lamp.

BARD. Why, Sir John, my face does you no harm.

FAL. No, I'll be sworn. I make as good use of it as many a man doth of a death's-head or a memento mori.¹⁰⁴ I never see thy face but I think upon hellfire and Dives that lived in purple; for there he is in his robes, burning, burning.¹⁰⁵ If thou wert any way given to virtue, I would swear by thy face; my oath should be 'By this fire, that's God's angel.' But thou art altogether given over, and wert indeed, but for the light in thy face, the son of utter darkness. When thou ran'st up Gadshill in the night to catch my horse, if I did not think thou hadst been an ignis fatuus¹⁰⁶ or a ball of wildfire, there's no purchase in money. O, thou art a perpetual triumph, an everlasting bonfire-light! Thou hast saved me a thousand marks in links¹⁰⁷ and torches, walking with thee in the night betwixt tavern and tavern; but the sack that thou hast drunk me would have bought me lights as good cheap

at the dearest chandler's in Europe. I have maintained that salamander of yours with fire any time this two-and-thirty years. God reward me for it!

BARD. 'Shblood, I would my face were in your belly!

FAL. God-a-mercy! so should I be sure to be heart-burn'd.

Enter HOSTESS

How now, Dame Partlet the hen?¹⁰⁸ Have you enquir'd yet who pick'd my pocket?

HOST. Why, Sir John, what do you think, Sir John? Do you think I keep thieves in my house? I have search'd, I have enquired, so has my husband, man by man, boy by boy, servant by servant. The tithe of a hair was never lost in my house before.

FAL. Ye lie, hostess. Bardolph was shav'd and lost many a hair, and I'll be sworn my pocket was pick'd. Go to, you are a woman, go!

HOST. Who, I? No; I defy thee! God's light, I was never call'd so in mine own house before!

FAL. Go to, I know you well enough.

HOST. No, Sir John; you do not know me, Sir John. I know you, Sir John. You owe me money, Sir John, and now you pick a quarrel to beguile me of it. I bought you a dozen of shirts to your back.

FAL. Dowlas, filthy dowlas!¹⁰⁹ I have given them away to bakers' wives; they have made bolters¹¹⁰ of them.

HOST. Now, as I am a true woman, holland of eight shillings an ell. You owe money here besides, Sir John, for your diet and by-drinkings, and money lent you, four-and-twenty pound.

FAL. He had his part of it; let him pay.

HOST. He? Alas, he is poor; he hath nothing.

FAL. How? Poor? Look upon his face. What call you rich? Let them coin his nose, let them coin his cheeks. I'll not pay a denier. What, will you make a younker¹¹¹ of me? Shall I not take mine ease in mine inn but I shall have my pocket pick'd? I have lost a seal-ring of my grandfather's worth forty mark.

HOST. O Jesu, I have heard the Prince tell

¹⁰³ shriveled apple.

¹⁰⁵ see Luke 16:19 ff.

¹⁰⁷ small torches.

¹⁰⁴ reminder of death.

¹⁰⁶ will o' the wisp.

¹⁰⁸ See Chaucer's *Nun's Priest's Tale*.

¹⁰⁹ coarse linen.

¹¹¹ greenhorn.

¹¹⁰ sifting cloths.

THE DRAMA · WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

him, I know not how oft, that that ring was copper!

FAL. How? the Prince is a Jack, a sneak-cup. 'Sblood, an he were here, I would cudgel him like a dog if he would say so.

Enter the PRINCE [and POINS], marching; and FALSTAFF meets them, playing upon his truncheon like a fife

How now, lad? Is the wind in that door, i' 10
faith? Must we all march?

BARD. Yea, two and two, Newgate fashion.¹¹²

HOST. My lord, I pray you hear me.

PRINCE. What say'st thou, Mistress Quickly? How doth thy husband? I love him well; he 15
is an honest man.

HOST. Good my lord, hear me.

FAL. Prithee let her alone and list to me.

PRINCE. What say'st thou, Jack?

FAL. The other night I fell asleep here be- 20
hind the arras and had my pocket pick'd. This house is turn'd bawdy house; they pick pockets.

PRINCE. What didst thou lose, Jack?

FAL. Wilt thou believe me, Hal? Three or 25
four bonds of forty pound apiece and a seal-ring of my grandfather's.

PRINCE. A trifle, some eightpenny matter.

HOST. So I told him, my lord, and I said I heard your Grace say so; and, my lord, he 30
speaks most vilely of you, like a foul-mouth'd man as he is, and said he would cudgel you.

PRINCE. What! he did not?

HOST. There's neither faith, truth, nor womanhood in me else.

FAL. There's no more faith in thee than in a stewed prune, nor no more truth in thee than in a drawn fox; and for womanhood, Maid Marian¹¹³ may be the deputy's wife of the ward to thee. Go, you thing, go!

HOST. Say, what thing? what thing?

FAL. What thing? Why, a thing to thank God on.

HOST. I am no thing to thank God on, I would thou shouldst know it! I am an honest 45
man's wife, and, setting thy knighthood aside, thou art a knave to call me so.

FAL. Setting thy womanhood aside, thou art a beast to say otherwise.

HOST. Say, what beast, thou knave, thou?

FAL. What beast? Why, an otter.

5 PRINCE. An otter, Sir John? Why an otter?

FAL. Why, she's neither fish nor flesh; a man knows not where to have her.

HOST. Thou are an unjust man in saying so. Thou or any man knows where to have me, 10
thou knave, thou!

PRINCE. Thou say'st true, hostess, and he slanders thee most grossly.

HOST. So he doth you, my lord, and said this other day you ought him a thousand 15
pound.

PRINCE. Sirrah, do I owe you a thousand pound?

FAL. A thousand pound, Hal? A million! Thy love is worth a million; thou owest me 20
thy love.

HOST. Nay, my lord, he call'd you Jack and said he would cudgel you.

FAL. Did I, Bardolph?

BARD. Indeed, Sir John, you said so.

FAL. Yea, if he said my ring was copper.

PRINCE. I say 'tis copper. Darest thou be as good as thy word now?

FAL. Why, Hal, thou knowest, as thou art but man, I dare; but as thou art Prince, I fear 30
thee as I fear the roaring of the lion's whelp.

PRINCE. And why not as the lion?

FAL. The King himself is to be feared as the lion. Dost thou think I'll fear thee as I fear thy father? Nay, an I do, I pray God my girdle 35
break.

PRINCE. O, if it should, how would thy guts fall about thy knees! But, sirrah, there's no room for faith, truth, nor honesty in this bosom of thine. It is all fill'd up with guts and midriff.

40 Charge an honest woman with picking thy pocket? Why, thou whoreson, impudent, emboss'd¹¹⁴ rascal, if there were anything in thy pocket but tavern reckonings, memorandums of bawdy houses, and one poor pennyworth of sugar candy to make thee long-winded—if thy pocket were enrich'd with any other injuries but these, I am a villain. And yet you will stand to it; you will not pocket up wrong. Art thou not ashamed?

50 FAL. Dost thou hear, Hal? Thou knowest in

¹¹⁴ blown up.

¹¹² like prisoners in Newgate Prison.

¹¹³ The gist of this remark is that compared with the hostess, Maid Marian (not too virtuous) would seem a respectable official's wife; Marian appears in morris dances and Robin Hood stories.

the state of innocency Adam fell; and what should poor Jack Falstaff do in the days of villany? Thou seest I have more flesh than another man, and therefore more frailty. You confess then, you pick'd my pocket?

PRINCE. It appears so by the story.

FAL. Hostess, I forgive thee. Go make ready breakfast. Love thy husband, look to thy servants, cherish thy guests. Thou shalt find me tractable to any honest reason. Thou seest I am pacified.—Still?—Nay, prithee be gone. [*exit HOSTESS*] Now, Hal, to the news at court. For the robbery, lad—how is that answered?

PRINCE. O my sweet beef, I must still be good angel to thee. The money is paid back again.

FAL. O, I do not like that paying back! 'Tis a double labour.

PRINCE. I am good friends with my father, and may do anything.

FAL. Rob me the exchequer the first thing thou doest, and do it with unwash'd hands¹¹⁵ too.

BARD. Do, my lord.

PRINCE. I have procured thee, Jack, a charge of foot.

FAL. I would it had been of horse. Where shall I find one that can steal well? O for a fine thief of the age of two-and-twenty or thereabouts! I am heinously unprovided. Well, God be thanked for these rebels. They offend none but the virtuous. I laud them, I praise them.

PRINCE. Bardolph!

BARD. My lord?

PRINCE. Go bear this letter to Lord John of Lancaster,
To my brother John; this to my Lord of Westmoreland. [*exit BARDOLPH*]

Go, Poins, to horse, to horse; for thou and I Have thirty miles to ride yet ere dinner time.

[*exit POINS*]
Jack, meet me to-morrow in the Temple Hall
At two o'clock in the afternoon.

There shalt thou know thy charge, and there receive

Money and order for their furniture.

The land is burning; Percy stands on high;

And either they or we must lower lie. [*exit*]

FAL. Rare words! brave world! Hostess, my

breakfast, come.

O, I could wish this tavern were my drum!¹¹⁶
[*exit*]

ACT IV

SCENE I.

The rebel camp near Shrewsbury

Enter HARRY HOTSPUR, WORCESTER, and DOUGLAS

HOT. Well said, my noble Scot. If speaking truth

In this fine age were not thought flattery,
Such attribution should the Douglas have
As not a soldier of this season's stamp
Should go so general current through the world.
By God, I cannot flatter, I defy

The tongues of soothers! but a braver place
In my heart's love hath no man than yourself.
Nay, task me to my word; approve me,¹¹⁷ lord.
DOUG. Thou art the king of honour.

No man so potent breathes upon the ground
But I will beard him.

Enter one with letters

HOT. Do so, and 'tis well.—
What letters hast thou there? I can but thank you.

MESS. These letters come from your father.

HOT. Letters from him? Why comes he not himself?

MESS. He cannot come, my lord; he is grievous sick.

HOT. Zounds! how has he the leisure to be sick

In such a justling time? Who leads his power?
Under whose government come they along?

MESS. His letters bears his mind, not I, my lord.

WOR. I prithee tell me, doth he keep his bed?

MESS. He did, my lord, four days ere I sat forth,

And at the time of my departure thence

He was much fear'd by his physicians.

WOR. I would the state of time had first been whole

¹¹⁶ to attract recruits.

¹¹⁷ test me.

¹¹⁵ at once.

Ere he by sickness had been visited.

His health was never better worth than now.

HOT. Sick now? droop now? This sickness
doth infect

The very lifeblood of our enterprise.

'Tis catching hither, even to our camp.

He writes me here that inward sickness—

And that his friends by deputation could not

So soon be drawn; nor did he think it meet

To lay so dangerous and dear a trust

On any soul remov'd but on his own.

Yet doth he give us bold advertisement,

That with our small conjunction we should on,

To see how fortune is dispos'd to us;

For, as he writes, there is no quailing now,

Because the King is certainly possess'd

Of all our purposes. What say you to it?

WOR. Your father's sickness is a maim to us.

HOT. A perilous gash, a very limb lopp'd off.

And yet, in faith, it is not! His present want

Seems more than we shall find it. Were it good

To set the exact wealth of all our states

All at one cast? to set so rich a main¹¹⁸

On the nice¹¹⁹ hazard of one doubtful hour?

It were not good; for therein should we read

The very bottom and the soul of hope,

The very list,¹²⁰ the very utmost bound

Of all our fortunes.

DOUG. Faith, and so we should;

Where now remains a sweet reversion.

We may boldly spend upon the hope of what

Is to come in.

A comfort of retirement lives in this.

HOT. A rendezvous, a home to fly unto,

If that the devil and mischance look big

Upon the maidenhead of our affairs.

WOR. But yet I would your father had been
here.

The quality and hair¹²¹ of our attempt

Brooks no division. It will be thought

By some that know not why he is away,

That wisdom, loyalty, and mere dislike

Of our proceedings kept the Earl from hence.

And think how such an apprehension

May turn the tide of fearful faction

And breed a kind of question in our cause.

For well you know we of the off'ring side

Must keep aloof from strict arbitrement,

And stop all sight-holes, every loop from

whence

¹¹⁸ stake.

¹²⁰ limit.

¹¹⁹ doubtful, delicate.

¹²¹ synonymous with quality.

The eye of reason may pry in upon us.

This absence of your father's draws a curtain

That shows the ignorant a kind of fear

Before not dreamt of.

5 HOT. You strain too far.

I rather of his absence make this use:

It lends a lustre and more great opinion,

A larger dare to our great enterprise,

Than if the Earl were here; for men must

10 think,

If we, without his help, can make a head

To push against a kingdom, with his help

We shall o'erturn it topsy-turvy down.

Yet all goes well; yet all our joints are whole.

15 DOUG. As heart can think. There is not such
a word

Spoke of in Scotland as this term of fear.

Enter SIR RICHARD VERNON

20 HOT. My cousin Vernon! welcome, by my
soul.

VER. Pray God my news be worth a welcome,
lord.

The Earl of Westmoreland, seven thousand

25 strong,

Is marching hitherwards; with him Prince

John.

HOT. No harm. What more?

VER. And further, I have learn'd

30 The King himself in person is set forth,

Or hitherwards intended speedily,

With strong and mighty preparation.

HOT. He shall be welcome too. Where is his

son,

35 The nimble-footed madcap Prince of Wales,

And his comrades, that daff'd¹²² the world

aside

And bid it pass?

VER. All furnish'd, all in arms;

40 All plum'd like estridges¹²³ that with the wind

Bated¹²⁴ like eagles having lately bath'd;

Glittering in golden coats like images;

As full of spirit as the month of May

And gorgeous as the sun at midsummer;

45 Wanton as youthful goats, wild as young bulls.

I saw young Harry with his beaver¹²⁵ on,

His cushes¹²⁶ on his thighs, gallantly arm'd,

Rise from the ground like feathered Mercury,

And vaulted with such ease into his seat

50 ¹²² pushed.

¹²⁴ flapped.

¹²⁶ armor.

¹²³ ostriches.

¹²⁵ helmet.

As if an angel dropp'd down from the clouds
To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus
And witch the world with noble horsemanship.

HOT. No more, no more! Worse than the sun
in March,

This praise doth nourish agues. Let them come.
They come like sacrifices in their trim,
And to the fire-ey'd maid of smoky war¹²⁷
All hot and bleeding will we offer them.
The mailed Mars shall on his altar sit
Up to the ears in blood. I am on fire
To hear this rich reprisal is so nigh,
And yet not ours. Come, let me taste my
horse,

Who is to bear me like a thunderbolt
Against the bosom of the Prince of Wales.
Harry to Harry shall, hot horse to horse,
Meet, and ne'er part till one drop down a
corse.

O that Glendower were come!

VER. There is more news.
I learn'd in Worcester, as I rode along,
He cannot draw his power this fourteen days.

DOUG. That's the worst tidings that I hear
of yet.

WOR. Ay, by my faith, that bears a frosty
sound.

HOT. What may the King's whole battle
reach unto?

VER. To thirty thousand.

HOT. Forty let it be.
My father and Glendower being both away,
The powers of us may serve so great a day.
Come, let us take a muster speedily.
Doomsday is near. Die all, die merrily.

DOUG. Talk not of dying, I am out of fear
Of death or death's hand for this one half-year.
[*exunt*]

SCENE II.

A public road near Coventry

Enter FALSTAFF and BARDOLPH

FAL. Bardolph, get thee before to Coventry; 45
fill me a bottle of sack. Our soldiers shall
march through. We'll to Sutton Co'fil¹²⁸ to-
night.

BARD. Will you give me money, Captain?

FAL. Lay out, lay out.

BARD. This bottle makes an angel.¹²⁹

FAL. An if it do, take it for thy labour, an if
it make twenty, take them all, I'll answer the
5 coinage. Bid my lieutenant Peto meet me at
town's end.

BARD. I will, Captain. Farewell. [*exit*]

FAL. If I be not ashamed of my soldiers, I
am a sous'd gurnet.¹³⁰ I have misused the
10 King's press damnably. I have got, in exchange
of a hundred and fifty soldiers, three hundred
and odd pounds. I press me none but good
householders, yeomen's sons; inquire me out
contracted bachelors, such as had been ask'd
15 twice on the banes¹³¹—such a commodity of
warm slaves as had as lieve hear the devil as a
drum; such as fear the report of a caliver worse
than a struck fowl or a hunt wild duck. I press'd
me none but such toasts-and-butter, with
20 hearts in their bellies no bigger than pins'
heads, and they have bought out their serv-
ices; and now my whole charge consists of
ancients, corporals, lieutenants, gentlemen of
companies—slaves as ragged as Lazarus in the
25 painted cloth, where the glutton's dogs licked
his sores; and such as indeed were never
soldiers, but discarded unjust serving-men,
younger sons to younger brothers, revolted
tapsters, and ostlers trade-fall'n; the cankers of
30 a calm world and a long peace; ten times more
dishonourable ragged than an old fac'd an-
cient; and such have I to fill up the rooms of
them that have bought out their services that
you would think that I had a hundred and fifty
35 tattered Prodigals lately come from swine-
keeping, from eating draff¹³² and husks. A mad
fellow met me on the way, and told me I had
unloaded all the gibbets and press'd the dead
bodies. No eye hath seen such scarecrows. I'll
40 not march through Coventry with them, that's
flat. Nay, and the villains march wide betwixt
the legs, as if they had gyves¹³³ on; for indeed
I had the most of them out of prison. There's
but a shirt and a half in all my company; and
the half-shirt is two napkins tack'd together
and thrown over the shoulders like a herald's
coat without sleeves; and the shirt, to say the
truth, stol'n from my host at Saint Alban's, or
the red-nose innkeeper of Daventry. But that's

¹²⁷ Bellona, goddess of war.

¹²⁸ Sutton Coldfield, near Coventry.

¹²⁹ I owe an angel, a coin worth 10 shillings.

¹³⁰ pickled fish.

¹³² swill.

¹³¹ banns.

¹³³ fetters.

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all one; they'll find linen enough on every hedge.

Enter the PRINCE and the LORD OF WEST-MORELAND

PRINCE. How now, blown Jack? How now, quilt?

FAL. What, Hal? How now, mad wag? What a devil dost thou in Warwickshire? My good Lord of Westmoreland, I cry you mercy. I thought your honour had already been at Shrewsbury.

WEST. Faith, Sir John, 'tis more than time that I were there, and you too; but my powers are there already. The King, I can tell you, looks for us all. We must away all, to-night.

FAL. Tut, never fear me. I am as vigilant as a cat to steal cream.

PRINCE. I think, to steal cream indeed, for thy theft hath already made thee butter. But tell me, Jack, whose fellows are these that come after?

FAL. Mine, Hal, mine.

PRINCE. I did never see such pitiful rascals.

FAL. Tut, tut! good enough to toss; food for powder, food for powder. They'll fill a pit as well as better. Tush, man, mortal men, mortal men.

WEST. Ay, but, Sir John, methinks they are exceeding poor and bare—too beggarly.

FAL. Faith, for their poverty, I know not where they had that; and for their bareness, I am sure they never learn'd that of me.

PRINCE. No, I'll be sworn, unless you call three fingers on the ribs bare. But, sirrah, make haste. Percy is already in the field. *[exit]*

FAL. What, is the King encamp'd?

WEST. He is, Sir John. I fear we shall stay too long. *[exit]*

FAL. Well, To the latter end of a fray and the beginning of a feast

Fits a dull fighter and a keen guest. *[exit]*

SCENE III.

The rebel camp near Shrewsbury

Enter HOTSPUR, WORCESTER, DOUGLAS, VERNON

HOT. We'll fight with him to-night.

WOR. It may not be.

DOUG. You give him then advantage.

VER. Not a whit.

HOT. Why say you so? Looks he not for supply?

VER. So do we.

5 HOT. His is certain, ours is doubtful.

WOR. Good cousin, be advis'd; stir not to-night.

VER. Do not, my lord.

DOUG. You do not counsel well.

10 You speak it out of fear and cold heart.

VER. Do me no slander, Douglas. By my life—

And I dare well maintain it with my life—

If well-respected honour bid me on,

15 I hold as little counsel with weak fear

As you, my lord, or any Scot that this day lives.

Let it be seen to-morrow in the battle

Which of us fears.

DOUG. Yea, or to-night.

20 VER. Content.

HOT. To-night, say I.

VER. Come, come, it may not be. I wonder much,

Being men of such great leading as you are,

25 That you foresee not what impediments

Drag back our expedition. Certain horse

Of my cousin Vernon's are not yet come up.

Your uncle Worcester's horse came but to-day;

And now their pride and mettle is asleep,

30 Their courage with hard labour tame and dull,

That not a horse is half the half of himself.

HOT. So are the horses of the enemy,

In general journey-bated and brought low.

The better part of ours are full of rest.

35 WOR. The number of the King exceedeth ours.

For God's sake, cousin, stay till all come in.

[the trumpet sounds a parley]

Enter SIR WALTER BLUNT

40 BLUNT. I come with gracious offers from the King,

If you vouchsafe me hearing and respect.

HOT. Welcome, Sir Walter Blunt, and would to God

45 You were of our determination!

Some of us love you well; and even those some

Envy your great deservings and good name,

Because you are not of our quality,

50 But stand against us like an enemy.

BLUNT. And God defend but still I should stand so,

So long as out of limit and true rule
 You stand against anointed majesty!
 But to my charge. The King hath sent to know
 The nature of your griefs; and whereupon
 You conjure from the breast of civil peace
 Such bold hostility, teaching his duteous land
 Audacious cruelty. If that the King
 Have any way your good deserts forgot,
 Which he confesseth to be manifold,
 He bids you name your griefs, and with all *10*
 speed
 You shall have your desires with interest,
 And pardon absolute for yourself and these
 Herein misled by your suggestion.
HOT. The King is kind, and well we know *15*
 the King
 Knows at what time to promise, when to pay.
 My father and my uncle and myself
 Did give him that same royalty he wears,
 And when he was not six-and-twenty strong, *20*
 Sick in the world's regard, wretched and low,
 A poor unminded outlaw sneaking home,
 My father gave him welcome to the shore;
 And when he heard him swear and vow to
 God
 He came but to be Duke of Lancaster,
 To sue his livery¹³⁴ and beg his peace,
 With tears of innocency and terms of zeal,
 My father, in kind heart and pity mov'd,
 Swore him assistance, and perform'd it too. *30*
 Now when the lords and barons of the realm
 Perceiv'd Northumberland did lean to him,
 The more and less came in with cap and knee;
 Met him in boroughs, cities, villages,
 Attended him on bridges, stood in lanes, *35*
 Laid gifts before him, proffer'd him their oaths,
 Gave him their heirs as pages, followed him
 Even at the heels in golden multitudes.
 He presently, as greatness knows itself,
 Steps me a little higher than his vow *40*
 Made to my father, while his blood was poor,
 Upon the naked shore at Ravenspurgh;
 And now, forsooth, takes on him to reform
 Some certain edicts and some strait decrees
 That lie too heavy on the commonwealth; *45*
 Cries out upon abuses, seems to weep
 Over his country's wrongs; and by this face,
 This seeming brow of justice, did he win
 The hearts of all that he did angle for;
 Proceeded further—cut me off the heads

Of all the favourites that the absent King
 In deputation left behind him here
 When he was personal in the Irish war.
BLUNT. Tut! I came not to hear this.
5 *HOT.* Then to the point.
 In short time after he depos'd the King;
 Soon after that depriv'd him of his life,
 And in the neck of that task'd¹³⁵ the whole
 state;
 To make that worse, suff'ring his kinsman
 March
 (Who is, if every owner were well plac'd,
 Indeed his king) to be engag'd in Wales,
 There without ransom to lie forfeited,
 Disgrac'd me in my happy victories,
 Sought to entrap me by intelligence,
 Rated mine uncle from the Council board,
 In rage dismiss'd my father from the court,
 Broke oath on oath, committed wrong on
 wrong; *20*
 And in conclusion drove us to seek out
 This head of safety, and withal to pry
 Into his title, the which we find
 Too indirect for long continuance.
25 *BLUNT.* Shall I return this answer to the
 King?
HOT. Not so, Sir Walter. We'll withdraw
 awhile.
 Go to the King; and let there be impawn'd
30 Some surety for a safe return again,
 And in the morning early shall mine uncle
 Bring him our purposes, and so farewell.
BLUNT. I would you would accept of grace
 and love.
35 *HOT.* And may be so we shall.
BLUNT. Pray God you do.
[exeunt]

SCENE IV.

York. The Archbishop's palace

*Enter the ARCHBISHOP OF YORK and SIR
 MICHAEL*

ARCH. Hie, good Sir Michael; bear this
 sealed brief
 With winged haste to the Lord Marshal;
 This to my cousin Scroop; and all the rest
50 To whom they are directed. If you knew

¹³⁴ to make legal claim to his inheritance.

¹³⁵ taxed.

How much they do import, you would make
haste.

SIR M. My good lord,
I guess their tenour.

ARCH. Like enough you do. 5
To-morrow, good Sir Michael, is a day
Wherein the fortune of ten thousand men
Must bide the touch;¹³⁶ for, sir, at Shrewsbury,
As I am truly given to understand,
The King with mighty and quick-raised power 10
Meets with Lord Harry; and I fear, Sir
Michael,

What with the sickness of Northumberland,
Whose power was in the first proportion,
And what with Owen Glendower's absence 15
thence,

Who with them was a rated sinew too
And comes not in, overrul'd by prophecies—
I fear the power of Percy is too weak
To wage an instant trial with the King. 20

SIR M. Why, my good lord, you need not
fear;

There is Douglas and Lord Mortimer.

ARCH. No, Mortimer is not there.

SIR M. But there is Mordake, Vernon, Lord 25
Harry Percy,

And there is my Lord of Worcester, and a head
Of gallant warriors, noble gentlemen.

ARCH. And so there is; but yet the King hath
drawn

The special head of all the land together—
The Prince of Wales, Lord John of Lancaster,
The noble Westmoreland and warlike Blunt,
And many moe corrivals and dear men¹³⁷
Of estimation and command in arms.

SIR M. Doubt not, my lord, they shall be well
oppos'd.

ARCH. I hope no less, yet needful 'tis to
fear;

And, to prevent the worst, Sir Michael, speed. 40
For if Lord Percy thrive not, ere the King
Dismiss his power, he means to visit us,
For he hath heard of our confederacy,
And 'tis but wisdom to make strong against
him. 45

Therefore make haste. I must go write again
To other friends; and so farewell, Sir Michael.
[*exeunt*]

¹³⁶ must be tested.

¹³⁷ And many more companions and valuable
men.

ACT V

SCENE I.

The King's camp near Shrewsbury

*Enter the KING, PRINCE OF WALES, LORD JOHN
OF LANCASTER, SIR WALTER BLUNT, FALSTAFF*

KING. How bloodily the sun begins to peer
Above yon busky¹³⁸ hill! The day looks pale
At his distemp'rature.¹³⁹

PRINCE. The southern wind
Doth play the trumpet to his purposes
And by his hollow whistling in the leaves
Foretells a tempest and a blust'ring day. 15

KING. Then with the losers let it sympathize,
For nothing can seem foul to those that win.
[*the trumpet sounds*]

Enter WORCESTER [and VERNON]

How now, my Lord of Worcester? 'Tis not well
That you and I should meet upon such terms
As now we meet. You have deceiv'd our trust
And made us doff our easy robes of peace
To crush our old limbs in ungentle steel. 25

This is not well, my lord; this is not well.
What say you to it? Will you again unknit
This churlish knot of all-aborred war,
And move in that obedient orb again

30 Where you did give a fair and natural light,
And be no more an exhal'd meteor,
A prodigy of fear, and a portent
Of broached mischief to the unborn times?
WOR. Hear me, my liege.

35 For mine own part, I could be well content
To entertain the lag-end of my life
With quiet hours; for I do protest

I have not sought the day of this dislike.

KING. You have not sought it! How comes it
then?

FAL. Rebellion lay in his way, and he
found it.

PRINCE. Peace, chewet,¹⁴⁰ peace!

WOR. It pleas'd your Majesty to turn your
looks

45 Of favour from myself and all our house;
And yet I must remember you, my lord,
We were the first and dearest of your friends.
For you my staff of office did I break

¹³⁸ bushy.

¹⁴⁰ jackdaw.

¹³⁹ unusual appearance.

In Richard's time, and posted day and night
To meet you on the way and kiss your hand
When yet you were in place and in account
Nothing so strong and fortunate as I.

It was myself, my brother, and his son
That brought you home and boldly did
outdare

The dangers of the time. You swore to us,
And you did swear that oath at Doncaster,
That you did nothing purpose 'gainst the state
Nor claim no further than your new-fall'n
right,

The seat of Gaunt, dukedom of Lancaster.
To this we swore our aid. But in short space
It rain'd down fortune show'ring on your
head,

And such a flood of greatness fell on you—
What with our help, what with the absent
King,

What with the injuries of a wanton time,
The seeming sufferances that you had borne,
And the contrarious winds that held the King
So long in his unlucky Irish wars
That all in England did repute him dead—

And from this swarm of fair advantages
You took occasion to be quickly woo'd
To gripe the general sway into your hand;
Forgot your oath to us at Doncaster;
And, being fed by us, you us'd us so
As that ungentle gull, the cuckoo's bird,
Useth the sparrow—did oppress our nest;
Grew by our feeding to so great a bulk
That even our love durst not come near your
sight

For fear of swallowing; but with nimble wing
We were enforc'd for safety sake to fly
Out of your sight and raise this present head;
Whereby we stand opposed by such means
As you yourself have forg'd against yourself
By unkind usage, dangerous countenance,
And violation of all faith and troth
Sworn to us in your younger enterprise.

KING. These things, indeed, you have articu-
late,

Proclaim'd at market crosses, read in churches.
To face the garment of rebellion
With some fine colour that may please the eye
Of fickle changelings and poor discontents,
Which gape and rub the elbow at the news
Of hurlyburly innovation.
And never yet did insurrection want
Such water colours to impaint his cause,

Nor moody beggars, starving for a time
Of pell-mell havoc and confusion.

PRINCE. In both our armies there is many a
soul

5 Shall pay full dearly for this encounter,
If once they join in trial. Tell your nephew
The Prince of Wales doth join with all the
world

In praise of Henry Percy. By my hopes,
10 This present enterprise set off his head,
I do not think a braver gentleman,
More active-valiant or more valiant-young,
More daring or more bold, is now alive
To grace this latter age with noble deeds.

15 For my part, I may speak it to my shame,
I have a truant been to chivalry,
And so I hear he doth account me too.
Yet this before my father's Majesty—
I am content that he shall take the odds

20 Of his great name and estimation,
And will, to save the blood on either side,
Try fortune with him in a single fight.

KING. And, Prince of Wales, so dare we ven-
ture thee,

25 Albeit considerations infinite
Do make against it. No, good Worcester, no!
We love our people well; even those we love
That are misled upon your cousin's part,
And, will they take the offer of our grace,

30 Both he, and they, and you, yea, every man
Shall be my friend again, and I'll be his.
So tell your cousin, and bring me word
What he will do. But if he will not yield,
Rebuke and dread correction wait on us,
35 And they shall do their office. So be gone.
We will not now be troubled with reply.
We offer fair; take it advisedly.

exit WORCESTER [with VERNON]

PRINCE. It will not be accepted, on my life.

40 The Douglas and the Hotspur both together
Are confident against the world in arms.

KING. Hence, therefore, every leader to his
charge;

For, on their answer, will we set on them,
45 And God befriend us as our cause is just!

[exeunt; manent PRINCE, FALSTAFF]

FAL. Hal, if thou see me down in the battle
and bestride me, so 'Tis a point of friendship.

PRINCE. Nothing but a Colossus can do thee
50 that friendship. Say thy prayers, and farewell.

FAL. I would 'twere bedtime, Hal, and all
well.

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PRINCE. Why, thou owest God a death.

[*exit*]

FAL. 'Tis not due yet. I would be loath to pay him before his day. What need I be so forward with him that calls not on me? Well, 'tis no matter; honour pricks me on. Yea, but how if honour prick me off when I come on? How then? Can honour set to a leg? No. Or an arm? No. Or take away the grief of a wound? No. Honour hath no skill in surgery then? No. What is honour? A word. What is that word honour? Air. A trim reckoning! Who hath it? He that died a Wednesday. Doth he feel it? No. Doth he hear it? No. 'Tis insensible then? Yea, to the dead. But will it not live with the living? No. Why? Detraction will not suffer it. Therefore I'll none of it. Honour is a mere scutcheon—and so ends my catechism. [*exit*]

SCENE II.

The rebel camp

Enter WORCESTER and SIR RICHARD VERNON

WOR. O no, my nephew must not know, Sir Richard,

The liberal and kind offer of the King.

VER. 'Twere best he did.

WOR. Then are we all undone. It is not possible, it cannot be, The King should keep his word in loving us. He will suspect us still and find a time To punish this offence in other faults. Suspicion all our lives shall be stuck full of eyes;

For treason is but trusted like the fox, Who, ne'er so tame, so cherish'd and lock'd up, Will have a wild trick of his ancestors.

Look how we can, or sad or merrily, Interpretation will misquote our looks, And we shall feed like oxen at a stall, The better cherish'd, still the nearer death.

My nephew's trespass may be well forgot; It hath the excuse of youth and heat of blood, And an adopted name of privilege—

A hare-brain'd Hotspur, govern'd by a spleen. All his offences live upon my head

And on his father's. We did train him on;

And, his corruption being ta'en from us,

We, as the spring of all, shall pay for all.

Therefore, good cousin, let not Harry know, In any case, the offer of the King.

Enter HOTSPUR [and DOUGLAS]

5 VER. Deliver what you will, I'll say 'tis so. Here comes your cousin.

HOT. My uncle is return'd.

Deliver up my Lord of Westmoreland.

Uncle, what news?

10 WOR. The King will bid you battle presently.

DOUG. Defy him by the Lord of Westmoreland.

HOT. Lord Douglas, go you and tell him so.

DOUG. Marry, and shall, and very willingly.

[*exit*]

WOR. There is no seeming mercy in the King.

HOT. Did you beg any? God forbid!

WOR. I told him gently of our grievances, Of his oath-breaking; which he mended thus,

20 By now forswearing that he is forsworn.

He calls us rebels, traitors, and will scourge With haughty arms this hateful name in us.

Enter DOUGLAS

25 DOUG. Arm, gentlemen! to arms! for I have thrown

A brave defiance in King Henry's teeth,

And Westmoreland, that was engag'd,¹⁴¹ did bear it;

30 Which cannot choose but bring him quickly on.

WOR. The Prince of Wales stepp'd forth before the King

And, nephew, challeng'd you to single fight.

35 HOT. O, would the quarrel lay upon our heads,

And that no man might draw short breath to-day

But I and Harry Monmouth! Tell me, tell me,

40 How show'd his tasking?¹⁴² Seem'd it in contempt?

VER. No, by my soul. I never in my life

Did hear a challenge urg'd more modestly,

Unless a brother should a brother dare

To gentle exercise and proof of arms.

He gave you all the duties of a man;

Trimm'd up your praises with a princely tongue;

Spoke your deservings like a chronicle;

50 ———

¹⁴¹ held as hostage.

¹⁴² challenge

Making you ever better than his praise
By still dispraising praise valued with you;
And, which became him like a prince indeed,
He made a blushing cital¹⁴³ of himself,
And chid his truant youth with such a grace
As if he mast'ed there a double spirit
Of teaching and of learning instantly.
There did he pause; but let me tell the world,
If he outlive the envy of this day,
England did never owe¹⁴⁴ so sweet a hope,
So much misconstrued in his wantonness.

HOT. Cousin, I think thou art enamoured
Upon his follies. Never did I hear
Of any prince so wild a libertine.
But be he as he will, yet once ere night
I will embrace him with a soldier's arm,
That he shall shrink under my courtesy.
Arm, arm with speed! and, fellows, soldiers,
friends,
Better consider what you have to do
Than I, that have not well the gift of tongue,
Can lift your blood up with persuasion.

Enter a MESSENGER

MESS. My lord, here are letters for you.

HOT. I cannot read them now.—
O gentlemen, the time of life is short!
To spend that shortness basely were too long
If life did ride upon a dial's point,
Still ending at the arrival of an hour.
An if we live, we live to tread on kings;
If die, brave death, when princes die with us!
Now for our consciences, the arms are fair,
When the intent of bearing them is just.

Enter another MESSENGER

MESS. My lord, prepare. The King comes on
apace.

HOT. I thank him that he cuts me from my
tale,
For I profess not talking. Only this—
Let each man do his best; and here draw I
A sword whose temper I intend to stain
With the best blood that I can meet withal
In the adventure of this perilous day.
Now, Esperance! Percy! and set on.
Sound all the lofty instruments of war,
And by that music let us all embrace;
For, heaven to earth, some of us never shall
A second time do such a courtesy.

¹⁴³ recital.

¹⁴⁴ own.

*Here they embrace. The trumpets sound
[exit]*

SCENE III.

Plain between the camps

*The KING enters with his Power. Alarm to
the battle. Then enter DOUGLAS and SIR
WALTER BLUNT*

BLUNT. What is thy name, that in the battle
thus

Thou crossest me? What honour dost thou seek
Upon my head?

DOUG. Know then my name is Douglas,
And I do haunt thee in the battle thus
Because some tell me that thou art a king.

BLUNT. They tell thee true.

DOUG. The Lord of Stafford dear to-day hath
bought

Thy likeness, for instead of thee, King Harry,
This sword hath ended him. So shall it thee,
Unless thou yield thee as my prisoner.

BLUNT. I was not born a yielder, thou proud
Scot;

And thou shalt find a king that will revenge
Lord Stafford's death.

They fight. DOUGLAS kills BLUNT

Then enter HOTSPUR

HOT. O Douglas, hadst thou fought at Holme-
don thus,

I never had triumph'd upon a Scot.

DOUG. All's done, all's won. Here breathless
lies the King.

HOT. Where?

DOUG. Here.

HOT. This, Douglas? No. I know this face
full well.

A gallant knight he was, his name was Blunt;
Semblably furnish'd like the King himself.

DOUG. A fool go with thy soul, whither it
goes!

A borrowed title hast thou bought too dear:

Why didst thou tell me that thou wert a king?
HOT. The King hath many marching in his
coats.

DOUG. Now, by my sword, I will kill all his
coats;

I'll murder all his wardrop, piece by piece,
Until I meet the King.

THE DRAMA · WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

HOT.
Up and away!
Our soldiers stand full fairly for the day.
[*exeunt*]

Alarum. Enter FALSTAFF solus

FAL. Though I could scape shot-free at London, I fear the shot here. Here's no scoring but upon the pate. Soft! who are you? Sir Walter Blunt. There's honour for you! Here's no vanity! I am as hot as molten lead, and as heavy too. God keep lead out of me! I need no more weight than mine own bowels. I have led my rag-of-muffins where they are pepper'd. There's not three of my hundred and fifty left alive; and they are for the town's end, to beg 15 during life. But who comes here?

Enter the PRINCE

PRINCE. What, stand'st thou idle here? Lend me thy sword.
Many a nobleman lies stark and stiff
Under the hoofs of vaunting enemies,
Whose deaths are yet unreveng'd. I prithee
Lend me thy sword.

FAL. O Hal, I prithee give me leave to 25 breathe awhile. Turk Gregory¹⁴⁵ never did such deeds in arms as I have done this day. I have paid Percy; I have made him sure.

PRINCE. He is indeed, and living to kill thee. I prithee lend me thy sword.

FAL. Nay, before God, Hal, if Percy be alive, thou get'st not my sword; but take my pistol, if thou wilt.

PRINCE. Give it me. What, is it in the case?

FAL. Ay, Hal. 'Tis hot, 'tis hot. There's that 35 will sack a city. [*the PRINCE draws it out and finds it to be a bottle of sack*]

PRINCE. What, is it a time to jest and dally now? [*he throws the bottle at him; exit*]

FAL. Well, if Percy be alive, I'll pierce him. 40 If he do come in my way, so; if he do not, if I come in his willingly, let him make a carbonado¹⁴⁶ of me. I like not such grinning honour as Sir Walter hath. Give me life; which if I can save, so; if not, honour comes unlook'd for, 45 and there's an end. [*exit*]

¹⁴⁵ Pope Gregory VII, a former militant friar, had a reputation among Protestants for being ferocious.

¹⁴⁶ meat pounded and slashed for tenderness in broiling.

SCENE IV.

Another part of the field

Alarum. Excursions. Enter the KING, the PRINCE, LORD JOHN OF LANCASTER, EARL OF WESTMORELAND

KING. I prithee,
Harry, withdraw thyself; thou bleedest too much.

Lord John of Lancaster, go you with him.

JOHN. Not I, my lord, unless I did bleed too.

PRINCE. I do beseech your Majesty make up. Lest your retirement do amaze your friends.

KING. I will do so.

My Lord of Westmoreland, lead him to his tent.

WEST. Come, my lord, I'll lead you to your tent.

20 PRINCE. Lead me, my lord? I do not need your help;

And God forbid a shallow scratch should drive The Prince of Wales from such a field as this. Where stain'd nobility lies trodden on,

And rebels' arms triumph in massacres!

JOHN. We breathe too long. Come, cousin Westmoreland,

Our duty this way lies. For God's sake, come.

[*exeunt PRINCE JOHN and WESTMORELAND*]

30 PRINCE. By God, thou hast deceiv'd me, Lancaster!

I did not think thee lord of such a spirit.

Before, I lov'd thee as a brother, John;

35 But now, I do respect thee as my soul.

KING. I saw him hold Lord Percy at the point

With lustier maintenance than I did look for Of such an ungrown warrior.

PRINCE. O, this boy 40 Lends mettle to us all! [*exit*]

Enter DOUGLAS

DOUG. Another king? They grow like Hydra's heads.¹⁴⁷

I am the Douglas, fatal to all those

That wear those colours on them. What art thou

That counterfeit'st the person of a king?

50 _____
¹⁴⁷ a nine-headed monster killed by Hercules; if one head was lopped off, two grew in its place.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE · THE DRAMA

KING. The King himself, who, Douglas,
grieves at heart
So many of his shadows thou hast met,
And not the very King. I have two boys
Seek Percy and thyself about the field;
But, seeing thou fall'st on me so luckily,
I will assay thee. So defend thyself.

DOUG. I fear thou art another counterfeit;
And yet, in faith, thou bearest thee like a king.
But mine I am sure thou art, whoe'er thou be, 10
And thus I win thee.

*They fight. The KING being in danger,
enter PRINCE OF WALES*

PRINCE. Hold up thy head, vile Scot, or thou 15
art like
Never to hold it up again! The spirits
Of valiant Shirley, Stafford, Blunt are in my
arms.

It is the Prince of Wales that threatens thee, 20
Who never promiseth but he means to pay.

[they fight: DOUGLAS fleeth]

Cheerly, my lord. How fares your Grace?
Sir Nicholas Gawsey hath for succour sent,
And so hath Clifton. I'll to Clifton straight. 25

KING. Stay and breathe awhile
Thou hast redeem'd thy lost opinion,
And show'd thou mak'st some tender of my life,
In this fair rescue thou hast brought to me.

PRINCE. O God! they did me too much
injury

That ever said I heark'ned for your death.
If it were so, I might have let alone
The insulting hand of Douglas over you,
Which would have been as speedy in your end 35
As all the poisonous potions in the world,
And sav'd the treacherous labour of your son.

KING. Make up to Clifton; I'll to Sir Nicholas
Gawsey. *[exit]*

Enter HOTSPUR

HOT. If I mistake not, thou art Harry Mon-
mouth.

PRINCE. Thou speak'st as if I would deny
my name.

HOT. My name is Harry Percy.

PRINCE. Why, then I see
A very valiant rebel of the name.

I am the Prince of Wales; and think not, Percy,
To share with me in glory any more.

Two stars keep not their motion in one sphere,
Nor can one England brook a double reign

Of Harry Percy and the Prince of Wales

HOT. Nor shall it, Harry; for the hour is
come

To end the one of us; and would to God
5 Thy name in arms were now as great as mine!

PRINCE. I'll make it greater ere I part from
thee,

And all the budding honours on thy crest

I'll crop to make a garland for my head.

HOT. I can no longer brook thy vanities
[they fight]

Enter FALSTAFF

FAL. Well said, Hal! to it, Hal! Nay, you
shall find no boy's play here. I can tell you.

*Enter DOUGLAS. He fighteth with FAL-
STAFF, who falls down as if he were
dead [exit DOUGLAS]*

The PRINCE killeth PERCY

HOT. O Harry, thou hast robb'd me of my
youth!

I better brook the loss of brittle life
Than those proud titles thou hast won of me.

They wound my thoughts worse than thy
sword my flesh.

But thoughts, the slaves of life, and life, time's
fool,

And time, that takes survey of all the world,
30 Must have a stop. O, I could prophesy,

But that the earthy and cold hand of death
Lies on my tongue. No, Percy, thou art dust,
And food for— *[dies]*

PRINCE. For worms, brave Percy. Fare thee
well, great heart!

Ill-weav'd ambition, how much art thou
shrunk!

When that this body did contain a spirit,
A kingdom for it was too small a bound;

40 But now two paces of the vilest earth
Is room enough. This earth that bears thee
dead

Bears not alive so stout a gentleman.

If thou wert sensible of courtesy,

45 I should not make so dear a show of zeal.

But let my favours hide thy mangled face;

And, even in thy behalf, I'll thank myself

For doing these fair rites of tenderness.

Adieu, and take thy praise with thee to

50 heaven!

Thy ignominy sleep with thee in the grave,

But not rememb'ed in thy epitaph! *[he spieth]*

FALSTAFF *on the ground*]

What, old acquaintance? Could not all this
flesh

Keep in a little life? Poor Jack, farewell!

I could have better spar'd a better man.

O, I should have a heavy miss of thee

If I were much in love with vanity!

Death hath not struck so fat a deer to-day,

Though many dearer, in this bloody fray.

Embowell'd will I see thee by-and-by;

Till then in blood by noble Percy lie. *[exit]*

FALSTAFF *riseth up*

FAL. Embowell'd? If thou embowell me to-
day, I'll give you leave to powder me and
eat me too to-morrow. 'Sblood, 'twas time to
counterfeit, or that hot termagant Scot had
paid me scot and lot too. Counterfeit? I lie;
I am no counterfeit. To die is to be a counter-
feit; for he is but the counterfeit of a man
who hath not the life of a man; but to coun-
terfeit dying when a man thereby liveth, is to
be no counterfeit, but the true and perfect
image of life indeed. The better part of valour
is discretion; in the which better part I have
saved my life. Zounds, I am afraid of this
gunpowder Percy, though he be dead. How
if he should counterfeit too, and rise? By my
faith, I am afraid he would prove the better
counterfeit. Therefore I'll make him sure; yea,
and I'll swear I kill'd him. Why may not he
rise as well as I? Nothing confutes me but eyes,
and nobody sees me. Therefore, sirrah *[stabs
him]*, with a new wound in your thigh, come
you along with me.

He takes up HOTSPUR on his back. Enter

PRINCE, and JOHN OF LANCASTER

PRINCE. Come, brother John; full bravely
hast thou flesh'd
Thy maiden sword.

JOHN. But, soft! whom have we here?
Did you not tell me this fat man was dead?

PRINCE. I did; I saw him dead,
Breathless and bleeding on the ground. Art
thou alive,

Or is it fantasy that plays upon our eyesight?
I prithee speak. We will not trust our eyes
Without our ears. Thou art not what thou
seem'st.

FAL. No, that's certain! I am not a double
man; but if I be not Jack Falstaff, then am

I a Jack. There is Percy. If your father will do
me any honour, so; if not, let him kill the
next Percy himself. I look to be either earl or
duke, I can assure you.

5 PRINCE. Why, Percy I kill'd myself, and saw
thee dead!

FAL. Didst thou? Lord, Lord, how this
world is given to lying! I grant you I was
down, and out of breath, and so was he; but
10 we rose both at an instant and fought a long
hour by Shrewsbury clock. If I may be be-
liev'd, so; if not, let them that should reward
valour bear the sin upon their own heads. I'll
take it upon my death, I gave him this wound
15 in the thigh. If the man were alive and would
deny it, zounds! I would make him eat a
piece of my sword.

JOHN. This is the strangest tale that ever I
heard.

20 PRINCE. This is the strangest fellow, brother
John.

Come, bring your luggage nobly on your back.
For my part, if a lie may do thee grace,
I'll gild it with the happiest terms I have.

[a retreat is sounded]

The trumpet sounds retreat; the day is ours.
Come, brother, let's to the highest of the field,
To see what friends are living, who are dead.

Exeunt [PRINCE HENRY and PRINCE JOHN]

30 FAL. I'll follow, as they say, for reward. He
that rewards me, God reward him! If I do
grow great, I'll grow less; for I'll purge, and
leave sack, and live cleanly, as a nobleman
should do *Exit [bearing off the body]*

35

SCENE V.

Another part of the field

*The trumpets sound. Enter the KING,
PRINCE OF WALES, LORD JOHN OF
LANCASTER, EARL OF WESTMORE-
LAND, with WORCESTER and VER-
NON prisoners*

KING. Thus ever did rebellion find rebuke.
Ill-spirited Worcester! did not we send grace,
Pardon, and terms of love to all of you?
And wouldst thou turn our offers contrary?
Misuse the honour of thy kinsman's trust?

50 Three knights upon our party slain to-day,
A noble earl, and many a creature else
Had been alive this hour,

If like a Christian thou hadst truly borne
Betwixt our armies true intelligence.

WOR. What I have done my safety urg'd me
to;

And I embrace this fortune patiently,
Since not to be avoided it falls on me.

KING. Bear Worcester to the death, and Ver-
non too;

Other offenders we will pause upon.

Exeunt WORCESTER and VERNON [guarded] 10

How goes the field?

PRINCE. The noble Scot, Lord Douglas, when
he saw

The fortune of the day quite turn'd from him,
The noble Percy slain, and all his men
Upon the foot of fear, fled with the rest;
And falling from a hill, he was so bruise'd
That the pursuers took him. At my tent
The Douglas is, and I beseech your Grace
I may dispose of him.

KING. With all my heart.

PRINCE. Then, brother John of Lancaster, to
you

This honourable bounty shall belong.

Go to the Douglas and deliver him

Up to his pleasure, ransomless and free.

His valour shown upon our crests to-day

Hath taught us how to cherish such high deeds,

5 Even in the bosom of our adversaries.

JOHN. I thank your Grace for this high cour-
tesy,

Which I shall give away immediately.

KING. Then this remains, that we divide our
power. 10

You, son John, and my cousin Westmoreland,
Towards York shall bend you with your dearest

speed

To meet Northumberland and the prelate

15 Scroop,

Who, as we hear, are busily in arms.

Myself and you, son Harry, will towards Wales

To fight with Glendower and the Earl of
March

20 Rebellion in this land shall lose his sway,

Meeting the check of such another day;

And since this business so fair is done,

Let us not leave till all our own be won.

[exeunt]

THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL*

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN

*Sheridan (1751–1816) was born to the theater, his father having been an actor and writer. He met his future wife at Bath, where his father had opened a school of oratory, and, in a romantic courtship marked by duels and a quick trip to France, won her hand. Needing money, he turned to writing plays, of which the two comedies, *The Rivals* (1775) and *The**

School for Scandal (1777), are the best known. As writer, theater manager, and man-about-town Sheridan achieved great popularity and was nominated for membership in *The Club* by Dr. Johnson himself. His place in the theater has been discussed in the introduction to drama, I, 399.

In 1780 Sheridan entered Parliament and remained in public service thereafter. He was prominent in the Warren Hastings case and held a high post as Treasurer of the Navy.

* The Hanson Webster text of this play is here reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Company, publishers.

THE DRAMA · RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN

Dogged by debt and disease he finally finished a useful life and was honored by a public funeral and eulogistic testimony from many prominent men who had admired his wit, his liberalism, and his personality.

Dramatis Personæ

SIR PETER TEAZLE	CRABTREE
SIR OLIVER SURFACE	SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE
JOSEPH SURFACE	HOWLEY
CHARLES	MOSES
TRIP	LADY TEAZLE
SNAKE	MARIA
CARELESS	LADY SNEERWELL
SIR HARRY BUMPER	MRS. CANDOUR

A PORTRAIT

Addressed to Mrs. Crewe,¹ with the Comedy of The School for Scandal

BY R. B. SHERIDAN, ESQ.

Tell me, ye prim adepts in Scandal's school,
Who rail by precept, and detract by rule,
Lives there no character, so tried, so known,
So deck'd with grace, and so unlike your own,
That even you assist her fame to raise,
Approve by envy, and by silence praise?
Attend!—a model shall attract your view—
Daughters of calumny, I summon you!
You shall decide if this a portrait prove,
Or fond creation of the Muse and Love.
Attend, ye virgin critics, shrewd and sage,
Ye matron censors of this childish age,
Whose peering eye and wrinkled front declare
A fixed antipathy to young and fair;
By cunning, cautious; or by nature, cold,
In maiden madness, virulently bold!
Attend! ye skilled to coin the precious tale,
Creating proof, where innuendoes fail!
Whose practised memories, cruelly exact,
Omit no circumstance, except the fact!
Attend, all ye who boast—or old or young
The living libel of a slanderous tongue!
So shall my theme as far contrasted be,
As saints by fiends, or hymns by calumny.

¹ Mrs. John Crewe, beauty and wit, friend of Sheridan, Fox, *et al.*

Come, gentle Amoret² (for 'neath that name,
In worthier verse is sung thy beauty's fame);
Come—for but thee who seeks the Muse?
and while

- 5 Celestial blushes check thy conscious smile,
With timid grace and hesitating eye,
The perfect model, which I boast, supply.
Vain Muse! couldst thou the humblest sketch
create
- 10 Of her, or slightest charm couldst imitate—
Could thy blest strain in kindred colors trace
The faintest wonder of her form and face—
Poets would study the immortal line,
And *Reynolds*³ own his art subdued by thine;
- 15 That art, which well might added lustre give
To Nature's best, and Heaven's superlative:
On *Granby*'s⁴ cheek might bid new glories rise,
Or point a purer beam from *Devon*'s⁵ eyes!
Hard is the task to shape that beauty's praise,
- 20 Whose judgment scorns the homage flattery
pays!
But praising Amoret we cannot err,
No tongue o'ervalues Heaven, or flatters her!
Yet she by Fate's perverseness—she alone
- 25 Would doubt our truth, nor deem such praise
her own!
Adorning Fashion, unadorn'd by dress,
Simple from taste, and not from carelessness;
Discreet in gesture, in deportment mild,
- 30 Not stiff with prudence, nor uncouthly wild:
No state has *Amoret*! no studied mien;
She frowns no goddess, and she moves no
queen.
The softer charm that in her manner lies
- 35 Is framed to captivate, yet not surprise;
It justly suits th' expression of her face—
'Tis less than dignity, and more than grace!
On her pure cheek the native hue is such,
That form'd by Heav'n to be admired so much,
- 40 The hand divine, with a less partial care,
Might well have fix'd a fainter crimson there,
And bade the gentle inmate of her breast—
Inshrined Modesty!—supply the rest.
But who the peril of her lips shall paint?
- 45 Strip them of smiles—still, still all words are
faint!

² name from *Faerie Queene*, here a pet name for Mrs. Crewe.

³ Sir Joshua Reynolds.

⁴ the Marchioness of Granby.

⁵ the Duchess of Devonshire.

But moving Love himself appears to teach
 Their action, though denied to rule her speech;
 And thou who seest her speak and dost not
 hear,
 Mourn not her distant accents 'scape thine ear;
 Viewing those lips, thou still may'st make
 pretence
 To judge of what she says, and swear 'tis
 sense:
 Cloth'd with such grace, with such expression
 fraught,
 They move in meaning, and they pause in
 thought!
 But dost thou farther watch, with chaim'd
 surprise,
 The mild irresolution of her eyes,
 Curious to mark how frequent they repose,
 In brief eclipse and momentary close—
 Ah! seest thou not an ambush'd Cupid there,
 Too tim'rous of his charge, with jealous care
 Veils and unveils those beams of heav'nly
 light,
 Too full, too fatal else, for mortal sight?
 Nor yet, such pleasing vengeance fond to meet,
 In pard'ning dimples hope a safe retreat.
 What though her peaceful breast should ne'er
 allow
 Subduing frowns to arm her alter'd brow,
 By Love, I swear, and by his gentle wiles,
 More fatal still the mere of her smiles!
 Thus lovely, thus adorn'd, possessing all
 Of bright or fair that can to woman fall.
 The height of vanity might well be thought
 Prerogative in her, and Nature's fault.
 Yet gentle *Amoret*, in mind supreme
 As well as charms, rejects the vainer theme;
 And half mistrustful of her beauty's store,
 She barbs with wit those darts too keen be-
 fore:—
 Read in all knowledge that her sex should
 reach,
 Though *Greville*,⁶ or the *Muse*, should deign
 to teach,
 Fond to improve, nor tim'rous to discern
 How far it is a woman's grace to learn;
 In *Millar's*⁷ dialect she would not prove
 Apollo's priestess, but Apollo's love,
 Graced by those signs, which truth delights

to own,
 The timid blush, and mild submitted tone.
 Whate'er she says, though sense appear
 throughout,
 5 Displays the tender hue of female doubt,
 Deck'd with that charm, how lovely wit ap-
 pears,
 How graceful *science*, when that robe she
 wears!
 10 Such too her talents, and her bent of mind,
 As speak a sprightly heart by thought refined.
 A taste for mirth, by contemplation school'd.
 A turn for ridicule, by candour ruled,
 A scorn of folly, which she tries to hide;
 15 An awe of talent, which she owns with pride!
 Peace! idle *Muse*, no more thy strain pro-
 long,
 But yield a theme, thy warmest praises
 wrong;
 20 Just to her merit, though thou canst not raise
 Thy feeble voice, behold th' acknowledged
 praise
 Has spread conviction through the envious
 train,
 25 And cast a fatal gloom o'er Scandal's reign!
 And lo! each pallid hag, with blister'd tongue,
 Muttters assent to all thy zeal has sung—
 Owns all the colors just—the outline true;
 Thee my inspirer, and my *model*—CREWE!
 30

PROLOGUE

WRITTEN BY MR. GARRICK⁸

35 A SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL! tell me, I beseech
 you,
 Needs there a school this modish art to teach
 you?
 No need of lessons now, the knowing think;
 40 We might as well be taught to eat and drink.
 Caused by a dearth of scandal, should the
 vapors⁹
 Distress our fair ones—let them read the
 papers;
 45 Their powerful mixtures such disorders hit;
 Crave what you will—there's *quantum*
sufficit.¹⁰

⁸ David Garrick, actor, dramatist, theater man-
 ager.

⁹ melancholy, the "blues."

¹⁰ enough to go around.

⁶ Mrs. Fulke Greville, Mrs. Crewe's mother.

⁷ Lady Millar was a famous hostess at literary
 salons.

THE DRAMA · RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN

ACT I

SCENE I.

LADY SNEERWELL's house

5 *Discovered LADY SNEERWELL at the dressing-table; SNAKE drinking chocolate*

"Lord!" cries my Lady Wormwood (who loves
tattle,

And puts much salt and pepper in her prattle),
Just ris'n at noon, all night at cards when
threshing

Strong tea and scandal—"Bless me, how re-
freshing!

"Give me the papers, *Lisp*—how bold and
free! (*sips*)

"*Last night Lord L. (*sips*) was caught with* 10
Lady D.

"For aching heads what charming *sal volatile!*
(*sips*.)

"If Mrs. B. will still continue flirting,

"We hope she'll draw, or we'll undraw the 15
curtain.

"Fine satire, poz!"—in public all abuse it,

"But, by ourselves (*sips*), our praise we can't
refuse it.

"Now, *Lisp*, read you—there, at that dash 20
and star."

"Yes, ma'am—A certain lord had best beware,
"Who lives not twenty miles from Grosvenor
Square;

"For should he Lady W. find willing,

"Wormwood is bitter"—"Oh, that's me, the
villain!

"Throw it behind the fire, and never more

"Let that vile paper come within my door."
Thus at our friends we laugh, who feel the 30
dart;

To reach our feelings, we ourselves must
smart.

Is our young bard so young, to think that he
Can stop the full spring-tide of calumny?

Knows he the world so little, and its trade?

Alas! the devil's sooner raised than laid.

So strong, so swift, the monster there's no
gagging:

Cut Scandal's head off, still the tongue is 40
wagging.

Proud of your smiles once lavishly bestow'd,

Again our young Don Quixote takes the road;

To show his gratitude he draws his pen,

And seeks this hydra, Scandal, in his den. 45

For your applause all perils he would
through—

He'll fight—that's write—a cavalliero true,
Till every drop of blood—that's ink—is spilt
for you.

LADY SNEER. The paragraphs, you say, Mr.
Snake, were all inserted?

SNAKE. They were, madam; and as I copied
them myself in a feigned hand, there can be
no suspicion whence they came.

LADY SNEER. Did you circulate the report of
Lady Brittle's intrigue with Captain Boastall?

SNAKE. That's in as fine a train as your lady-
ship could wish. In the common course of
things, I think it must reach Mrs. Clackitt's
ears within four-and-twenty hours; and then,
you know, the business is as good as done.

LADY SNEER. Why, truly, Mrs. Clackitt has
a very pretty talent, and a great deal of in-
dustry.

SNAKE. True, madam, and has been toler-
ably successful in her day. To my knowledge
she has been the cause of six matches being
broken off, and three sons disinherited; of four
forced elopements, and as many close con-
finements; nine separate maintenances, and
two divorces. Nay, I have more than once
traced her causing a *tête-à-tête* in the *Town*
and Country Magazine, when the parties, per-
haps, had never seen each other's face before
in the course of their lives.

LADY SNEER. She certainly has talents, but
her manner is gross.

SNAKE. 'Tis very true. She generally de-
signs well, has a free tongue, and a bold in-
vention; but her coloring is too dark, and her
outlines often extravagant. She wants that deli-
cacy of tint, and mellowness of sneer, which
distinguish your ladyship's scandal.

LADY SNEER. You are partial, Snake.

SNAKE. Not in the least; everybody allows
that Lady Sneerwell can do more with a word
or a look than many can with the most labored
detail, even when they happen to have a little
truth on their side to support it.

LADY SNEER. Yes, my dear Snake; and I am
50 no hypocrite to deny the satisfaction I reap
from the success of my efforts. Wounded my-
self in the early part of my life by the en-

¹¹ positively.

venomed tongue of slander, I confess I have since known no pleasure equal to the reducing others to the level of my own injured reputation.

SNAKE. Nothing can be more natural. But, Lady Sneerwell, there is one affair in which you have lately employed me, wherein, I confess, I am at a loss to guess your motives.

LADY SNEER. I conceive you mean with respect to my neighbor, Sir Peter Teazle, and his family?

SNAKE. I do. Here are two young men, to whom Sir Peter has acted as a kind of guardian since their father's death, the eldest possessing the most amiable character, and universally well spoken of; the youngest, the most dissipated and extravagant young fellow in the kingdom, without friends or character: the former an avowed admirer of your ladyship, and apparently your favorite; the latter attached to Maria, Sir Peter's ward, and confessedly beloved by her. Now, on the face of these circumstances, it is utterly unaccountable to me, why you, the widow of a city knight, with a good jointure, should not close with the passion of a man of such character and expectations as Mr. Surface; and more so why you should be so uncommonly earnest to destroy the mutual attachment subsisting between his brother Charles and Maria.

LADY SNEER. Then at once to unravel this mystery, I must inform you that love has no share whatever in the intercourse between Mr. Surface and me.

SNAKE. No!

LADY SNEER. His real attachment is to Maria, or her fortune; but finding in his brother a favored rival, he has been obliged to mask his pretensions, and profit by my assistance.

SNAKE. Yet still I am more puzzled why you should interest yourself in his success.

LADY SNEER. How dull you are! Cannot you surmise the weakness which I hitherto, through shame, have concealed even from you? Must I confess that Charles, that libertine, that extravagant, that bankrupt in fortune and reputation, that he it is for whom I'm thus anxious and malicious, and to gain whom I would sacrifice everything?

SNAKE. Now, indeed, your conduct appears consistent; but how came you and Mr. Surface so confidential?

LADY SNEER. For our mutual interest, I have found him out a long time since. I know him to be artful, selfish, and malicious, in short, a sentimental knave; while with Sir Peter, and indeed with all his acquaintance, he passes for a youthful miracle of prudence, good sense, and benevolence.

SNAKE. Yes; yet Sir Peter vows he has not his equal in England; and above all, he praises him as a man of sentiment.

LADY SNEER. True; and with the assistance of his sentiment and hypocrisy, he has brought Sir Peter entirely into his interest with regard to Maria; while poor Charles has no friend in the house, though, I fear, he has a powerful one in Maria's heart, against whom we must direct our schemes.

Enter SERVANT

SERV. Mr. Surface.

LADY SNEER. Show him up. [*exit SERVANT*]

Enter JOSEPH SURFACE

JOSEPH S. My dear Lady Sneerwell, how do you do to-day? Mr. Snake, your most obedient.

LADY SNEER. Snake has just been rallying me on our mutual attachment; but I have informed him of our real views. You know how useful he has been to us, and, believe me, the confidence is not ill placed.

JOSEPH S. Madam, it is impossible for me to suspect a man of Mr. Snake's sensibility and discernment.

LADY SNEER. Well, well, no compliments now, but tell me when you saw your mistress, Maria; or, what is more material to me, your brother.

JOSEPH S. I have not seen either since I left you; but I can inform you that they never meet. Some of your stories have taken a good effect on Maria.

LADY SNEER. Ah! my dear Snake! the merit of this belongs to you; but do your brother's distresses increase?

JOSEPH S. Every hour. I am told he has had another execution¹² in the house yesterday. In short, his dissipation and extravagance exceed anything I have ever heard of.

LADY SNEER. Poor Charles!

¹² seizure or sale of goods by the authorities.

JOSEPH S. True, madam; notwithstanding his vices, one can't help feeling for him. Poor Charles! I'm sure I wish it were in my power to be of any essential service to him; for the man who does not share in the distresses of a brother, even though merited by his own misconduct, deserves—

LADY SNEER. O Lud! you are going to be moral, and forget that you are among friends.

JOSEPH S. Egad, that's true! I'll keep that sentiment till I see Sir Peter; however, it certainly is a charity to rescue Maria from such a libertine, who, if he is to be reclaimed, can be so only by a person of your ladyship's superior accomplishments and understanding.

SNAKE. I believe, Lady Sneerwell, here's company coming; I'll go and copy the letter I mentioned to you. Mr. Surface, your most obedient. [*exit SNAKE*]

JOSEPH S. Sir, your very devoted. Lady Sneerwell, I am very sorry you have put any further confidence in that fellow.

LADY SNEER. Why so?

JOSEPH S. I have lately detected him in frequent conference with old Rowley, who was formerly my father's steward, and has never, you know, been a friend of mine.

LADY SNEER. And do you think he would betray us?

JOSEPH S. Nothing more likely; take my word for't, Lady Sneerwell, that fellow hasn't virtue enough to be faithful even to his own villainy. Ah! Maria!

Enter MARIA

LADY SNEER. Maria, my dear, how do you do? What's the matter?

MARIA. Oh! there is that disagreeable lover of mine, Sir Benjamin Backbite, has just called at my guardian's, with his odious uncle, Crabtree; so I slipped out, and ran hither to avoid them.

LADY SNEER. Is that all?

JOSEPH S. If my brother Charles had been of the party, madam, perhaps you would not have been so much alarmed.

LADY SNEER. Nay, now you are severe; for I dare swear the truth of the matter is, Maria heard *you* were here. But, my dear, what has Sir Benjamin done, that you would avoid him so?

MARIA. Oh, he has done nothing; but 'tis for

what he has said: his conversation is a perpetual libel on all his acquaintance.

JOSEPH S. Ay, and the worst of it is, there is no advantage in not knowing him; for he'll abuse a stranger just as soon as his best friend; and his uncle's as bad.

LADY SNEER. Nay, but we should make allowance; Sir Benjamin is a wit and a poet.

MARIA. For my part, I confess, madam, wit loses its respect with me, when I see it in company with malice. What do you think, Mr. Surface?

JOSEPH S. Certainly, madam; to smile at the jest which plants a thorn in another's breast is to become a principal in the mischief.

LADY SNEER. Pshaw! there's no possibility of being witty without a little ill nature: the malice of a good thing is the barb that makes it stick. What's your opinion, Mr. Surface?

JOSEPH S. To be sure, madam; that conversation, where the spirit of raillery is suppressed, will ever appear tedious and insipid.

MARIA. Well, I'll not debate how far scandal may be allowable; but in a man, I am sure, it is always contemptible. We have pride, envy, rivalry, and a thousand motives to depreciate each other; but the male slanderer must have the cowardice of a woman before he can traduce one.

Enter SERVANT

SERV. Madam, Mrs. Candour is below, and if your ladyship's at leisure, will leave her carriage.

LADY SNEER. Beg her to walk in. [*exit SERVANT*] Now, Maria, here is a character to your taste; for though Mrs. Candour is a little talkative, everybody allows her to be the best natured and best sort of woman.

MARIA. Yes, with a very gross affectation of good nature and benevolence, she does more mischief than the direct malice of old Crabtree.

JOSEPH S. I' faith that's true, Lady Sneerwell: whenever I hear the current running against the characters of my friends, I never think them in such danger as when Candour undertakes their defence.

LADY SNEER. Hush! here she is!

Enter MRS. CANDOUR

MRS. CAN. My dear Lady Sneerwell, how have you been this century? Mr. Surface, what

news do you hear? though indeed it is no matter, for I think one hears nothing else but scandal.

JOSEPH S. Just so, indeed, ma'am.

MRS. CAN. Oh, Marial child, what, is the whole affair off between you and Charles? His extravagance, I presume; the town talks of nothing else.

MARIA. Indeed! I am very sorry, ma'am, the town is not better employed.

MRS. CAN. True, true, child; but there's no stopping people's tongues. I own I was hurt to hear it, as I indeed was to learn, from the same quarter, that your guardian, Sir Peter, and Lady Teazle have not agreed lately as well as could be wished.

MARIA. 'Tis strangely impertinent for people to busy themselves so.

MRS. CAN. Very true, child, but what's to be done? People will talk; there's no preventing it. Why, it was but yesterday I was told Miss Gadabout had eloped with Sir Filgree Flirt. But, Lord! there's no minding what one hears; though, to be sure, I had this from very good authority.

MARIA. Such reports are highly scandalous.

MRS. CAN. So they are, child, shamefull shameful! But the world is so censorious, no character escapes. Lord, now who would have suspected your friend, Miss Prim, of an indiscretion? Yet such is the ill-nature of people, that they say her uncle stopped her last week, just as she was stepping into the York diligence¹³ with her dancing-master.

MARIA. I'll answer for't there are no grounds for that report.

MRS. CAN. Ah, no foundation in the world, I dare swear: no more, probably, than for the story circulated last month, of Mrs. Festino's affair with Colonel Cassino; though, to be sure, that matter was never rightly cleared up.

JOSEPH S. The licence of invention some people take is monstrous indeed.

MARIA. 'Tis so; but, in my opinion, those who report such things are equally culpable.

MRS. CAN. To be sure they are; tale-bearers are as bad as the tale-makers; 'tis an old observation, and a very true one. But what's to be done, as I said before? How will you prevent people from talking? To-day, Mrs. Clackitt as-

sured me, Mr. and Mrs. Honeymoon were at last become mere man and wife, like the rest of their acquaintance. She likewise hinted that a certain widow, in the next street, had got rid of her dropsy and recovered her shape in a most surprising manner. And at the same time, Miss Tattle, who was by, affirmed that Lord Buffalo had discovered his lady at a house of no extraordinary fame; and that Sir H. Bouquet and Tom Saunter were to measure swords on a similar provocation. But, Lord, do you think I would report these things? No, no! tale-bearers as I said before, are just as bad as the tale-makers.

JOSEPH S. Ah Mrs. Candour, if everybody had your forbearance and good-nature!

MRS. CAN. I confess, Mr. Surface, I cannot bear to hear people attacked behind their backs; and when ugly circumstances come out against our acquaintance, I own I always love to think the best. By-the-bye, I hope 'tis not true that your brother is absolutely ruined?

JOSEPH S. I am afraid his circumstances are very bad indeed, ma'am.

MRS. CAN. Ah! I heard so; but you must tell him to keep up his spirits; everybody almost is in the same way—Lord Spindle, Sir Thomas Splint, Captain Quinze, and Mr. Nickit—all up, I hear, within this week; so if Charles is undone, he'll find half his acquaintance ruined too, and that, you know, is a consolation.

JOSEPH S. Doubtless, ma'am; a very great one.

Enter SERVANT

SERV. Mr. Crabtree and Sir Benjamin Backbite. [*exit SERVANT*]

LADY SNEER. So, Maria, you see your lover pursues you, positively you sha'n't escape.

Enter CRABTREE and SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE

CRABT. Lady Sneerwell, I kiss your hand. Mrs. Candour, I don't believe you are acquainted with my nephew, Sir Benjamin Backbite? Egad! ma'am, he has a pretty wit, and is a pretty poet too; isn't he, Lady Sneerwell?

SIR BENJ. B. O fie, uncle!

CRABT. Nay, egad, it's true; I back him at a rebus or a charade against the best rhymers in the kingdom. Has your ladyship heard the epigram he wrote last week on Lady Frizzle's feather catching fire? Do, Benjamin, repeat it,

¹³ coach.

or the charade you made last night extempore at Mrs. Drowzie's conversazione. Come now; your first is the name of a fish, your second a great naval commander, and—

SIR BENJ. B. Uncle, now—pr'ythee—

CRABT. I' faith, ma'am, 'twould surprise you to hear how ready he is at all these fine sort of things.

LADY SNEER. I wonder, Sir Benjamin, you never publish anything.

SIR BENJ. B. To say truth, ma'am, 'tis very vulgar to print; and as my little productions are mostly satires and lampoons on particular people, I find they circulate more by giving copies in confidence to the friends of the parties. However, I have some love elegies, which, when favored with this lady's smiles, I mean to give the public.

CRABT. 'Fore heaven, ma'am, they'll immortalize you! You will be handed down to posterity, like Petrarch's Laura,¹⁴ or Waller's Scharissa.¹⁵

SIR BENJ. B. Yes, madam, I think you will like them, when you shall see them on a beautiful quarto page, where a neat rivulet of text shall meander through a meadow of margin. 'Fore Gad, they will be the most elegant things of their kind!

CRABT. But, ladies, that's true. Have you heard the news?

MRS. CAN. What, sir, do you mean the report of—

CRABT. No, ma'am, that's not it. Miss Nicely is going to be married to her own footman.

MRS. CAN. Impossible!

CRABT. Ask Sir Benjamin.

SIR BENJ. B. 'Tis very true, ma'am; everything is fixed, and the wedding liveries bespoken.

CRABT. Yes; and they do say there were pressing reasons for it.

LADY SNEER. Why, I have heard something of this before.

MRS. CAN. It can't be, and I wonder any one should believe such a story of so prudent a lady as Miss Nicely.

¹⁴ The fourteenth-century Italian poet Petrarch wrote his sonnets to a lady named Laura.

¹⁵ The seventeenth-century English poet Edmund Waller wrote some of his verse to "Scharissa," generally identified as Lady Dorothy Sidney.

SIR BENJ. B. O Lud! ma'am, that's the very reason 'twas believed at once. She has always been so cautious and so reserved, that everybody was sure there was some reason for it at bottom.

MRS. CAN. Why, to be sure, a tale of scandal is as fatal to the credit of a prudent lady of her stamp, as a fever is generally to those of the strongest constitutions. But there is a sort of puny, sickly reputation, that is always ailing, yet will outlive the robust characters of a hundred prudes.

SIR BENJ. B. True, madam, there are valetudinarians in reputation as well as constitution; who, being conscious of their weak part, avoid the least breath of air, and supply their want of stamina by care and circumspection.

MRS. CAN. Well, but this may be all a mistake. You know, Sir Benjamin, very trifling circumstances often give rise to the most injurious tales.

CRABT. That they do, I'll be sworn, ma'am. Did you ever hear how Miss Piper came to lose her lover and her character last summer at Tunbridge? Sir Benjamin, you remember it?

SIR BENJ. B. Oh, to be sure! The most whimsical circumstance.

LADY SNEER. How was it, pray?

CRABT. Why, one evening, at Mrs. Ponto's assembly, the conversation happened to turn on the breeding of Nova Scotia sheep in this country. Says a young lady in company, I have known instances of it, for Miss Letitia Piper, a first cousin of mine, had a Nova Scotia sheep that produced her twins. What! cries the Lady Dowager Dundizzy (who, you know, is as deaf as a post), has Miss Piper had twits? This mistake, as you may imagine, threw the whole company into a fit of laughter. However, 'twas the next morning everywhere reported, and in a few days believed by the whole town, that Miss Letitia Piper had actually been brought to bed of a fine boy and a girl; and in less than a week there were some people who could name the father, and the farmhouse where the babies were put to nurse.

LADY SNEER. Strange, indeed!

CRABT. Matter of fact, I assure you. O Lud! Mr. Surface, pray is it true that your uncle, Sir Oliver, is coming home?

JOSEPH S. Not that I know of, indeed, sir.

CRABT. He has been in the East Indies a

long time. You can scarcely remember him, I believe? Sad comfort whenever he returns, to hear how your brother has gone on!

JOSEPH S. Charles has been imprudent, sir, to be sure; but I hope no busy people have already prejudiced Sir Oliver against him. He may reform.

SIR BENJ. B. To be sure he may; for my part, I never believed him to be so utterly void of principle as people say; and though he has lost all his friends, I am told nobody is better spoken of by the Jews.

CRAST. That's true, egad, nephew. If the Old Jewry was a ward, I believe Charles would be an alderman. No man more popular there, 'fore Gad! I hear he pays as many annuities as the Irish tontine; and that whenever he is sick, they have prayers for the recovery of his health in all the synagogues.

SIR BENJ. B. Yet no man lives in greater splendor. They tell me, when he entertains his friends he will sit down to dinner with a dozen of his own securities; have a score of tradesmen waiting in the antechamber, and an officer behind every guest's chair.

JOSEPH S. This may be entertainment to you, gentlemen, but you pay very little regard to the feelings of a brother.

MARIA. Their malice is intolerable. Lady Sneerwell, I must wish you a good morning: I'm not very well. [*exit MARIA*]

MRS. CAN. O dear! she changes color very much.

LADY SNEER. Do, Mrs. Candour, follow her: she may want assistance.

MRS. CAN. That I will, with all my soul, ma'am. Poor dear girl, who knows what her situation may be! [*exit*]

LADY SNEER. 'Twas nothing but that she could not bear to hear Charles reflected on, notwithstanding their difference.

SIR BENJ. B. The young lady's *penchant* is obvious.

CRAST. But, Benjamin, you must not give up the pursuit for that: follow her, and put her into good humor. Repeat her some of your own verses. Come, I'll assist you.

SIR BENJ. B. Mr. Surface, I did not mean to hurt you; but, depend on't, your brother is utterly undone.

CRAST. O Lud, ay! undone as ever man was. Can't raise a guinea!

SIR BENJ. B. And everything sold, I'm told, that was movable.

CRAST. I have seen one that was at his house. Not a thing left but some empty bottles that were overlooked, and the family pictures, which I believe are framed in the wainscots.

SIR BENJ. B. And I'm very sorry, also, to hear some bad stories against him. [*going*]

CRAST. Oh! he has done many mean things, that's certain.

SIR BENJ. B. But, however, as he's your brother—[*going*]

CRAST. We'll tell you all another opportunity. [*exit*] CRASTREE and SIR BENJAMIN

LADY SNEER. Ha! ha! 'tis very hard for them to leave a subject they have not quite run down.

JOSEPH S. And I believe the abuse was no more acceptable to your ladyship than Maria.

LADY SNEER. I doubt her affections are farther engaged than we imagine. But the family are to be here this evening, so you may as well dine where you are, and we shall have an opportunity of observing farther, in the meantime, I'll go and plot mischief, and you shall study sentiment. [*exit*]

SCENE II.

SIR PETER'S house

Enter SIR PETER

SIR PETER T. When an old bachelor marries a young wife, what is he to expect? 'Tis now six months since Lady Teazle made me the happiest of men; and I have been the most miserable dog ever since! We tifted a little going to church, and fairly quarrelled before the bells had done ringing. I was more than once nearly choked with gall during the honeymoon, and had lost all comfort in life before my friends had done wishing me joy. Yet I chose with caution—a girl bred wholly in the country, who never knew luxury beyond one silk gown, nor dissipation above the annual gala of a race ball. Yet now she plays her part in all the extravagant fopperies of the fashion and the town, with as ready a grace as if she had never seen a bush or a grass-plot out of Grosvenor Square! I am sneered at by all my acquaintance, and paragraphed in the newspapers. She dissipates my fortune, and contra-

dicts all my humors: yet the worst of it is, I doubt I love her, or I should never bear all this. However, I'll never be weak enough to own it.

Enter ROWLEY

ROWLEY. Oh! Sir Peter, your servant; how is it with you, sir?

SIR PETER T. Very bad, Master Rowley, very bad. I meet with nothing but crosses and vexations.

ROWLEY. What can have happened to trouble you since yesterday?

SIR PETER T. A good question to a married man!

ROWLEY. Nay, I'm sure your lady, Sir Peter, can't be the cause of your uneasiness.

SIR PETER T. Why, has anybody told you she was dead?

ROWLEY. Come, come, Sir Peter, you love her, notwithstanding your tempers don't exactly agree.

SIR PETER T. But the fault is entirely hers, Master Rowley. I am, myself, the sweetest tempered man alive, and hate a teasing temper; and so I tell her a hundred times a day.

ROWLEY. Indeed!

SIR PETER T. Ay; and what is very extraordinary, in all our disputes she is always in the wrong! But Lady Snervell, and the set she meets at her house, encourage the perverseness of her disposition. Then, to complete my vexation, Maria, my ward, whom I ought to have the power of a father over, is determined to turn rebel too, and absolutely refuses the man whom I have long resolved on for her husband; meaning, I suppose, to bestow herself on his profligate brother.

ROWLEY. You know, Sir Peter, I have always taken the liberty to differ with you on the subject of these two young gentlemen. I only wish you may not be deceived in your opinion of the elder. For Charles, my life on't! he will retrieve his errors yet. Their worthy father, once my honored master, was, at his years, nearly as wild a spark; yet, when he died, he did not leave a more benevolent heart to lament his loss.

SIR PETER T. You are wrong, Master Rowley. On their father's death, you know, I acted as a kind of guardian to them both, till their uncle Sir Oliver's liberality gave them an early

independence: of course, no person could have more opportunities of judging of their hearts, and I was never mistaken in my life. Joseph is indeed a model for the young men of the age.

He is a man of sentiment, and acts up to the *sentiments* he professes; but for the other, take my word for't, if he had any grain of virtue by descent, he has dissipated it with the rest of his inheritance. Ah! my old friend, Sir Oliver, will be deeply mortified when he finds how part of his bounty has been misapplied.

ROWLEY. I am sorry to find you so violent against the young man, because this may be the most critical period of his fortune. I came hither with news that will surprise you.

SIR PETER T. What! let me hear.

ROWLEY. Sir Oliver is arrived, and at this moment in town.

SIR PETER T. How! you astonish me! I thought you did not expect him this month.

ROWLEY. I did not; but his passage has been remarkably quick.

SIR PETER T. Egad, I shall rejoice to see my old friend. 'Tis fifteen years since we met. We have had many a day together; but does he still enjoin us not to inform his nephews of his arrival?

ROWLEY. Most strictly. He means, before it is known, to make some trial of their dispositions.

SIR PETER T. Ah! there needs no art to discover their merits; he shall have his way. But, pray, does he know I am married?

ROWLEY. Yes, and will soon wish you joy.

SIR PETER T. What, as we drink health to a friend in a consumption! Ah! Oliver will laugh at me. We used to rail at matrimony together, and he has been steady to his text. Well, he must be soon at my house, though! I'll instantly give orders for his reception. But, Master Rowley, don't drop a word that Lady Teazle and I ever disagree.

ROWLEY. By no means.

SIR PETER T. For I should never be able to stand Noll's jokes; so I'd have him think, Lord forgive me! that we are a very happy couple.

ROWLEY. I understand you; but then you must be very careful not to differ while he is in the house with you.

SIR PETER T. Egad, and so we must, and that's impossible. Ah! Master Rowley, when an old bachelor marries a young wife, he deserves

—no—the crime carries its punishment along with it. [*exeunt*]

ACT II

SCENE I.

[SIR PETER'S house]

Enter SIR PETER and LADY TEAZLE

SIR PETER T. Lady Teazle, Lady Teazle, I'll not bear it!

LADY T. Sir Peter, Sir Peter, you may bear it or not, as you please; but I ought to have my own way in everything, and what's more, I will, too. What! though I was educated in the country, I know very well that women of fashion in London are accountable to nobody after they are married.

SIR PETER T. Very well, ma'am, very well; so a husband is to have no influence, no authority?

LADY T. Authority! No, to be sure, if you wanted authority over me, you should have adopted me, and not married me: I am sure you were old enough.

SIR PETER T. Old enough! ay, there it is. Well, well, Lady Teazle, though my life may be made unhappy by your temper, I'll not be ruined by your extravagance.

LADY T. My extravagance! I'm sure I'm not more extravagant than a woman of fashion ought to be.

SIR PETER T. No, no, madam, you shall throw away no more sums on such unmeaning luxury. 'Slife! to spend as much to furnish your dressing-room with flowers in winter as would suffice to turn the Pantheon¹⁶ into a green-house, and give a *fête champêtre*¹⁷ at Christmas.

LADY T. And am I to blame, Sir Peter, because flowers are dear in cold weather? You should find fault with the climate, and not with me. For my part, I'm sure, I wish it was spring all the year round, and that roses grew under our feet.

SIR PETER T. Oons! madam; if you had been born to this, I shouldn't wonder at your talking thus; but you forget what your situation was when I married you.

LADY T. No, no, I don't; 'twas a very disagreeable one, or I should never have married you.

SIR PETER T. Yes, yes, madam; you were then in somewhat a humbler style: the daughter of a plain country squire. Recollect, Lady Teazle, when I saw you first sitting at your tambor,¹⁸ in a pretty figured linen gown, with a bunch of keys at your side, your hair combed smooth over a roll, and your apartment hung round with fruits in worsted, of your own working.

LADY T. Oh, yes! I remember it very well, and a curious life I led. My daily occupation to inspect the dairy, superintend the poultry, make extracts from the family receipt book, and comb my aunt Deborah's lap-dog.

SIR PETER T. Yes, yes, ma'am, 'twas so indeed.

LADY T. And then, you know, my evening amusements! To draw patterns for ruffles, which I had not materials to make up; to play Pope Joan¹⁹ with the curate; to read a sermon to my aunt; or to be stuck down to an old spinet to strum my father to sleep after a fox-chase.

SIR PETER T. I am glad you have so good a memory. Yes, madam, these were the recreations I took you from; but now you must have your coach—*vis-à-vis*²⁰—and three powdered footmen before your chair; and in the summer, a pair of white cats²¹ to draw you to Kensington Gardens. No recollection, I suppose, when you were content to ride double, behind the butler, on a docked coach-horse?

LADY T. No; I swear I never did that. I deny the butler and the coach-horse.

SIR PETER T. This, madam, was your situation; and what have I done for you? I have made you a woman of fashion, of fortune, of rank; in short, I have made you my wife.

LADY T. Well, then, and there is but one thing more you can make me to add to the obligation, and that is—

SIR PETER T. My widow, I suppose?

LADY T. Hem! hem!

SIR PETER T. I thank you, madam; but don't flatter yourself; for though your ill conduct may disturb my peace, it shall never break

¹⁸ embroidery frame. ¹⁹ card game.

²⁰ that is, the occupants sit face to face.

²¹ horses.

¹⁶ here, a London concert hall.

¹⁷ garden party.

my heart, I promise you; however, I am equally obliged to you for the hint.

LADY T. Then why will you endeavor to make yourself so disagreeable to me, and thwart me in every little elegant expense?

SIR PETER T. 'Slife, madam, I say, had you any of these little elegant expenses when you married me?

LADY T. Lud, Sir Peter! would you have me be out of the fashion?

SIR PETER T. The fashion, indeed! what had you to do with the fashion before you married me?

LADY T. For my part, I should think you would like to have your wife thought a woman of taste.

SIR PETER T. Ay, there again; taste! Zounds! madam, you had no taste when you married me!

LADY T. That's very true indeed, Sir Peter; and after having married you, I should never pretend to taste again, I allow. But now, Sir Peter, if we have finished our daily jangle, I presume I may go to my engagement at Lady Sneerwell's.

SIR PETER T. Ah, there's another precious circumstance; a charming set of acquaintance you have made there.

LADY T. Nay, Sir Peter, they are all people of rank and fortune, and remarkably tenacious of reputation.

SIR PETER T. Yes, egad, they are tenacious of reputation with a vengeance; for they don't choose anybody should have a character but themselves! Such a crew! Ah! many a wretch has rid on a hurdle²² who has done less mischief than these utterers of forged tales, coiners of scandal, and clippers of reputation.

LADY T. What! would you restrain the freedom of speech?

SIR PETER T. Ah! they have made you just as bad as any one of the society.

LADY T. Why, I believe I do bear a part with a tolerable grace. But I vow I bear no malice against the people I abuse. When I say an ill-natured thing, 'tis out of pure good humor; and I take it for granted, they deal exactly in the same manner with me. But, Sir Peter, you know you promised to come to Lady Sneerwell's too.

SIR PETER T. Well, well, I'll call in just to look after my own character.

LADY T. Then indeed you must make haste after me, or you'll be too late. So, good-bye to ye. [*exit* LADY TEAZLE]

SIR PETER T. So, I have gained much by my intended expostulation; yet, with what a charming air she contradicts everything I say, and how pleasingly she shows her contempt for my authority! Well, though I can't make her love me, there is great satisfaction in quarrelling with her; and I think she never appears to such advantage as when she is doing everything in her power to plague me. [*exit*]

SCENE II.

At LADY SNEERWELL'S

20 *Enter* LADY SNEERWELL, MRS. CANDOUR, CRABTREE, SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE, and JOSEPH SURFACE

LADY SNEER. Nay, positively, we will hear 25 it.

JOSEPH S. Yes, yes, the epigram, by all means.

SIR BENJ. B. O plague on't, uncler! 'tis mere nonsense.

30 CRABT. No, no; 'fore Gad, very clever for an extempore!

SIR BENJ. B. But, ladies, you should be acquainted with the circumstances. You must know, that one day last week, as Lady Betty Curricke was taking the dust in Hyde Park, in a sort of duodecimo²³ phaeton, she desired me to write some verses on her ponies, upon which I took out my pocket-book, and in one moment produced the following:

40 Sure never were seen two such beautiful ponies;
Other horses are clowns, but these macaronies:²⁴
To give them this title I'm sure can't be wrong,
Their legs are so slim, and their tails are so long.

CRABT. There, ladies, done in the smack of a whip, and on horseback too.

50

²² cart for carrying the condemned to execution.

²³ tiny (as a duodecimo volume).

²⁴ fops, dandies.

JOSEPH S. A very Phœbus mounted, indeed, Sir Benjamin.

SIR BENJ. B. O dear sir! trifles, trifles.

Enter LADY TEAZLE and MARIA

MRS. CAN. I must have a copy.

LADY SNEER. Lady Teazle, I hope we shall see Sir Peter?

LADY T. I believe he'll wait on your ladyship presently.

LADY SNEER. Maria, my love, you look grave. Come, you shall set down to piquet with Mr. Surface.

MARIA. I take very little pleasure in cards; however, I'll do as you please.

LADY T. [*aside*] I am surprised Mr. Surface should sit down with her; I thought he would have embraced this opportunity of speaking to me, before Sir Peter came.

MRS. CAN. Now, I'll die, but you are so scandalous. I'll forswear your society.

LADY T. What's the matter, Mrs. Candour?

MRS. CAN. They'll not allow our friend, Miss Vermilion, to be handsome.

LADY SNEER. Oh, surely she is a pretty woman.

CRABT. I'm very glad you think so, ma'am.

MRS. CAN. She has a charming fresh color.

LADY T. Yes, when it is fresh put on.

MRS. CAN. O fie! I'll swear her color is natural; I have seen it come and go.

LADY T. I dare swear you have, ma'am; it goes off at night, and comes again in the morning.

SIR BENJ. B. True, ma'am, it not only comes and goes, but what's more, egad! her maid can fetch and carry it.

MRS. CAN. Ha! ha! ha! how I hate to hear you talk so! But surely, now, her sister *is*, or *was*, very handsome.

CRABT. Who? Mrs. Evergreen? O Lord! she's six and fifty if she's an hour.

MRS. CAN. Now, positively you wrong her; fifty-two or fifty-three is the utmost; and I don't think she looks more.

SIR BENJ. B. Ah! there's no judging by her looks, unless one could see her face.

LADY SNEER. Well, well, if Mrs. Evergreen *does* take some pains to repair the ravages of time, you must allow she effects it with great ingenuity, and surely that's better than the

careless manner in which the widow Ochre caulks her wrinkles.

SIR BENJ. B. Nay, now, Lady Sneerwell, you are severe upon the widow. Come, come, 'tis not that she paints so ill, but when she has finished her face, she joins it so badly to her neck, that she looks like a mended statue, in which the connoisseur sees at once that the head's modern though the trunk's antique.

CRABT. Ha! ha! ha! well said, nephew.

MRS. CAN. Ha! ha! ha! well, you make me laugh, but I vow I hate you for it. What do you think of Miss Simper?

SIR BENJ. B. Why, she has very pretty teeth.

LADY T. Yes, and on that account, when she is neither speaking nor laughing (which very seldom happens), she never absolutely shuts her mouth, but leaves it on ajar, as it were—thus—[*shows her teeth*]

MRS. CAN. How can you be so ill-natured?

LADY T. Nay, I allow even that's better than the pains Mrs. Prim takes to conceal her losses in front. She draws her mouth till it positively resembles the aperture of a poor's box, and all her words appear to slide out edgewise, as it were thus, *How do you do, madam? Yes, madam.*

LADY SNEER. Very well, Lady Teazle; I see you can be a little severe.

LADY T. In defence of a friend it is but justice. But here comes Sir Peter to spoil our pleasantry.

Enter SIR PETER TEAZLE

SIR PETER T. Ladies, your most obedient. [*aside*] Mercy on me! here is the whole set! a character dead at every word, I suppose.

MRS. CAN. I am rejoiced you are come, Sir Peter. They have been so censorious; and Lady Teazle as bad as any one.

SIR PETER T. It must be very distressing to you, Mrs. Candour, I dare swear.

MRS. CAN. Oh, they will allow good qualities to nobody; not even good nature to our friend Mrs. Pursy.

LADY T. What, the fat dowager who was at Mrs. Quadrille's last night?

MRS. CAN. Nay, her bulk is her misfortune; and when she takes such pains to get rid of it, you ought not to reflect on her.

LADY SNEER. That's very true, indeed.

my heart, I promise you; however, I am equally obliged to you for the hint.

LADY T. Then why will you endeavor to make yourself so disagreeable to me, and thwart me in every little elegant expense?

SIR PETER T. 'Slife, madam, I say, had you any of these little elegant expenses when you married me?

LADY T. Lud, Sir Peter! would you have me be out of the fashion?

SIR PETER T. The fashion, indeed! what had you to do with the fashion before you married me?

LADY T. For my part, I should think you would like to have your wife thought a woman of taste.

SIR PETER T. Ay, there again; taste! Zounds! madam, you had no taste when you married me!

LADY T. That's very true indeed, Sir Peter; and after having married you, I should never pretend to taste again, I allow. But now, Sir Peter, if we have finished our daily jangle, I presume I may go to my engagement at Lady Sneerwell's.

SIR PETER T. Ah, there's another precious circumstance; a charming set of acquaintance you have made there.

LADY T. Nay, Sir Peter, they are all people of rank and fortune, and remarkably tenacious of reputation.

SIR PETER T. Yes, egad, they are tenacious of reputation with a vengeance; for they don't choose anybody should have a character but themselves! Such a crew! Ah! many a wretch has rid on a hurdle²² who has done less mischief than these utterers of forged tales, coiners of scandal, and clippers of reputation.

LADY T. What! would you restrain the freedom of speech?

SIR PETER T. Ah! they have made you just as bad as any one of the society.

LADY T. Why, I believe I do bear a part with a tolerable grace. But I vow I bear no malice against the people I abuse. When I say an ill-natured thing, 'tis out of pure good humor; and I take it for granted, they deal exactly in the same manner with me. But, Sir Peter, you know you promised to come to Lady Sneerwell's too.

SIR PETER T. Well, well, I'll call in just to look after my own character.

LADY T. Then indeed you must make haste after me, or you'll be too late. So, good-bye to ye. [*exit* LADY TEAZLE]

SIR PETER T. So, I have gained much by my intended expostulation; yet, with what a charming air she contradicts everything I say, and how pleasingly she shows her contempt for my authority! Well, though I can't make her love me, there is great satisfaction in quarrelling with her; and I think she never appears to such advantage as when she is doing everything in her power to plague me. [*exit*]

SCENE II.

At LADY SNEERWELL'S

20 *Enter* LADY SNEERWELL, MRS. CANDOUR, CRABTREE, SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE, and JOSEPH SURFACE

LADY SNEER. Nay, positively, we will hear 25 it.

JOSEPH S. Yes, yes, the epigram, by all means.

SIR BENJ. B. O plague on't, uncler! 'tis mere nonsense.

30 CRABT. No, no; 'fore Gad, very clever for an extempore!

SIR BENJ. B. But, ladies, you should be acquainted with the circumstances. You must know, that one day last week, as Lady Betty Curricke was taking the dust in Hyde Park, in a sort of duodecimo²³ phaeton, she desired me to write some verses on her ponies, upon which I took out my pocket-book, and in one moment produced the following:

40 Sure never were seen two such beautiful ponies;

Other horses are clowns, but these macaronies:²⁴

To give them this title I'm sure can't be wrong,

Their legs are so slim, and their tails are so long.

CRABT. There, ladies, done in the smack of a whip, and on horseback too.

50

²² cart for carrying the condemned to execution.

²³ tiny (as a duodecimo volume).

²⁴ fops, dandies.

I believe there are many would thank them for the bill.

LADY SNEER. O Lud! Sir Peter; would you deprive us of our privileges?

SIR PETER T. Ay, madam; and then no person should be permitted to kill characters and run down reputations, but qualified old maids and disappointed widows.

LADY SNEER. Go, you monster!

MRS. CAN. But, surely, you would not be quite so severe on those who only report what they hear?

SIR PETER T. Yes, madam, I would have law merchant²⁷ for them too; and in all cases of slander currency, whenever the drawer of the lie was not to be found, the injured parties should have a right to come on any of the indorsers.

CRABT. Well, for my part, I believe there never was a scandalous tale without some foundation.

SIR PETER T. Oh, nine out of ten of the malicious inventions are founded on some ridiculous misrepresentation.

LADY SNEER. Come, ladies, shall we sit down to cards in the next room?

Enter a SERVANT, who whispers to SIR PETER

SIR PETER T. I'll be with them directly. *[apart]* I'll get away unperceived.

LADY SNEER. Sir Peter, you are not going to leave us?

SIR PETER T. Your ladyship must excuse me; I'm called away by particular business. But I leave my character behind me. *[exit SIR PETER]*

SIR BENJ. B. Well; certainly, Lady Teazle, that lord of yours is a strange being; I could tell you some stories of him would make you laugh heartily if he were not your husband.

LADY T. Oh, pray don't mind that; come, do let's hear them. *[joins the rest of the company going into the next room]*

JOSEPH S. Maria, I see you have no satisfaction in this society.

MARIA. How is it possible I should? If to raise malicious smiles at the infirmities or misfortunes of those who have never injured us be the province of wit or humor, Heaven grant me a double portion of dullness!

JOSEPH S. Yet they appear more ill-natured

than they are; they have no malice at heart.

MARIA. Then is their conduct still more contemptible; for, in my opinion, nothing could excuse the interference of their tongues, but a natural and uncontrollable bitterness of mind.

JOSEPH S. Undoubtedly, madam; and it has always been a sentiment of mine, that to propagate a malicious truth wantonly is more despicable than to falsify from revenge. But can you, Maria, feel thus for others, and be unkind to me alone? Is hope to be denied the tenderest passion?

MARIA. Why will you distress me by renewing the subject?

JOSEPH S. Ah, Maria! you would not treat me thus, and oppose your guardian, Sir Peter's will, but that I see that profligate Charles is still a favored rival.

MARIA. Ungenerously urged! But whatever my sentiments are for that unfortunate young man, be assured I shall not feel more bound to give him up, because his distresses have lost him the regard even of a brother.

JOSEPH S. Nay, but Maria, do not leave me with a frown; by all that's honest, I swear *[kneels]*—

[Re-enter LADY TEAZLE, behind]

[Aside] Gad's life, here's Lady Teazle!

[Aloud to MARIA] You must not; no, you shall not; for, though I have the greatest regard for Lady Teazle—

MARIA. Lady Teazle!

JOSEPH S. Yet were Sir Peter to suspect—

LADY T. *[coming forward]* What is this, pray? Do you take her for me? Child, you are wanted in the next room. *[exit MARIA]* What is all this, pray?

JOSEPH S. O, the most unlucky circumstance in nature! Maria has somehow suspected the tender concern I had for your happiness, and threatened to acquaint Sir Peter with her suspicions, and I was just endeavoring to reason with her when you came in.

LADY T. Indeed! but you seemed to adopt a very tender mode of reasoning; do you usually argue on your knees?

JOSEPH S. Oh, she's a child, and I thought a little bombast— But, Lady Teazle, when are you to give me your judgment on my library, as you promised?

LADY T. No, no; I begin to think it would be

²⁷ commercial law.

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imprudent, and you know I admit you as a lover no farther than fashion sanctions.

JOSEPH S. True, a mere platonic cicisbeo²⁸—what every wife is entitled to.

LADY T. Certainly, one must not be out of the fashion. However, I have so much of my country prejudices left, that, though Sir Peter's ill-humor may vex me ever so, it never shall provoke me to——

JOSEPH S. The only revenge in your power. Well; I applaud your moderation.

LADY T. Go; you are an insinuating wretch. But we shall be missed; let us join the company.

JOSEPH S. But we had best not return together.

LADY T. Well, don't stay; for Maria sha'n't come to hear any more of your reasoning, I promise you. [*exit LADY TEAZLE*]

JOSEPH S. A curious dilemma my politics have run me into! I wanted, at first, only to ingratiate myself with Lady Teazle, that she might not be my enemy with Maria; and I have, I don't know how, become her serious lover. Sincerely I begin to wish I had never made such a point of gaining so very good a character, for it has led me into so many cursed rogueries that I doubt I shall be exposed at last. [*exit*]

SCENE III.

SIR PETER TEAZLE'S

Enter ROWLEY and SIR OLIVER SURFACE

SIR OLIVER S. Ha! ha! ha! So my old friend is married, hey?—a young wife out of the country. Ha! ha! ha! that he should have stood bluff to old bachelor so long, and sink into a husband at last.

ROWLEY. But you must not rally him on the subject, Sir Oliver; 'tis a tender point, I assure you, though he has been married only seven months.

SIR OLIVER S. Then he has been just half a year on the stool of repentance! Poor Peter! But you say he has entirely given up Charles; never sees him, hey?

ROWLEY. His prejudice against him is aston-

ishing, and I am sure greatly increased by a jealousy of him with Lady Teazle, which he has industriously been led into by a scandalous society in the neighborhood, who have contributed not a little to Charles's ill name. Whereas the truth is, I believe, if the lady is partial to either of them, his brother is the favorite.

SIR OLIVER S. Ay, I know there is a set of malicious, prating, prudent gossips, both male and female, who murder characters to kill time; and will rob a young fellow of his good name, before he has years to know the value of it. But I am not to be prejudiced against my nephew by such, I promise you. No, no; if Charles has done nothing false or mean, I shall compound²⁹ for his extravagance.

ROWLEY. Then, my life on't, you will reclaim him. Ah, sir! it gives me new life to find that your heart is not turned against him; and that the son of my good old master has one friend, however, left.

SIR OLIVER S. What, shall I forget, Master Rowley, when I was at his years myself? Egad, my brother and I were neither of us very prudent youths; and yet, I believe, you have not seen many better men than your old master was.

ROWLEY. Sir, 'tis this reflection gives me assurance that Charles may yet be a credit to his family. But here comes Sir Peter.

SIR OLIVER S. Egad, so he does. Mercy on me! he's greatly altered, and seems to have a settled married look! One may read *husband* in his face at this distance!

Enter SIR PETER TEAZLE

SIR PETER T. Ha! Sir Oliver, my old friend! Welcome to England a thousand times!

SIR OLIVER S. Thank you—thank you, Sir Peter! and i' faith I am glad to find you well, believe me.

SIR PETER T. Oh! 'tis a long time since we met—fifteen years, I doubt, Sir Oliver, and many a cross accident in the time.

SIR OLIVER S. Ay, I have had my share. But what! I find you are married, hey? Well, well, it can't be helped; and so—I wish you joy with all my heart.

²⁸ lover or escort of a married woman.

²⁹ make allowances (in the settlement).

SIR PETER T. Thank you, thank you, Sir Oliver. Yes, I have entered into—the happy state; but we'll not talk of that now.

SIR OLIVER S. True, true, Sir Peter; old friends should not begin on grievances at first meeting; no, no, no.

ROWLEY. Take care, pray, sir.

SIR OLIVER S. Well, so one of my nephews is a wild fellow, hey?

SIR PETER T. Wild! Ah! my old friend, I grieve for your disappointment there, he's a lost young man, indeed. However, his brother will make you amends. Joseph is, indeed, what a youth should be. Everybody in the world speaks well of him.

SIR OLIVER S. I am sorry to hear it, he has too good a character to be an honest fellow. Everybody speaks well of him! Pshaw! then he has bowed as low to knaves and fools as to the honest dignity of genius and virtue.

SIR PETER T. What, Sir Oliver! do you blame him for not making enemies?

SIR OLIVER S. Yes, if he has merit enough to deserve them.

SIR PETER T. Well, well, you'll be convinced when you know him. 'Tis edification to hear him converse, he professes the noblest sentiments.

SIR OLIVER S. Oh! plague of his sentiments! If he salutes me with a scrap of morality in his mouth, I shall be sick directly. But, however, don't mistake me, Sir Peter, I don't mean to defend Charles's errors; but before I form my judgment of either of them, I intend to make a trial of their hearts; and my friend Rowley and I have planned something for the purpose.

ROWLEY. And Sir Peter shall own for once he has been mistaken.

SIR PETER T. Oh! my life on Joseph's honor.

SIR OLIVER S. Well—come, give us a bottle of good wine, and we'll drink the lad's health, and tell you our scheme.

SIR PETER T. *Allons,*³⁰ then!

SIR OLIVER S. And don't, Sir Peter, be so severe against your old friend's son. Odds my life! I am not sorry that he has run out of the course a little; for my part I hate to see prudence clinging to the green suckers of youth, 'tis like ivy round a sapling, and spoils the growth of the tree. [*exeunt*]

ACT III

SCENE I.

SIR PETER TEAZLE'S

Enter SIR PETER TEAZLE, SIR OLIVER SURFACE, and ROWLEY

SIR PETER T. Well, then, we will see this fellow first, and have our wine afterwards; but how is this, Master Rowley? I don't see the jest of your scheme.

ROWLEY. Why, sir, this Mr. Stanley, who I was speaking of, is nearly related to them by their mother. He was a merchant in Dublin, but has been ruined by a series of undeserved misfortunes. He has applied, by letter, to Mr. Surface and Charles; from the former he has received nothing but evasive promises of future service, while Charles has done all that his extravagance has left him power to do, and he is, at this time, endeavoring to raise a sum of money, part of which, in the midst of his own distresses, I know he intends for the service of poor Stanley.

SIR OLIVER S. Ah! he is my brother's son.

SIR PETER T. Well, but how is Sir Oliver personally to—

ROWLEY. Why, sir, I will inform Charles and his brother that Stanley has obtained permission to apply personally to his friends, and as they have neither of them ever seen him, let Sir Oliver assume his character, and he will have a fair opportunity of judging, at least, of the benevolence of their dispositions; and believe me, sir, you will find in the youngest brother one who, in the midst of folly and dissipation, has still, as our immortal bard expresses it, "a heart to pity, and a hand, open as day, for melting charity."³¹

SIR PETER T. Pshaw! What signifies his having an open hand or purse either, when he has nothing left to give? Well, well, make the trial, if you please. But where is the fellow whom you brought for Sir Oliver to examine, relative to Charles's affairs?

ROWLEY. Below, waiting his commands, and no one can give him better intelligence. This, Sir Oliver, is a friendly Jew, who, to do him justice, has done everything in his power to

³⁰ Let's go.

³¹ misquoted from *Henry IV, Part Two*.

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bring your nephew to a proper sense of his extravagance.

SIR PETER T. Pray let us have him in.

ROWLEY. [*apart to SERVANT*] Desire Mr. Moses to walk upstairs.

SIR PETER T. But pray, why should you suppose he will speak the truth?

ROWLEY. Oh! I have convinced him that he has no chance of recovering certain sums advanced to Charles, but through the bounty of Sir Oliver, who he knows is arrived, so that you may depend on his fidelity to his own interests. I have also another evidence in my power—one Snake, whom I have detected in a matter little short of forgery, and shall speedily produce him to remove some of your prejudices.

SIR PETER T. I have heard too much on that subject.

ROWLEY. Here comes the honest Israelite.

Enter MOSES

This is Sir Oliver.

SIR OLIVER S. Sir, I understand you have lately had great dealings with my nephew, Charles.

MOSES. Yes, Sir Oliver, I have done all I could for him; but he was ruined before he came to me for assistance.

SIR OLIVER S. That was unlucky, truly; for you have had no opportunity of showing your talents.

MOSES. None at all; I hadn't the pleasure of knowing his distresses till he was some thousands worse than nothing.

SIR OLIVER S. Unfortunate, indeed! But I suppose you have done all in your power for him, honest Moses?

MOSES. Yes, he knows that. This very evening I was to have brought him a gentleman from the city, who does not know him, and will, I believe, advance him some money.

SIR PETER T. What! one Charles has never had money from before?

MOSES. Yes; Mr. Premium, of Crutched Friars, formerly a broker.

SIR PETER T. Egad, Sir Oliver, a thought strikes me! Charles, you say, does not know Mr. Premium?

MOSES. Not at all.

SIR PETER T. Now then, Sir Oliver, you may

have a better opportunity of satisfying yourself than by an old romancing tale of a poor relation. Go with my friend Moses, and represent Premium, and then, I'll answer for it, you'll see your nephew in all his glory.

SIR OLIVER S. Egad, I like this idea better than the other, and I may visit Joseph afterwards as Old Stanley.

SIR PETER T. True, so you may.

ROWLEY. Well, this is taking Charles rather at a disadvantage, to be sure. However, Moses, you understand Sir Peter, and will be faithful.

MOSES. You may depend upon me. This is near the time I was to have gone.

SIR OLIVER S. I'll accompany you as soon as you please, Moses. But hold! I have forgot one thing—how the plague shall I be able to pass for a Jew?

MOSES. There's no need—the principal is Christian.

SIR OLIVER S. Is he? I'm very sorry to hear it. But then, again, a'n't I rather too smartly dressed to look like a money lender?

SIR PETER T. Not at all; 'twould not be out of character if you went in your own carriage—would it, Moses?

MOSES. Not in the least.

SIR OLIVER S. Well, but how must I talk? There's certainly some cant of usury and mode of treating that I ought to know.

SIR PETER T. Oh! there's not much to learn. The great point, as I take it, is to be exorbitant enough in your demands—hey, Moses?

MOSES. Yes, that's a very great point.

SIR OLIVER S. I'll answer for't I'll not be wanting in that. I'll ask him eight or ten per cent. on the loan, at least.

MOSES. If you ask him no more than that, you'll be discovered immediately.

SIR OLIVER S. Hey! what the plague! How much, then?

MOSES. That depends upon the circumstances. If he appears not very anxious for the supply, you should require only forty or fifty per cent.; but if you find him in great distress, and want the moneys very bad, you may ask double.

SIR PETER T. A good honest trade you're learning, Sir Oliver!

SIR OLIVER S. Truly, I think so; and not unprofitable.

MOSES. Then, you know, you hav'n't the

moneys yourself, but are forced to borrow them for him of an old friend.

SIR OLIVER S. Oh! I borrow it of a friend, do I?

MOSES. And your friend is an unconscionable dog; but you can't help that.

SIR OLIVER S. My friend an unconscionable dog?

MOSES. Yes, and he himself has not the moneys by him, but is forced to sell stock at a great loss.

SIR OLIVER S. He is forced to sell stock at a great loss, is he? Well, that's very kind of him.

SIR PETER T. I' faith, Sir Oliver—Mr. Premium, I mean—you'll soon be master of the trade. But, Moses! would not you have him run out a little against the Annuity Bill? That would be in character, I should think.

MOSES. Very much.

ROWLEY. And lament that a young man now must be at years of discretion before he is suffered to ruin himself?

MOSES. Ay, great pity!

SIR PETER T. And abuse the public for allowing merit to an Act whose only object is to snatch misfortune and imprudence from the rapacious grip of usury, and give the minor a chance of inheriting his estate without being undone by coming into possession.

SIR OLIVER S. So, so, Moses shall give me further instructions as we go together.

SIR PETER T. You will not have much time, for your nephew lives hard by.

SIR OLIVER S. Oh! never fear; my tutor appears so able, that though Charles lived in the next street, it must be my own fault if I am not a complete rogue before I turn the corner. [*exit SIR OLIVER SURFACE and MOSES*]

SIR PETER T. So now, I think Sir Oliver will be convinced. You are partial, Rowley, and would have prepared Charles for the other plot.

ROWLEY. No, upon my word, Sir Peter.

SIR PETER T. Well, go bring me this Snake, and I'll hear what he has to say presently. I see Maria, and want to speak with her. [*exit ROWLEY*] I should be glad to be convinced my suspicions of Lady Teazle and Charles were unjust. I have never yet opened my mind on this subject to my friend Joseph. I am determined I will do it; he will give me his opinion sincerely.

Enter MARIA

So, child, has Mr. Surface returned with you?

MARIA. No, sir; he was engaged.

SIR PETER T. Well, Maria, do you not reflect, the more you converse with that amiable young man, what return his partiality for you deserves?

MARIA. Indeed, Sir Peter, your frequent importunity on this subject distresses me extremely; you compel me to declare that I know no man who has ever paid me a particular attention whom I would not prefer to Mr. Surface.

SIR PETER T. So, here's perverseness! No, no, Maria, 'tis Charles only whom you would prefer. 'Tis evident his vices and follies have won your heart.

MARIA. This is unkind, sir. You know I have obeyed you in neither seeing nor corresponding with him. I have heard enough to convince me that he is unworthy my regard. Yet I cannot think it culpable, if, while my understanding severely condemns his vices, my heart suggests some pity for his distresses.

SIR PETER T. Well, well, pity him as much as you please; but give your heart and hand to a worthier object.

MARIA. Never to his brother!

SIR PETER T. Go, perverse and obstinate! But take care, madam; you have never yet known what the authority of a guardian is. Don't compel me to inform you of it.

MARIA. I can only say, you shall not have just reason. 'Tis true, by my father's will, I am for a short period bound to regard you as his substitute; but must cease to think you so, when you would compel me to be miserable. [*exit MARIA*]

SIR PETER T. Was ever man so crossed as I am? Everything conspiring to fret me! I had not been involved in matrimony a fortnight, before her father, a hale and hearty man, died, on purpose, I believe, for the pleasure of plaguing me with the care of his daughter. But here comes my helpmate! She appears in great good humor. How happy I should be if I could tease her into loving me, though but a little!

Enter LADY TEAZLE

LADY T. Lud! Sir Peter, I hope you hav'n't been quarrelling with Maria? It is not using me

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well to be ill humored when I am not by.

SIR PETER T. Ah! Lady Teazle, you might have the power to make me good humored at all times.

LADY T. I am sure I wish I had; for I want you to be in a charming sweet temper at this moment. Do be good humored now, and let me have two hundred pounds, will you?

SIR PETER T. Two hundred pounds! What, a'n't I to be in a good humor without paying for it? But speak to me thus, and i' faith there's nothing I could refuse you. You shall have it; but seal me a bond for the repayment.

LADY T. Oh, no—there. My note of hand will do as well. [*offering her hand*]

SIR PETER T. And you shall no longer reproach me with not giving you an independent settlement. I mean shortly to surprise you. But shall we always live thus, hey?

LADY T. If you please. I'm sure I don't care how soon we leave off quarrelling, provided you'll own you were tired first.

SIR PETER T. Well, then let our future contest be, who shall be most obliging.

LADY T. I assure you, Sir Peter, good nature becomes you. You look now as you did before we were married, when you used to walk with me under the elms, and tell me stories of what a gallant you were in your youth, and chuck me under the chin, you would; and ask me if I thought I could love an old fellow who would deny me nothing—didn't you?

SIR PETER T. Yes, yes; and you were as kind and attentive—

LADY T. Ay, so I was, and would always take your part, when my acquaintance used to abuse you, and turn you into ridicule.

SIR PETER T. Indeed!

LADY T. Ay, and when my cousin Sophy has called you a stiff, peevish old bachelor, and laughed at me for thinking of marrying one who might be my father, I have always defended you, and said, I didn't think you so ugly by any means, and I dared say you'd make a very good sort of a husband.

SIR PETER T. And you prophesied right; and we shall now be the happiest couple—

LADY T. And never differ again?

SIR PETER T. No, never! Though at the same time, indeed, my dear Lady Teazle, you must watch your temper very seriously; for in all our little quarrels, my dear, if you recollect, my

love, you always began first.

LADY T. I beg your pardon, my dear Sir Peter: indeed, you always gave the provocation.

SIR PETER T. Now see, my angel! take care; contradicting isn't the way to keep friends.

LADY T. Then don't you begin it, my love!

SIR PETER T. There, now! you—you are going on. You don't perceive, my life, that you are just doing the very thing which you know always makes me angry.

LADY T. Nay, you know if you will be angry without any reason, my dear—

SIR PETER T. There! now you want to quarrel again.

LADY T. No, I am sure I don't; but if you will be so peevish—

SIR PETER T. There now! who begins first?

LADY T. Why you, to be sure. I said nothing; but there's no bearing your temper.

SIR PETER T. No, no, madam; the fault's in your own temper.

LADY T. Ay, you are just what my cousin Sophy said you would be.

SIR PETER T. Your cousin Sophy is a forward, impertinent gipsy.

LADY T. You are a great bear, I'm sure, to abuse my relations.

SIR PETER T. Now may all the plagues of marriage be doubled on me, if ever I try to be friends with you any more!

LADY T. So much the better.

SIR PETER T. No, no, madam; 'tis evident you never cared a pin for me, and I was a madman to marry you—a pert, rural coquette, that had refused half the honest squires in the neighborhood.

LADY T. And I am sure I was a fool to marry you; an old dangling bachelor, who was single at fifty, only because he never could meet with any one who would have him.

SIR PETER T. Ay, ay, madam; but you were pleased enough to listen to me; you never had such an offer before.

LADY T. No! didn't I refuse Sir Tivy Terrier, who everybody said would have been a better match? for his estate is just as good as yours, and he has broke his neck since we have been married.

SIR PETER T. I have done with you, madam! You are an unfeeling, ungrateful—but there's an end to everything. I believe you capable of

everything that is bad. Yes, madam, I now believe the reports relative to you and Charles, madam. Yes, madam, *you* and Charles are—not without grounds—

LADY T. Take care, Sir Peter; you had better not insinuate any such thing! I'll not be suspected without cause, I promise you.

SIR PETER T. Very well, madam! very well! A separate maintenance as soon as you please. Yes, madam, or a divorce! I'll make an example of myself for the benefit of all old bachelors. Let us separate, madam.

LADY T. Agreed, agreed! And now, my dear Sir Peter, we are of a mind once more, we may be the happiest couple, and never differ again, you know—ha! ha! ha! Well, you are going to be in a passion, I see, and I shall only interrupt you; so, bye—bye. *[exit]*

SIR PETER T. Plagues and tortures! Can't I make her angry either! Oh, I am the most miserable fellow! but I'll not bear her presuming to keep her temper; no! she may break my heart, but she sha'n't keep her temper. *[exit]*

SCENE II.

CHARLES SURFACE'S HOUSE

Enter TRIP, MOSES, and SIR OLIVER SURFACE.

TRIP. Here, Master Moses! if you'll stay a moment, I'll try whether—what's the gentleman's name?

SIR OLIVER S. Mr. Moses, what is my name?

MOSES. Mr. Premium.

TRIP. Premium—very well. *[exit TRIP, taking snuff]*

SIR OLIVER S. To judge by the servants, one wouldn't believe the master was ruined. But what!—sure, this was my brother's house?

MOSES. Yes, sir; Mr. Charles bought it of Mr. Joseph, with the furniture, pictures, &c., just as the old gentleman left it. Sir Peter thought it a piece of extravagance in him.

SIR OLIVER S. In my mind, the other's economy in selling it to him was more reprehensible by half.

Enter TRIP

TRIP. My master says you must wait, gentlemen; he has company, and can't speak with you yet.

SIR OLIVER S. If he knew who it was wanted to see him, perhaps he would not send such a

message?

TRIP. Yes, yes, sir; he knows you are here, I did not forget little Premium; no, no, no.

SIR OLIVER S. Very well, and I pray, sir, what may be your name?

TRIP. Trip, sir; my name is Trip, at your service.

SIR OLIVER S. Well, then, Mr. Trip, you have a pleasant sort of place here, I guess?

TRIP. Why, yes; here are three or four of us pass our time agreeably enough, but then our wages are sometimes a little in arrear—and not very great either—but fifty pounds a year, and find our own bags and bouquets.

SIR OLIVER S. *[aside]* Bags and bouquets! halters and bastinadoes!

TRIP. And, *à propos*, Moses: have you been able to get me that little bill discounted?

SIR OLIVER S. *[aside]* Wants to raise money too! mercy on me! Has his distresses too, I warrant, like a lord, and affects creditors and duns.

MOSES. 'Twas not to be done, indeed, Mr. Trip.

TRIP. Good luck, you surprise me! My friend Brush has indorsed it, and I thought when he put his name on the back of a bill 'twas the same as cash.

MOSES. No! 'twouldn't do.

TRIP. A small sum; but twenty pounds. Hark'ee, Moses, do you think you couldn't get it me by way of annuity?

SIR OLIVER S. *[aside]* An annuity! ha! ha! a footman raise money by way of annuity!

Well done, luxury, egad!

MOSES. Well, but you must insure your place.

TRIP. Oh, with all my heart! I'll insure my place, and my life, too, if you please.

SIR OLIVER S. *[aside]* It is more than I would your neck.

MOSES. But is there nothing you could deposit?

TRIP. Why, nothing capital of my master's wardrobe has dropped lately; but I could give you a mortgage on some of his winter clothes, with equity of redemption before November; or you shall have the reversion of the French velvet, or a post-obit³² on the blue and silver:

³² *post obitum*, Latin for "after death"; here, a note secured by expected legacy.

THE DRAMA · RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN

these, I should think, Moses, with a few pair of point ruffles, as a collateral security; hey, my little fellow?

MOSES. Well, well. [bell rings]

TRIP. Egad, I heard the bell! I believe, gentlemen, I can now introduce you. Don't forget the annuity, little Moses! This way, gentlemen. I'll insure my place, you know.

SIR OLIVER S. If the man be a shadow of the master, this is the temple of dissipation indeed. [exeunt]

SCENE III.

CHARLES SURFACE, [SIR HARRY BUMPER,]

CARELESS, &c., &c. [discovered] at a table with wine, &c.

CHARLES S. 'Fore heaven, 'tis true! there's the great degeneracy of the age. Many of our acquaintance have taste, spirit, and politeness; but, plague on't, they won't drink.

CARELESS. It is so indeed, Charles! they give in to all the substantial luxuries of the table, and abstain from nothing but wine and wit. Oh, certainly society suffers by it intolerably; for now, instead of the social spirit of raillery that used to mantle over a glass of bright Burgundy, their conversation is become just like the Spa water they drink, which has all the pertness and flatulence of Champagne, without the spirit or flavor.

1ST GENT. But what are they to do who love play better than wine?

CARELESS. True; there's Sir Harry diets himself for gaming, and is now under a hazard regimen.

CHARLES S. Then he'll have the worst of it. What! you wouldn't train a horse for the course by keeping him from corn? For my part, egad, I am never so successful as when I am a little merry; let me throw on a bottle of Champagne, and I never lose; at least, I never feel my losses, which is exactly the same thing.

2ND GENT. Ay, that I believe.

CHARLES S. And then, what man can pretend to be a believer in love, who is an abjurer of wine? 'Tis the test by which the lover knows his own heart. Fill a dozen bumpers to a dozen beauties, and she that floats atop is the maid that has bewitched you.

CARELESS. Now then, Charles, be honest, and give us your real favorite.

CHARLES S. Why, I have withheld her only

in compassion to you. If I toast her, you must give a round of her peers, which is impossible —on earth.

CARELESS. Oh! then we'll find some canonized vestals or heathen goddesses that will do, I warrant!

CHARLES S. Here then, bumpers, you rogues! bumpers! Marial Marial!

SIR HARRY B. Maria who?

CHARLES S. Oh, damn the surname; 'tis too formal to be registered in Love's calendar; but now, Sir Harry, beware, we must have beauty superlative.

CARELESS. Nay, never study, Sir Harry; we'll stand to the toast, though your mistress should want an eye, and you know you have a song will excuse you.

SIR HARRY B. Egad, so I have! and I'll give him the song instead of the lady.

SONG

Here's to the maiden of bashful fifteen;
Here's to the widow of fifty;
Here's to the flaunting extravagant quean,
And here's to the housewife that's thrifty

Chorus. Let the toast pass,
Drink to the lass,
I'll warrant she'll prove an excuse for the glass.

Here's to the charmer whose dimples we prize;
Now to the maid who has none, sir;
Here's to the girl with a pair of blue eyes,
And here's to the nymph with but one, sir.

Chorus. Let the toast pass, &c.

Here's to the maid with a bosom of snow;
Now to her that's as brown as a berry;
Here's to the wife with a face full of woe,
And now to the girl that is merry.

Chorus. Let the toast pass, &c.

For let 'em be clumsy, or let 'em be slim,
Young or ancient, I care not a feather;
So fill a pint bumper quite up to the brim,
And let us e'en toast them together.

Chorus. Let the toast pass, &c.

ALL. Bravol bravol!

Enter TRIP, and whispers to CHARLES SURFACE

CHARLES S. Gentlemen, you must excuse me a little. Careless, take the chair, will you?

CARELESS. Nay, pr'ythee, Charles, what now? This is one of your peerless beauties, I

suppose, has dropt in by chance?

CHARLES S. No, faith! To tell you the truth 'tis a Jew and a broker, who are come by appointment.

CARELESS. Oh, damn it! let's have the Jew in.

1ST GENT. Ay, and the broker too, by all means.

2ND GENT. Yes, yes, the Jew and the broker.

CHARLES S. Egad, with all my heart! Trip, bid the gentlemen walk in; though there's one of them a stranger, I can tell you.

CARELESS. Charles, let us give them some generous Burgundy, and perhaps they'll grow conscientious.

CHARLES S. Oh, hang 'em, no! wine does but draw forth a man's natural qualities, and to make them drink would only be to whet their knavery.

Enter TRIP, SIR OLIVER SURFACE, and

MOSES

CHARLES S. So, honest Moses, walk in; walk in, pray, Mr. Premium—that's the gentleman's name, isn't it, Moses?

MOSES. Yes, sir.

CHARLES S. Set chairs, Trip—sit down, Mr. Premium—glasses, Trip—sit down, Moses. Come, Mr. Premium, I'll give you a sentiment; here's *Success to usury!* Moses, fill the gentleman a bumper.

MOSES. *Success to usury!*

CARELESS. Right, Moses; usury is prudence and industry, and deserves to succeed.

SIR OLIVER S. Then, *here's all the success it deserves!*

CARELESS. No, no, that won't do! Mr. Premium, you have demurred at the toast, and must drink it in a pint bumper.

1ST GENT. A pint bumper, at least.

MOSES. Oh, pray, sir, consider; Mr. Premium's a gentleman.

CARELESS. And therefore loves good wine.

2ND GENT. Give Moses a quart glass; this is mutiny, and a high contempt for the chair.

CARELESS. Here, now for't! I'll see justice done, to the last drop of my bottle.

SIR OLIVER S. Nay, pray, gentlemen; I did not expect this usage.

CHARLES S. No, hang it, you sha'n't! Mr. Premium's a stranger.

SIR OLIVER S. [*aside*] Odd! I wish I was well out of their company.

CARELESS. Plague on 'em, then! if they don't drink, we'll not sit down with them. Come, Harry, the dice are in the next room. Charles, you'll join us when you have finished your business with the gentlemen!

CHARLES S. I will! I will! [*exunt*] Careless!

CARELESS. [*returning*] Well!

CHARLES S. Perhaps I may want you.

CARELESS. Oh, you know I am always ready: word, note, or bond, 'tis all the same to me. [*exit*]

MOSES. Sir, this is Mr. Premium, a gentleman of the strictest honor and secrecy and always performs what he undertakes. Mr. Premium, this is—

CHARLES S. Pshaw! have done. Sir, my friend Moses is a very honest fellow, but a little slow at expression; he'll be an hour giving us our titles. Mr. Premium, the plain state of the matter is this: I am an extravagant young fellow who wants to borrow money; you I take to be a prudent old fellow, who have got money to lend. I am blockhead enough to give fifty per cent. sooner than not have it; and you, I presume, are rogue enough to take a hundred if you can get it. Now, sir, you see we are acquainted at once, and may proceed to business without further ceremony.

SIR OLIVER S. Exceeding frank, upon my word. I see, sir, you are not a man of many compliments.

CHARLES S. Oh, no, sir! plain dealing in business I always think best.

SIR OLIVER S. Sir, I like you the better for it; however, you are mistaken in one thing; I have no money to lend, but I believe I could procure some of a friend; but then he's an unconscionable dog, isn't he, Moses?

MOSES. But you can't help that.

SIR OLIVER S. And must sell stock to accommodate you—mustn't he, Moses?

MOSES. Yes, indeed! You know I always speak the truth, and scorn to tell a lie!

CHARLES S. Right. People that speak truth generally do; but these are trifles, Mr. Premium. What! I know money isn't to be bought without paying for't!

SIR OLIVER S. Well; but what security could you give? You have no land, I suppose?

CHARLES S. Not a molehill, nor a twig, but what's in the bough-pots out of the window!

SIR OLIVER S. Nor any stock, I presume?

CHARLES S. Nothing but live stock, and that's

only a few pointers and ponies. But pray, Mr. Premium, are you acquainted at all with any of my connections?

SIR OLIVER S. Why, to say truth, I am.

CHARLES S. Then you must know that I have a dev'lish rich uncle in the East Indies, Sir Oliver Surface, from whom I have the greatest expectations?

SIR OLIVER S. That you have a wealthy uncle I have heard; but how your expectations will turn out is more, I believe, than you can tell.

CHARLES S. Oh, no! there can be no doubt. They tell me I'm a prodigious favorite, and that he talks of leaving me everything.

SIR OLIVER S. Indeed! this is the first I've heard of it.

CHARLES S. Yes, yes, 'tis just so. Moses knows 'tis true; don't you, Moses?

MOSES. Oh, yes! I'll swear to't.

SIR OLIVER S. [*aside*] Egad, they'll persuade me presently I'm at Bengal.

CHARLES S. Now, I propose, Mr. Premium, if it's agreeable to you, a post-obit on Sir Oliver's life; though at the same time the old fellow has been so liberal to me that I give you my word I should be very sorry to hear that anything had happened to him.

SIR OLIVER S. Not more than I should, I assure you. But the bond you mention happens to be just the worst security you could offer me, for I might live to a hundred, and never see the principal.

CHARLES S. Oh, yes, you would; the moment Sir Oliver dies, you know, you would come on me for the money.

SIR OLIVER S. Then I believe I should be the most unwelcome dun you ever had in your life.

CHARLES S. What! I suppose you're afraid that Sir Oliver is too good a life?

SIR OLIVER S. No, indeed, I am not; though I have heard he is as hale and healthy as any man of his years in Christendom.

CHARLES S. There again now you are misinformed. No, no, the climate has hurt him considerably, poor uncle Oliver! Yes, yes, he breaks apace, I'm told, and is so much altered lately that his nearest relations don't know him.

SIR OLIVER S. No! ha! ha! ha! so much altered lately, that his nearest relations don't know him! ha! ha! ha! egad—ha! ha! ha!

CHARLES S. Ha! ha! you're glad to hear that,

little Premium?

SIR OLIVER S. No, no, I'm not.

CHARLES S. Yes, yes, you are—ha! ha! ha! You know that mends your chance.

SIR OLIVER S. But I'm told Sir Oliver is coming over? Nay, some say he is actually arrived?

CHARLES S. Pshaw! Sure I must know better than you whether he's come or not. No, no; rely on't, he's at this moment at Calcutta. Isn't he, Moses?

MOSES. Oh, yes, certainly.

SIR OLIVER S. Very true, as you say, you must know better than I, though I have it from pretty good authority. Haven't I, Moses?

MOSES. Yes, most undoubtedly!

SIR OLIVER S. But, sir, as I understand you want a few hundreds immediately, is there nothing you could dispose of?

CHARLES S. How do you mean?

SIR OLIVER S. For instance, now, I have heard that your father left behind him a great quantity of massive old plate?

CHARLES S. O Lud! that's gone long ago. Moses can tell you how better than I can.

SIR OLIVER S. [*aside*] Good luck! all the family race-cups and corporation-bowls!—[*aloud*] Then it was also supposed that his library was one of the most valuable and compact—

CHARLES S. Yes, yes, so it was—vastly too much so for a private gentleman. For my part, I was always of a communicative disposition, so I thought it a shame to keep so much knowledge to myself.

SIR OLIVER S. [*aside*] Mercy upon me! Learning that had run in the family like an heirloom!—[*aloud*] Pray, what are become of the books?

CHARLES S. You must inquire of the auctioneer, Master Premium, for I don't believe even Moses can direct you.

MOSES. I know nothing of books.

SIR OLIVER S. So, so, nothing of the family property left, I suppose?

CHARLES S. Not much, indeed; unless you have a mind to the family pictures. I have got a room full of ancestors above, and if you have a taste for paintings, egad, you shall have 'em a bargain.

SIR OLIVER S. Hey! what the devil! sure, you wouldn't sell your forefathers, would you?

CHARLES S. Every man of them to the best bidder.

SIR OLIVER S. What! your great uncles and aunts?

CHARLES S. Ay, and my great grandfathers and grandmothers too.

SIR OLIVER S. [*aside*] Now I give him up.—
[*aloud*] What the plague, have you no bowels for your own kindred? Odd's life, do you take me for Shylock in the play, that you would raise money of me on your own flesh and blood?

CHARLES S. Nay, my little broker, don't be angry: what need you care if you have your money's worth?

SIR OLIVER S. Well, I'll be the purchaser: I think I can dispose of the family canvas.—
[*aside*] Oh, I'll never forgive him this! never!

Enter CARELESS

CARELESS. Come, Charles, what keeps you?

CHARLES S. I can't come yet: i'faith, we are going to have a sale above stairs, here's little Premium will buy all my ancestors.

CARELESS. Oh, burn your ancestors!

CHARLES S. No, he may do that afterwards, if he pleases. Stay, Careless, we want you, egad, you shall be auctioneer, so come along with us.

CARELESS. Oh, have with you, if that's the case. [I can] handle a hammer as well as a dice-box!

SIR OLIVER S. [*aside*] Oh, the profligates!

CHARLES S. Come, Moses, you shall be appraiser, if we want one. Gad's life, little Premium, you don't seem to like the business?

SIR OLIVER S. Oh, yes, I do, vastly. Ha! ha! ha! yes, yes, I think it a rare joke to sell one's family by auction—ha! ha!—[*aside*] Oh, the prodigal!

CHARLES S. To be sure! when a man wants money, where the plague should he get assistance if he can't make free with his own relations? [*exeunt*]

ACT IV

SCENE I.

Picture room at CHARLES'S

Enter CHARLES SURFACE, SIR OLIVER SURFACE, MOSES, and CARELESS

CHARLES S. Walk in, gentlemen; pray walk in. Here they are, the family of the Surfaces, up to the Conquest.

SIR OLIVER S. And, in my opinion, a goodly collection.

CHARLES S. Ay, ay; these are done in the true spirit of portrait painting; no *volontier* [*e*] *grace*³³ and expression. Not like the works of your modern Raphaels, who give you the strongest resemblance, yet contrive to make your portrait independent of you, so that you may sink the original and not hurt the picture. No, no; the merit of these is the inveterate likeness—all stiff and awkward as the originals, and like nothing in human nature besides.

SIR OLIVER S. Ah! we shall never see such figures of men again.

CHARLES S. I hope not. Well, you see, Master Premium, what a domestic character I am. Here I sit of an evening surrounded by my family. But come, get to your pulpit, Mr. Auctioneer; here's an old gouty chain of my grandfather's will answer the purpose

CARELESS. Ay, ay, this will do. But, Charles, I hav'n't a hammer, and what's an auctioneer without his hammer?

CHARLES S. Egad, that's true. What parchment have we here? Oh, our genealogy in full. Here, Careless, you shall have no common bit of mahogany, here's the family tree, for you, you rogue; this shall be your hammer, and now you may knock down my ancestors with their own pedigree.

SIR OLIVER S. [*aside*] What an unnatural rogue! an *ex post facto*³⁴ parricide!

CARELESS. Yes, yes, here's a bit of your generation indeed, faith, Charles, this is the most convenient thing you could have found for the business, for 'twill serve not only as a hammer, but a catalogue into the bargain. Come, begin,—A-going, a-going, a-going!

CHARLES S. Bravo, Careless! Well, here's my great uncle, Sir Richard Raveline, a marvellous good general in his day, I assure you. He served in all the Duke of Marlborough's wars, and got that cut over his eye at the battle of Malplaquet. What say you, Mr. Premium? look at him; there's a hero, not cut out of his feathers, as your modern clipp'd captains are, but enveloped in wig and regimentals, as a general should be. What do you bid?

MOSES. Mr. Premium would have you speak.

CHARLES S. Why, then, he shall have him for ten pounds, and I'm sure that's not dear for a staff-officer.

³³ freely tossed-off slickness.

³⁴ retroactive.

SIR OLIVER S. [*aside*] Heaven deliver me! his famous uncle Richard for ten pounds!—
[*aloud*] Well, sir, I take him at that.

CHARLES S. Careless, knock down my uncle Richard. Here, now, is a maiden sister of his, my great aunt Deborah, done by Kneller,³⁵ thought to be in his best manner, and a very formidable likeness. There she is, you see, a shepherdess feeding her flock. You shall have her for five pounds ten; the sheep are worth the money.

SIR OLIVER S. [*aside*] Ah! poor Deborah; a woman who set such a value on herself!—
[*aloud*] Five pounds ten; she's mine.

CHARLES S. Knock down my aunt Deborah! Here, now, are two that were a sort of cousins of theirs. You see, Moses, these pictures were done sometime ago, when beaux wore wigs, and the ladies their own hair.

SIR OLIVER S. Yes, truly, headdresses appear to have been a little lower in those days.

CHARLES S. Well, take that couple for the same.

MOSES. 'Tis a good bargain.

CHARLES S. Careless! This, now, is a grandfather of my mother, a learned judge, well known on the Western Circuit. What do you rate him at, Moses?

MOSES. Four guineas.

CHARLES S. Four guineas! Gad's life, you don't bid me the price of his wig. Mr. Premium, you have more respect for the wool-sack;³⁶ do let us knock his lordship down at fifteen.

SIR OLIVER S. By all means.

CARELESS. Gone!

CHARLES S. And there are two brothers of his, William and Walter Blunt, Esquires, both members of Parliament, and noted speakers, and what's very extraordinary, I believe, this is the first time they were ever bought or sold.

SIR OLIVER S. That is very extraordinary, indeed! I'll take them at your own price, for the honor of Parliament.

CARELESS. Well said, little Premium! I'll knock them down at forty.

CHARLES S. Here's a jolly fellow; I don't know what relation, but he was mayor of Man-

chester. Take him at eight pounds.

SIR OLIVER S. No, no; six will do for the mayor.

CHARLES S. Come, make it guineas, and I'll throw you the two aldermen there into the bargain.

SIR OLIVER S. They're mine.

CHARLES S. Careless, knock down the mayor and aldermen. But, plague on't, we shall be all day retailing in this manner. Do let us deal wholesale; what say you, little Premium? Give us three hundred pounds for the rest of the family in the lump.

CARELESS. Ay, ay, that will be the best way.

SIR OLIVER S. Well, well, anything to accommodate you—they are mine. But there is one portrait which you have always passed over.

CARELESS. What, that ill-looking little fellow over the settee?

SIR OLIVER S. Yes, sir, I mean that; though I don't think him so ill-looking a little fellow, by any means.

CHARLES S. What, that? Oh! that's my uncle Oliver; 'twas done before he went to India.

CARELESS. Your uncle Oliver! Gad, then, you'll never be friends, Charles. That, now, to me, is as stern a looking rogue as ever I saw—an unforgiving eye, and a damned disinheriting countenance! an inveterate knave, depend on't. Don't you think so, little Premium?

SIR OLIVER S. Upon my soul, sir, I do not. I think it is as honest a looking face as any in the room, dead or alive. But I suppose uncle Oliver goes with the rest of the lumber?

CHARLES S. No, hang it! I'll not part with poor Noll. The old fellow has been very good to me, and, egad, I'll keep his picture while I've a room to put it in.

SIR OLIVER S. [*aside*] The rogue's my nephew after all!—[*aloud*] But, sir, I have somehow taken a fancy to that picture.

CHARLES S. I'm sorry for't, for you certainly will not have it. Oons, haven't you got enough of them?

SIR OLIVER S. [*aside*] I forgive him everything!—[*aloud*] But, sir, when I take a whim in my head I don't value money. I'll give you as much for that as for all the rest.

CHARLES S. Don't tease me, master broker. I tell you I'll not part with it, and there's an end of it.

SIR OLIVER S. [*aside*] How like his father the

³⁵ Sir Godfrey Kneller (1646–1723).

³⁶ literally, the cushion used by the Lord Chancellor in the House of Lords; actually, the meaning here is respect for the law.

dog is!—[*aloud*] Well, well, I have done.—
[*aside*] I did not perceive it before, but I think I
never saw such a striking resemblance.—Here
is a draft for your sum.

CHARLES S. Why, 'tis for eight hundred
pounds.

SIR OLIVER S. You will not let Sir Oliver go?

CHARLES S. Zounds! no! I tell you once more.

SIR OLIVER S. Then never mind the differ-
ence, we'll balance that another time. But give
me your hand on the bargain; you are an
honest fellow, Charles. I beg pardon, sir, for
being so free. Come, Moses.

CHARLES S. Egad, this is a whimsical old
fellow! But hark'ee, Premium, you'll prepare
lodgings for these gentlemen?

SIR OLIVER S. Yes, yes, I'll send for them in
a day or two.

CHARLES S. But, hold; do now send a gen-
teel conveyance for them, for, I assure you,
they were most of them used to ride in their
own carriages.

SIR OLIVER S. I will, I will; for all but Oliver.

CHARLES S. Ay, all but the little nabob.

SIR OLIVER S. You're fixed on that?

CHARLES S. Peremptorily.

SIR OLIVER S. [*aside*] A dear extravagant
rogue!—[*aloud*] Good day! Come, Moses. Let
me hear now who calls him profligate! [*exeunt*
SIR OLIVER SURFACE and MOSES]

CARELESS. Why, this is the oddest genius of
the sort I ever saw!

CHARLES S. Egad! he's the prince of brokers,
I think. I wonder how Moses got acquainted
with so honest a fellow. Ha! here's Rowley;
do, Careless, say I'll join the company in a
few moments.

CARELESS. I will; but don't let that old block-
head persuade you to squander any of that
money on old musty debts, or any such non-
sense; for tradesmen, Charles, are the most
exorbitant fellows.

CHARLES S. Very true, and paying them is
only encouraging them.

CARELESS. Nothing else.

CHARLES S. Ay, ay, never fear. [*exit* CARE-
LESS] Sol this was an odd old fellow, indeed.
Let me see; two-thirds of this is mine by right,
five hundred and thirty odd pounds. 'Fore
heaven! I find one's ancestors are more valuable
relations than I took them for! Ladies and
gentlemen, your most obedient and very grate-
ful servant.

Enter ROWLEY

Ha! old Rowley; egad, you are just come in
time to take leave of your old acquaintance.

ROWLEY. Yes, I heard they were a-going.
But I wonder you can have such spirits under
so many distresses.

CHARLES S. Why, there's the point! my dis-
tresses are so many, that I can't afford to part
with my spirits; but I shall be rich and sple-
netic, all in good time. However, I suppose
you are surprised that I am not more sorrow-
ful at parting with so many near relations; to
be sure 'tis very affecting; but you see they
never move a muscle, so why should I?

ROWLEY. There's no making you serious a
moment.

CHARLES S. Yes, faith, I am so now. Here,
my honest Rowley, here, get me this changed
directly, and take a hundred pounds of it im-
mediately to old Stanley.

ROWLEY. A hundred pounds! Consider
only—

CHARLES S. Gad's life, don't talk about it;
poor Stanley's wants are pressing, and if you
don't make haste, we shall have some one call
that has a better right to the money.

ROWLEY. Ah! there's the point! I never will
cease dunning you with the old proverb—

CHARLES S. "Be just before you're generous."
Why, so I would if I could; but Justice is an
old, lame, hobbling beldame, and I can't get
her to keep pace with Generosity for the soul
of me.

ROWLEY. Yet, Charles, believe me, one
hour's reflection—

CHARLES S. Ay, ay, it's all very true; but,
hark'ee, Rowley, while I have, by heaven, I'll
give; so damn your economy, and now for haz-
ard. [*exeunt*]

SCENE II.

The parlor

Enter SIR OLIVER SURFACE and MOSES

MOSES. Well, sir, I think, as Sir Peter said,
you have seen Mr. Charles in high glory; 'tis
great pity he's so extravagant.

SIR OLIVER S. True, but he would not sell my
picture.

MOSES. And loves wine and women so
much.

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SIR OLIVER S. But he would not sell my picture.

MOSES. And games so deep.

SIR OLIVER S. But he would not sell my picture. Oh, here's Rowley.

Enter ROWLEY

ROWLEY. So, Sir Oliver, I find you have made a purchase—

SIR OLIVER S. Yes, yes; our young rake has parted with his ancestors like old tapestry.

ROWLEY. And here has he commissioned me to re-deliver you part of the purchase money. I mean, though, in your necessitous character of old Stanley.

MOSES. Ah! there is the pity of it all; he is so damned charitable.

ROWLEY. And I left a hosier and two tailors in the hall, who, I'm sure, won't be paid, and this hundred would satisfy them.

SIR OLIVER S. Well, well, I'll pay his debts, and his benevolence too. But now I am no more a broker, and you shall introduce me to the elder brother as old Stanley.

ROWLEY. Not yet a while; Sir Peter, I know, means to call there about this time.

Enter TRIP

TRIP. Oh, gentlemen, I beg pardon for not showing you out; this way. Moses, a word. [*exeunt TRIP and MOSES*]

SIR OLIVER S. There's a fellow for you! Would you believe it, that puppy intercepted the Jew on our coming, and wanted to raise money before he got to his master.

ROWLEY. Indeed!

SIR OLIVER S. Yes, they are now planning an annuity business. Ah! Master Rowley, in my days servants were content with the follies of their masters, when they were worn a little threadbare; but now, they have their vices, like their birthday clothes, with the gloss on. [*exeunt*]

SCENE III.

A library

[*Discovered*] JOSEPH SURFACE and a SERVANT

JOSEPH S. No letter from Lady Teazle?

SERV. No, sir.

JOSEPH S. I am surprised she has not sent,

if she is prevented from coming. Sir Peter certainly does not suspect me. Yet, I wish I may not lose the heiress, through the scrape I have drawn myself into with the wife; however, Charles's imprudence and bad character are great points in my favor. [*knocking heard without*]

SERV. Sir, I believe that must be Lady Teazle.

JOSEPH S. Hold! see whether it is or not before you go to the door: I have a particular message for you, if it should be my brother.

SERV. 'Tis her ladyship, sir; she always leaves her chair at the milliner's in the next street.

JOSEPH S. Stay, stay; draw that screen before the window—that will do; my opposite neighbor is a maiden lady of so anxious a temper. [*SERVANT draws the screen, and exit*] I have a difficult hand to play in this affair. Lady Teazle has lately suspected my views on Maria; but she must by no means be let into that secret—at least, till I have her more in my power.

Enter LADY TEAZLE

LADY T. What, sentiment in soliloquy now? Have you been very impatient? O Lud! don't pretend to look grave. I vow I couldn't come before.

JOSEPH S. Oh, madam, punctuality is a species of constancy, a very unfashionable quality in a lady.

LADY T. Upon my word you ought to pity me. Do you know, Sir Peter is grown so ill-natured to me of late, and so jealous of Charles too; that's the best of the story, isn't it?

JOSEPH S. [*aside*] I am glad my scandalous friends keep that up.

LADY T. I am sure I wish he would let Maria marry him, and then perhaps he would be convinced. Don't you, Mr. Surface?

JOSEPH S. [*aside*] Indeed I do not.—Oh, certainly I do! for then my dear Lady Teazle would also be convinced how wrong her suspicions were of my having any design on the silly girl.

LADY T. Well, well, I'm inclined to believe you. But isn't it provoking, to have the most ill-natured things said of one? And there's my friend, Lady Sneerwell, has circulated I don't know how many scandalous tales of me, and

all without any foundation too; that's what vexes me.

JOSEPH S. Ay, madam, to be sure, that is the provoking circumstance—without foundation. Yes, yes, there's the mortification, indeed, for when a scandalous story is believed against one, there certainly is no comfort like the consciousness of having deserved it.

LADY T. No, to be sure, then I'd forgive their malice; but to attack me, who am really so innocent, and who never say an ill-natured thing of anybody—that is, of any friend; and then Sir Peter too, to have him so peevish, and so suspicious, when I know the integrity of my own heart! indeed 'tis monstrous!

JOSEPH S. But, my dear Lady Teazle, 'tis your own fault if you suffer it. When a husband entertains a groundless suspicion of his wife, and withdraws his confidence from her, the original compact is broken, and she owes it to the honor of her sex to outwit him.

LADY T. Indeed! so that if he suspects me without cause, it follows, that the best way of curing his jealousy is to give him reason for't.

JOSEPH S. Undoubtedly; for your husband should never be deceived in you; and in that case it becomes you to be frail in compliment to his discernment.

LADY T. To be sure, what you say is very reasonable, and when the consciousness of my innocence—

JOSEPH S. Ah! my dear madam, there is the great mistake: 'tis this very conscious innocence that is of the greatest prejudice to you. What is it makes you negligent of forms and careless of the world's opinion? Why, the consciousness of your own innocence. What makes you thoughtless in your own conduct, and apt to run into a thousand little imprudences? Why, the consciousness of your own innocence. What makes you impatient of Sir Peter's temper, and outrageous of his suspicions? Why, the consciousness of your innocence.

LADY T. 'Tis very true!

JOSEPH S. Now, my dear Lady Teazle, if you would but once make a trifling *faux pas*, you can't conceive how cautious you would grow, and how ready to humor and agree with your husband.

LADY T. Do you think so?

JOSEPH S. Oh! I'm sure on't; and then you would find all scandal would cease at once;

for, in short, your character at present is like a person in a plethora, absolutely dying from too much health.

LADY T. So, so; then I perceive your prescription is, that I must sin in my own defence, and part with my virtue to secure my reputation?

JOSEPH S. Exactly so, upon my credit, ma'am.

LADY T. Well, certainly this is the oddest doctrine and the newest receipt for avoiding calumny!

JOSEPH S. An infallible one, believe me. Prudence, like experience, must be paid for.

LADY T. Why, if my understanding were once convinced—

JOSEPH S. Oh, certainly, madam, your understanding should be convinced. Yes, yes; heaven forbid I should persuade you to do anything you thought wrong. No, no, I have too much honor to desire it.

LADY T. Don't you think we may as well leave *honor* out of the question?

JOSEPH S. Ah! the ill effects of your country education, I see, still remain with you.

LADY T. I doubt they do indeed; and I will fairly own to you, that if I could be persuaded to do wrong, it would be by Sir Peter's ill usage sooner than your *honorable logic*, after all.

JOSEPH S. Then, by this hand, which he is unworthy of—[*taking her hand*]

Enter SERVANT

S'death, you blockhead! What do you want? SERV. I beg your pardon, sir, but I thought you would not choose Sir Peter to come up without announcing him.

JOSEPH S. Sir Peter! Oons—the *devil*!

LADY T. Sir Peter! O Lud, I'm ruined! I'm ruined!

SERV. Sir, 'twasn't I let him in.

LADY T. Oh, I'm quite undone! What will become of me? Now, Mr. Logic. Oh! he's on the stairs. I'll get behind here; and if ever I'm so imprudent again—[*Goes behind the screen*]

JOSEPH S. Give me that book. [*sits down*]
SERVANT pretends to adjust his hair

Enter SIR PETER

SIR PETER T. Ay, ever improving himself. Mr. Surface! Mr. Surface!

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JOSEPH S. Oh! my dear Sir Peter, I beg your pardon. [*gaping, throws away the book*] I have been dozing over a stupid book. Well, I am much obliged to you for this call. You haven't been here, I believe, since I fitted up this room. Books, you know, are the only things in which I am a coxcomb.

SIR PETER T. 'Tis very neat indeed. Well, well, that's proper; and you can make even your screen a source of knowledge; hung, I perceive, with maps.

JOSEPH S. Oh, yes, I find great use in that screen.

SIR PETER T. I dare say, you must, certainly, when you want to find anything in a hurry.

JOSEPH S. [*aside*] Ay, or to hide anything in a hurry, either.

SIR PETER T. Well, I have a little private business—

JOSEPH S. [*to the servant*] You need not stay.

SERV. No, sir. [*exit*]

JOSEPH S. Here's a chair, Sir Peter, I beg—

SIR PETER T. Well, now we are alone, there is a subject, my dear friend, on which I wish to unburden my mind to you—a point of the greatest moment to my peace; in short, my dear friend, Lady Teazle's conduct of late has made me extremely unhappy.

JOSEPH S. Indeed! I am very sorry to hear it.

SIR PETER T. Ay, 'tis too plain she has not the least regard for me; but, what's worse, I have pretty good authority to suppose she has formed an attachment to another.

JOSEPH S. Indeed! you astonish me!

SIR PETER T. Yes; and, between ourselves, I think I've discovered the person.

JOSEPH S. How! you alarm me exceedingly.

SIR PETER T. Ay, my dear friend, I knew you would sympathize with me!

JOSEPH S. Yes, believe me, Sir Peter, such a discovery would hurt me just as much as it would you.

SIR PETER T. I am convinced of it. Ah! it is a happiness to have a friend whom we can trust even with one's family secrets. But have you no guess who I mean?

JOSEPH S. I haven't the most distant idea. It can't be Sir Benjamin Backbite!

SIR PETER T. Oh, no! What say you to Charles?

JOSEPH S. My brother! impossible!

SIR PETER T. Oh! my dear friend, the goodness of your own heart misleads you. You judge of others by yourself.

JOSEPH S. Certainly, Sir Peter, the heart that is conscious of its own integrity is ever slow to credit another's treachery.

SIR PETER T. True; but your brother has no sentiment; you never hear him talk so.

JOSEPH S. Yet I can't but think Lady Teazle herself has too much principle.

SIR PETER T. Ay; but what is principle against the flattery of a handsome, lively young fellow?

JOSEPH S. That's very true.

SIR PETER T. And then, you know, the difference of our ages makes it very improbable that she should have any very great affection for me; and if she were to be frail, and I were to make it public, why the town would only laugh at me, the foolish old bachelor, who had married a girl.

JOSEPH S. That's true, to be sure; they would laugh.

SIR PETER T. Laugh—ay, and make ballads, and paragraphs, and the devil knows what of me.

JOSEPH S. No; you must never make it public.

SIR PETER T. But then again—that the nephew of my old friend, Sir Oliver, should be the person to attempt such a wrong, hurts me more nearly.

JOSEPH S. Ay, there's the point. When ingratitude bars the dart of injury, the wound has double danger in it.

SIR PETER T. Ay, I, that was, in a manner, left his guardian; in whose house he had been so often entertained; who never in my life denied him—my advice.

JOSEPH S. Oh, 'tis not to be credited. There may be a man capable of such baseness, to be sure; but, for my part, till you can give me positive proofs, I cannot but doubt it. However, if it should be proved on him, he is no longer a brother of mine. I disclaim kindred with him; for the man who can break the laws of hospitality, and tempt the wife of his friend, deserves to be branded as the pest of society.

SIR PETER T. What a difference there is between you! What noble sentiments!

JOSEPH S. Yet, I cannot suspect Lady Teazle's honor.

SIR PETER T. I am sure I wish to think well of her, and to remove all ground of quarrel between us. She has lately reproached me more than once with having made no settlement on her; and, in our last quarrel, she almost hinted that she should not break her heart if I was dead. Now, as we seem to differ in our ideas of expense, I have resolved she shall have her own way, and be her own mistress in that respect for the future; and if I were to die, she will find I have not been inattentive to her interest while living. Here, my friend, are the drafts of the two deeds, which I wish to have your opinion on. By one, she will enjoy eight hundred a year independent while I live; and, by the other, the bulk of my fortune at my death.

JOSEPH S. This conduct, Sir Peter, is indeed truly generous.—[*aside*] I wish it may not corrupt my pupil.

SIR PETER T. Yes, I am determined she shall have no cause to complain, though I would not have her acquainted with the latter instance of my affection yet awhile.

JOSEPH S. [*aside*] Nor I, if I could help it.

SIR PETER T. And now, my dear friend, if you please, we will talk over the situation of your affairs with Maria.

JOSEPH S. [*softly*] Oh, no, Sir Peter; another time, if you please.

SIR PETER T. I am sensibly chagrined at the little progress you seem to make in her affections.

JOSEPH S. [*softly*] I beg you will not mention it. What are my disappointments when your happiness is in debate!—[*aside*] 'Sdeath, I shall be ruined every way.

SIR PETER T. And though you are so averse to my acquainting Lady Teazle with your passion for Maria, I'm sure she's not your enemy in the affair.

JOSEPH S. Pray, Sir Peter, now, oblige me. I am really too much affected by the subject we have been speaking of to bestow a thought on my own concerns. The man who is intrusted with his friend's distresses can never—

Enter SERVANT

Well, sir?

SERV. Your brother, sir, is speaking to a gentleman in the street, and says he knows you are within.

JOSEPH S. 'Sdeath, blockhead, I'm not within; I'm out for the day.

SIR PETER T. Stay—hold—a thought has struck me: you shall be at home.

JOSEPH S. Well, well, let him up. [*exit SERVANT*]

[*Aside*] He'll interrupt Sir Peter, however.

SIR PETER T. Now, my good friend, oblige me, I entreat you. Before Charles comes, let me conceal myself somewhere; then do you tax him on the point we have been talking, and his answer may satisfy me at once.

JOSEPH S. O fie, Sir Peter! would you have me join in so mean a trick?—to trepan my brother, too?

SIR PETER T. Nay, you tell me you are sure he is innocent; if so, you do him the greatest service by giving him an opportunity to clear himself, and you will set my heart at rest. Come, you shall not refuse me; here, behind this screen will be—Hey! what the devil! there seems to be one listener there already. I'll swear I saw a petticoat!

JOSEPH S. Hal! hal! hal! Well, this is ridiculous enough. I'll tell you, Sir Peter, though I hold a man of intrigue to be a most despicable character, yet, you know it does not follow that one is to be an absolute Joseph³⁷ either! Hark'ee, 'tis a little French milliner—a silly rogue that plagues me—and having some character to lose, on your coming, sir, she ran behind the screen.

SIR PETER T. Ah! you rogue! But egad, she has overheard all I have been saying of my wife.

JOSEPH S. Oh, 'twill never go any farther, you may depend upon it.

SIR PETER T. No; then, faith, let her hear it out. Here's a closet will do as well.

JOSEPH S. Well, go in there.

SIR PETER T. Sly rogue! sly rogue! [*going into the closet*]

JOSEPH S. A narrow escape, indeed! and a curious situation I'm in, to part man and wife in this manner.

LADY T. [*peeping*] Couldn't I steal off?

JOSEPH S. Keep close, my angel!

SIR PETER T. [*peeping*] Joseph, tax him home.

JOSEPH S. Back, my dear friend!

³⁷ that is, virtuous like the Biblical Joseph.

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LADY T. [*peeping*] Couldn't you lock Sir Peter in?

JOSEPH S. Be still, my life!

SIR PETER T. [*peeping*] You're sure the little milliner won't blab?

JOSEPH S. In, in, my good Sir Peter. [*aside*] 'Fore Gad, I wish I had a key to the door.

Enter CHARLES SURFACE

CHARLES S. Holloa! brother, what has been the matter? Your fellow would not let me up at first. What! have you had a Jew or a wench with you?

JOSEPH S. Neither, brother, I assure you.

CHARLES S. But what has made Sir Peter steal off? I thought he had been with you.

JOSEPH S. He *was*, brother; but hearing you were coming, he did not choose to stay.

CHARLES S. What! was the old gentleman afraid I wanted to borrow money of him?

JOSEPH S. No, sir; but I am sorry to find, Charles, you have lately given that worthy man grounds for great uneasiness.

CHARLES S. Yes, they tell me I do that to a great many worthy men. But how so, pray?

JOSEPH S. To be plain with you, brother, he thinks you are endeavoring to gain Lady Teazle's affections from him.

CHARLES S. Who, I? O Lud! not I, upon my word. Ha! ha! ha! ha! so the old fellow has found out that he has got a young wife, has he? Or, what is worse, Lady Teazle has found out she has an old husband?

JOSEPH S. This is no subject to jest on, brother. He who can laugh—

CHARLES S. True, true, as you were going to say—then, seriously, I never had the least idea of what you charge me with, upon my honor.

JOSEPH S. [*raising his voice*] Well, it will give Sir Peter great satisfaction to hear this.

CHARLES S. To be sure, I once thought the lady seemed to have taken a fancy to me; but, upon my soul, I never gave her the least encouragement; besides, you know my attachment to Maria.

JOSEPH S. But sure, brother, even if Lady Teazle had betrayed the fondest partiality for you—

CHARLES S. Why, look'ee, Joseph, I hope I shall never deliberately do a dishonorable action; but if a pretty woman was purposely to throw herself in my way; and that pretty

woman married to a man old enough to be her father—

JOSEPH S. Well—

CHARLES S. Why, I believe I should be obliged to borrow a little of your morality, that's all. But, brother, do you know now that you surprise me exceedingly, by naming *me* with Lady Teazle? for, 'faith, I always understood you were her favorite.

JOSEPH S. Oh, for shame, Charles! This retort is foolish.

CHARLES S. Nay, I swear I have seen you exchange such significant glances—

JOSEPH S. Nay, nay, sir, this is no jest.

CHARLES S. Egad, I'm serious. Don't you remember one day when I called here—

JOSEPH S. Nay, prithee, Charles—

CHARLES S. And found you together—

JOSEPH S. Zounds, sir! I insist—

CHARLES S. And another time when your servant—

JOSEPH S. Brother, brother, a word with you!—[*aside*] Gad, I must stop him.

CHARLES S. Informed, I say, that—

JOSEPH S. Hush! I beg your pardon, but Sir Peter has overheard all we have been saying. I knew you would clear yourself, or I should not have consented.

CHARLES S. How, Sir Peter! Where is he?

JOSEPH S. Softly; there! [*points to the closet*]

CHARLES S. Oh, 'fore heaven, I'll have him out. Sir Peter, come forth!

JOSEPH S. No, no—

CHARLES S. I say, Sir Peter, come into court. [*pulls in SIR PETER*] What! my old guardian! What! turn inquisitor, and take evidence in-cog?

SIR PETER T. Give me your hand, Charles. I believe I have suspected you wrongfully; but you mustn't be angry with Joseph; 'twas my plan!

CHARLES S. Indeed!

SIR PETER T. But I acquit you. I promise you I don't think near so ill of you as I did. What I have heard has given me great satisfaction.

CHARLES S. Egad, then, 'twas lucky you didn't hear any more; [*apart to JOSEPH*] wasn't it, Joseph?

SIR PETER T. Ah! you would have retorted on him.

CHARLES S. Ay, ay, that was a joke.

SIR PETER T. Yes, yes, I know his honor too well.

CHARLES S. But you might as well have suspected *him* as *me* in this matter, for all that; [*apart to JOSEPH*] mightn't he, Joseph?

SIR PETER T. Well, well, I believe you.

JOSEPH S. [*aside*] Would they were both well out of the room!

Enter SERVANT, and whispers to JOSEPH
SURFACE

SIR PETER T. And in future perhaps we may not be such strangers.

JOSEPH S. Gentlemen, I beg pardon, I must wait on you downstairs; here is a person come on particular business.

CHARLES S. Well, you can see him in another room. Sir Peter and I have not met a long time, and I have something to say to him.

JOSEPH S. [*aside*] They must not be left together.—I'll send this man away, and return directly. [*apart to SIR PETER*] Sir Peter, not a word of the French milliner.

SIR PETER T. [*apart to JOSEPH*] I! not for the world—[*exit JOSEPH*] Ah! Charles, if you associated more with your brother, one might indeed hope for your reformation. He is a man of sentiment. Well, there is nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment.

CHARLES S. Pshaw! he is too moral by half, and so apprehensive of his good name, as he calls it, that I suppose he would as soon let a priest into his house as a girl.

SIR PETER T. No, no, come, come; you wrong him. No, no! Joseph is no rake, but he is no such saint either in that respect.—[*aside*] I have a great mind to tell him, we should have a laugh at Joseph.

CHARLES S. Oh, hang him! He's a very anchorite, a young hermit.

SIR PETER T. Hark'ee; you must not abuse him; he may chance to hear of it again, I promise you.

CHARLES S. Why, you won't tell him?

SIR PETER T. No—but—this way. [*aside*] Egad, I'll tell him.—[*aloud*] Hark'ee; have you a mind to have a good laugh at Joseph?

CHARLES S. I should like it of all things.

SIR PETER T. Then, i'faith, we will; I'll be quit with him for discovering me. He had a girl with him when I called.

CHARLES S. What! Joseph? you jest

SIR PETER T. Hush! a little French millner, and the best of the jest is, she's in the room now.

CHARLES S. The devil she is!

SIR PETER T. Hush! I tell you! [*points*]

CHARLES S. Behind the screen! 'Slife, let's unveil her!

SIR PETER T. No, no—he's coming—you sha'n't, indeed!

CHARLES S. Oh, egad, we'll have a peep at the little millner!

SIR PETER T. Not for the world, Joseph will never forgive me—

CHARLES S. I'll stand by you—

SIR PETER T. Odds, here he is.

JOSEPH SURFACE *enters just as CHARLES SURFACE throws down the screen*

CHARLES S. Lady Teazle, by all that's wonderful!

SIR PETER T. Lady Teazle, by all that's damnable!

CHARLES S. Sir Peter, this is one of the smartest French milliners I ever saw. Egad, you seem all to have been diverting yourselves here at hide and seek, and I don't see who is out of the secret. Shall I beg your ladyship to inform me? Not a word! Brother, will you be pleased to explain this matter? What! is Morality dumb too? Sir Peter, though I found you in the dark, perhaps you are not so now! All mute! Well, though I can make nothing of the affair, I suppose you perfectly understand one another, so I'll leave you to yourselves. [*going*] Brother, I'm sorry to find you have given that worthy man cause for so much uneasiness. Sir Peter! there's nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment! [*exit CHARLES*] [*they stand for some time looking at each other*]

JOSEPH S. Sir Peter—notwithstanding—I confess—that appearances are against me—if you will afford me your patience—I make no doubt—but I shall explain everything to your satisfaction.

SIR PETER T. If you please, sir.

JOSEPH S. The fact is, sir, that Lady Teazle, knowing my pretensions to your ward Maria—I say, sir, Lady Teazle, being apprehensive of the jealousy of your temper—and knowing my friendship to the family—She, sir, I say—called here—in order that—I might explain

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these pretensions—but on your coming—being apprehensive—as I said—of your jealousy—she withdrew—and this, you may depend on it, is the whole truth of the matter.

SIR PETER T. A very clear account, upon my word; and I dare swear the lady will vouch for every article of it.

LADY T. For not one word of it, Sir Peter!

SIR PETER T. How! don't you think it worth while to agree in the lie?

LADY T. There is not one syllable of truth in what that gentleman has told you.

SIR PETER T. I believe you, upon my soul, ma'am!

JOSEPH S. [*aside to LADY TEAZLE*] 'Sdeath, madam, will you betray me?

LADY T. Good Mr. Hypocrite, by your leave, I'll speak for myself.

SIR PETER T. Ay, let her alone, sir; you'll find she'll make out a better story than you, without prompting.

LADY T. Hear me, Sir Peter! I came hither on no matter relating to your ward, and even ignorant of this gentleman's pretensions to her. But I came seduced by his insidious arguments, at least to listen to his pretended passion, if not to sacrifice your honor to his baseness.

SIR PETER T. Now, I believe, the truth is coming indeed!

JOSEPH S. The woman's mad!

LADY T. No, sir, she has recovered her senses, and your own arts have furnished her with the means. Sir Peter, I do not expect you to credit me, but the tenderness you expressed for me, when I am sure you could not think I was a witness to it, has penetrated so to my heart, that had I left the place without the shame of this discovery, my future life should have spoken the sincerity of my gratitude. As for that smooth-tongued hypocrite, who would have seduced the wife of his too credulous friend, while he affected honorable addresses to his ward, I behold him now in a light so truly despicable that I shall never again respect myself for having listened to him. [*exit LADY TEAZLE*]

JOSEPH S. Notwithstanding all this, Sir Peter, Heaven knows—

SIR PETER T. That you are a villain! and so I leave you to your conscience.

JOSEPH S. You are too rash, Sir Peter; you shall hear me. The man who shuts out conviction

by refusing to—[*exeunt SIR PETER and SURFACE talking*]

ACT V

SCENE I.

The library [*in JOSEPH SURFACE's house*]

Enter JOSEPH SURFACE and SERVANT

JOSEPH S. Mr. Stanley? and why should you think I would see him? you must know he comes to ask something.

SERV. Sir, I should not have let him in, but that Mr. Rowley came to the door with him.

JOSEPH S. Pshaw! blockhead! to suppose that I should now be in a temper to receive visits from poor relations! Well, why don't you show the fellow up?

SERV. I will, sir. Why, sir, it was not my fault that Sir Peter discovered my lady—

JOSEPH S. Go, fool! [*exit SERVANT*] Sure Fortune never played a man of my policy such a trick before. My character with Sir Peter, my hopes with Maria, destroyed in a moment! I'm in a rare humor to listen to other people's distresses! I sha'n't be able to bestow even a benevolent sentiment on Stanley. So! here he comes, and Rowley with him. I must try to recover myself, and put a little charity into my face, however. [*exit*]

Enter SIR OLIVER SURFACE and ROWLEY

SIR OLIVER S. What! does he avoid us? That was he, was it not?

ROWLEY. It was, sir. But I doubt you are come a little too abruptly. His nerves are so weak that the sight of a poor relation may be too much for him. I should have gone first to break it to him.

SIR OLIVER S. Oh, plague of his nerves! Yet this is he whom Sir Peter extols as a man of the most benevolent way of thinking!

ROWLEY. As to his way of thinking, I cannot pretend to decide; for, to do him justice, he appears to have as much speculative benevolence as any private gentleman in the kingdom, though he is seldom so sensual as to indulge himself in the exercise of it.

SIR OLIVER S. Yet he has a string of charitable sentiments at his fingers' ends.

ROWLEY. Or rather at his tongue's end, Sir Oliver; for I believe there is no sentiment he

has such faith in as that "Charity begins at home."

SIR OLIVER s. And his, I presume, is of that domestic sort which never stirs abroad at all?

ROWLEY. I doubt you'll find it so; but he's coming. I mustn't seem to interrupt you; and, you know, immediately as you leave him, I come in to announce your arrival in your real character.

SIR OLIVER s. True; and afterwards you'll meet me at Sir Peter's.

ROWLEY. Without losing a moment. *[exit]*

SIR OLIVER s. I don't like the complaisance of his features.

Enter JOSEPH SURFACE

JOSEPH s. Sir, I beg you ten thousand pardons for keeping you a moment waiting. Mr. Stanley, I presume.

SIR OLIVER s. At your service.

JOSEPH s. Sir, I beg you will do me the honor to sit down. I entreat you, sir!

SIR OLIVER s. Dear sir, there's no occasion. —*[aside]* Too civil by half!

JOSEPH s. I have not the pleasure of knowing you, Mr. Stanley, but I am extremely happy to see you look so well. You were nearly related to my mother, I think, Mr. Stanley?

SIR OLIVER s. I was, sir; so nearly, that my present poverty, I fear, may do discredit to her wealthy children, else I should not have presumed to trouble you.

JOSEPH s. Dear sir, there needs no apology; he that is in distress, though a stranger, has a right to claim kindred with the wealthy. I am sure I wish I was of that class, and had it in my power to offer you even a small relief.

SIR OLIVER s. If your uncle, Sir Oliver, were here, I should have a friend.

JOSEPH s. I wish he was, sir, with all my heart: you should not want an advocate with him, believe me, sir.

SIR OLIVER s. I should not need one—my distresses would recommend me. But I imagined his bounty would enable you to become the agent of his charity.

JOSEPH s. My dear sir, you were strangely misinformed. Sir Oliver is a worthy man, a very worthy man; but avarice, Mr. Stanley, is the vice of age. I will tell you, my good sir, in confidence, what he has done for me has been a mere nothing; though people, I know, have

thought otherwise, and, for my part, I never chose to contradict the report.

SIR OLIVER s. What! has he never transmitted you bullion—rupees—pagodas?³⁸

JOSEPH s. Oh, dear sir, nothing of the kind. No, no; a few presents, now and then—china, shawls, congou tea, avadavats,³⁹ and Indian crackers; little more, believe me.

SIR OLIVER s. *[aside]* Here's gratitude for twelve thousand pounds! Avadavats and Indian crackers!

JOSEPH s. Then, my dear sir, you have heard, I doubt not, of the extravagance of my brother; there are very few would credit what I have done for that unfortunate young man.

SIR OLIVER s. *[aside]* Not I, for one!

JOSEPH s. The muns I have lent him! Indeed I have been exceedingly to blame; it was an amiable weakness; however, I don't pretend to defend it; and now I feel it doubly culpable, since it has deprived me of the pleasure of serving you, Mr. Stanley, as my heart dictates.

SIR OLIVER s. *[aside]* Dissembler!—*[aloud]* Then, sir, you can't assist me?

JOSEPH s. At present, it grieves me to say, I cannot; but, whenever I have the ability, you may depend upon hearing from me.

SIR OLIVER s. I am extremely sorry—

JOSEPH s. Not more than I, believe me; to pity without the power to relieve is still more painful than to ask and be denied.

SIR OLIVER s. Kind sir, your most obedient humble servant.

JOSEPH s. You leave me deeply affected, Mr. Stanley. William, be ready to open the door.

SIR OLIVER s. Oh, dear sir, no ceremony.

JOSEPH s. Your very obedient.

SIR OLIVER s. Sir, your most obsequious.

JOSEPH s. You may depend upon hearing from me, whenever I can be of service.

SIR OLIVER s. Sweet sir, you are too good!

JOSEPH s. In the meantime I wish you health and spirits.

SIR OLIVER s. Your ever grateful and perpetual humble servant.

JOSEPH s. Sir, yours as sincerely.

SIR OLIVER s. *[aside]* Charles, you are my heir! *[exit]*

JOSEPH s. This is one bad effect of a good

³⁸ Indian coins.

³⁹ Indian songbirds.

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these pretensions—but on your coming—being apprehensive—as I said—of your jealousy—she withdrew—and this, you may depend on it, is the whole truth of the matter.

SIR PETER T. A very clear account, upon my word; and I dare swear the lady will vouch for every article of it.

LADY T. For not one word of it, Sir Peter!

SIR PETER T. How! don't you think it worth while to agree in the lie?

LADY T. There is not one syllable of truth in what that gentleman has told you.

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ACT V

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SIR OLIVER S. Yet he has a string of charitable sentiments at his fingers' ends.

ROWLEY. Or rather at his tongue's end, Sir Oliver; for I believe there is no sentiment he

LADY SNEER. And had, indeed, some good qualities.

MRS. CAN. So she had, indeed. But have you heard the particulars?

LADY SNEER. No; but everybody says that Mr. Surface—

SIR BENJ. B. Ay, there, I told you Mr. Surface was the man.

MRS. CAN. No, no; indeed the assignation was with Charles.

LADY SNEER. With Charles! You alarm me, Mrs. Candour!

MRS. CAN. Yes, yes, he was the lover. Mr. Surface, to do him justice, was only the former.

SIR BENJ. B. Well, I'll not dispute with you, Mrs. Candour; but, be it which it may, I hope that Sir Peter's wound will not—

MRS. CAN. Sir Peter's wound! Oh, mercy! I didn't hear a word of their fighting.

LADY SNEER. Nor I, a syllable.

SIR BENJ. B. No! what, no mention of the duel?

MRS. CAN. Not a word.

SIR BENJ. B. Oh, yes, they fought before they left the room.

LADY SNEER. Pray, let us hear.

MRS. CAN. Ay, do oblige us with the duel.

SIR BENJ. B. "Sir," says Sir Peter, immediately after the discovery, "you are a most ungrateful fellow."

MRS. CAN. Ay, to Charles.

SIR BENJ. B. No, no, to Mr. Surface—"a most ungrateful fellow; and, old as I am, sir," says he, "I insist on immediate satisfaction."

MRS. CAN. Ay, that must have been to Charles; for 'tis very unlikely Mr. Surface should fight in his own house.

SIR BENJ. B. Gad's life, ma'am, not at all. "Giving me satisfaction." On this, ma'am, Lady Teazle, seeing Sir Peter in such danger, ran out of the room in strong hysterics, and Charles after her, calling out for hartshorn and water; then, madam, they began to fight with swords.

Enter CRABTREE

CRABT. With pistols, nephew—pistols. I have it from undoubted authority.

MRS. CAN. Oh, Mr. Crabtree, then it is all true!

CRABT. Too true, indeed, madam, and Sir Peter is dangerously wounded—

SIR BENJ. B. By a thrust in second¹⁰ quite through his left side—

CRABT. By a bullet lodged in the thorax.

MRS. CAN. Mercy on me! Poor Sir Peter!

CRABT. Yes, madam; though Charles would have avoided the matter, if he could.

MRS. CAN. I knew Charles was the person.

SIR BENJ. B. My uncle, I see, knows nothing of the matter.

CRABT. But Sir Peter taxed him with the basest ingratitude.

SIR BENJ. B. That I told you, you know—

CRABT. Do, nephew, let me speak! and insisted on immediate—

SIR BENJ. B. Just as I said—

CRABT. Odds life, nephew, allow others to know something too. A pair of pistols lay on the bureau (for Mr. Surface, it seems, had come home the night before late from Salthill, where he had been to see the Montem with a friend, who has a son at Eton), so, unluckily, the pistols were left charged.

SIR BENJ. B. I heard nothing of this.

CRABT. Sir Peter forced Charles to take one, and they fired, it seems, pretty nearly together. Charles's shot took effect as I tell you, and Sir Peter's missed; but what is very extraordinary, the ball struck against a little bronze Shakespeare that stood over the fireplace, grazed out of the window, at a right angle, and wounded the postman, who was just coming to the door with a double letter from Northamptonshire.

SIR BENJ. B. My uncle's account is more circumstantial, I confess; but I believe mine is the true one, for all that.

LADY SNEER. [*aside*] I am more interested in this affair than they imagine, and must have better information. [*exit* LADY SNEERWELL]

SIR BENJ. B. Ah! Lady Sneerwell's alarm is very easily accounted for.

CRABT. Yes, yes, they certainly do say; but that's neither here nor there.

MRS. CAN. But, pray, where is Sir Peter at present?

CRABT. Oh! they brought him home, and he is now in the house, though the servants are ordered to deny him.

MRS. CAN. I believe so, and Lady Teazle, I suppose, attending him.

¹⁰ a parry.

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CRABT. Yes, yes; and I saw one of the faculty enter just before me.

SIR BENJ. B. Hey, who comes here?

CRABT. Oh, this is he: the physician, depend on't.

MRS. CAN. Oh, certainly: it must be the physician; and now we shall know.

Enter SIR OLIVER SURFACE

CRABT. Well, doctor, what hopes?

MRS. CAN. Ah, doctor, how's your patient?

SIR BENJ. B. Now, doctor, isn't it a wound with a small sword?

CRABT. A bullet lodged in the thorax, for a hundred!

SIR OLIVER S. Doctor! a wound with a small sword! and a bullet in the thorax! Oons! are you mad, good people?

SIR BENJ. B. Perhaps, sir, you are not a doctor?

SIR OLIVER S. Truly, I am to thank you for my degree if I am.

CRABT. Only a friend of Sir Peter's, then, I presume. But, sir, you must have heard of his accident?

SIR OLIVER S. Not a word!

CRABT. Not of his being dangerously wounded?

SIR OLIVER S. The devil he is!

SIR BENJ. B. Run through the body——

CRABT. Shot in the breast——

SIR BENJ. B. By one Mr. Surface——

CRABT. Ay, the younger.

SIR OLIVER S. Hey! what the plague! you seem to differ strangely in your accounts: however, you agree that Sir Peter is dangerously wounded.

SIR BENJ. B. Oh, yes, we agree there.

CRABT. Yes, yes, I believe there can be no doubt of that.

SIR OLIVER S. Then, upon my word, for a person in that situation, he is the most imprudent man alive; for here he comes, walking as if nothing at all was the matter.

Enter SIR PETER TEAZLE

Odds heart, Sir Peter, you are come in good time, I promise you; for we had just given you over.

SIR BENJ. B. Egad, uncle, this is the most sudden recovery!

SIR OLIVER S. Why, man, what do you out of

bed with a small sword through your body, and a bullet lodged in your thorax?

SIR PETER T. A small sword, and a bullet!

SIR OLIVER S. Ay, these gentlemen would have killed you without law or physic, and wanted to dub me a doctor, to make me an accomplice.

SIR PETER T. Why, what is all this?

SIR BENJ. B. We rejoice, Sir Peter, that the story of the duel is not true, and are sincerely sorry for your other misfortune.

SIR PETER T. [*aside*] So, so; all over the town already.

CRABT. Though, Sir Peter, you were certainly vastly to blame to marry at your years.

SIR PETER T. Sir, what business is that of yours?

MRS. CAN. Though, indeed, as Sir Peter made so good a husband, he's very much to be pitied.

SIR PETER T. Plague on your pity, ma'am! I desire none of it.

SIR BENJ. B. However, Sir Peter, you must not mind the laughing and jests you will meet with on the occasion.

SIR PETER T. Sir, sir, I desire to be master in my own house.

CRABT. 'Tis no uncommon case, that's one comfort.

SIR PETER T. I insist on being left to myself; without ceremony. I insist on your leaving my house directly.

MRS. CAN. Well, well, we are going, and depend on't we'll make the best report of it we can. [*exit*]

SIR PETER T. Leave my house!

CRABT. And tell how hardly you've been treated. [*exit*]

SIR PETER T. Leave my house!

SIR BENJ. B. And how patiently you bear it. [*exit*]

SIR PETER T. Fiends! vipers! furies! Oh! that their own venom would choke them!

SIR OLIVER S. They are very provoking, indeed, Sir Peter.

Enter ROWLEY

ROWLEY. I heard high words; what has ruffled you, sir?

SIR PETER T. Pshaw! what signifies asking? Do I ever pass a day without my vexations?

ROWLEY. Well, I'm not inquisitive.

SIR OLIVER S. Well, Sir Peter, I have seen both my nephews in the manner we proposed.

SIR PETER T. A precious couple they are!

ROWLEY. Yes, and Sir Oliver is convinced that your judgment was right, Sir Peter.

SIR OLIVER S. Yes, I find Joseph is indeed the man, after all.

ROWLEY. Ay, as Sir Peter says, he is a man of sentiment.

SIR OLIVER S. And acts up to the sentiments he professes.

ROWLEY. It certainly is edification to hear him talk.

SIR OLIVER S. Oh, he's a model for the young men of the age! But how's this, Sir Peter? you don't join us in your friend Joseph's praise, as I expected.

SIR PETER T. Sir Oliver, we live in a damned wicked world, and the fewer we praise the better.

ROWLEY. What! do you say so, Sir Peter, who were never mistaken in your life?

SIR PETER T. Pshaw! Plague on you both! I see by your sneering you have heard the whole affair. I shall go mad among you!

ROWLEY. Then, to fret you no longer, Sir Peter, we are indeed acquainted with it all. I met Lady Teazle coming from Mr. Surface's so humbled that she deigned to request me to be her advocate with you.

SIR PETER T. And does Sir Oliver know all this?

SIR OLIVER S. Every circumstance.

SIR PETER T. What, of the closet and the screen, hey?

SIR OLIVER S. Yes, yes, and the little French milliner. Oh, I have been vastly diverted with the story! Ha! ha! ha!

SIR PETER T. 'Twas very pleasant.

SIR OLIVER S. I never laughed more in my life, I assure you. Ha! ha! ha!

SIR PETER T. Oh, vastly diverting! Ha! ha! ha!

ROWLEY. To be sure, Joseph with his sentiments; ha! ha! ha!

SIR PETER T. Yes, yes, his sentiments! Ha! ha! ha! Hypocritical villain!

SIR OLIVER S. Ay, and that rogue Charles to pull Sir Peter out of the closet: ha! ha! ha!

SIR PETER T. Ha! ha! 'twas devilish entertaining, to be sure!

SIR OLIVER S. Ha! ha! ha! Egad, Sir Peter, I

should like to have seen your face when the screen was thrown down: ha! ha!

SIR PETER T. Yes, yes, my face when the screen was thrown down: ha! ha! ha! Oh, I must never show my head again!

SIR OLIVER S. But come, come, it isn't fair to laugh at you neither, my old friend, though, upon my soul, I can't help it.

SIR PETER T. Oh, pray don't restrain your mirth on my account; it does not hurt me at all! I laugh at the whole affair myself. Yes, yes, I think being a standing jest for all one's acquaintance a very happy situation. Oh, yes, and then of a morning to read the paragraphs about Mr. S—, Lady T—, and Sir P—, will be so entertaining!

ROWLEY. Without affection, Sir Peter, you may despise the ridicule of fools; but I see Lady Teazle going towards the next room. I am sure you must desire a reconciliation as earnestly as she does.

SIR OLIVER S. Perhaps my being here prevents her coming to you. Well, I'll leave honest Rowley to mediate between you; but he must bring you all presently to Mr. Surface's, where I am now returning, if not to reclaim a libertine, at least to expose hypocrisy.

SIR PETER T. Ah, I'll be present at your discovering yourself there with all my heart; though 'tis a vile unlucky place for discoveries.

ROWLEY. We'll follow. [exit SIR OLIVER]

SIR PETER T. She is not coming here, you see, Rowley.

ROWLEY. No, but she has left the door of that room open, you perceive. See, she is in tears.

SIR PETER T. Certainly a little mortification appears very becoming in a wife. Don't you think it will do her good to let her pine a little?

ROWLEY. Oh, this is ungenerous in you!

SIR PETER T. Well, I know not what to think. You remember the letter I found of hers, evidently intended for Charles?

ROWLEY. A mere forgery, Sir Peter, laid in your way on purpose. This is one of the points which I intend Snake shall give you conviction of.

SIR PETER T. I wish I were once satisfied of that. She looks this way. What a remarkably elegant turn of the head she has! Rowley, I'll go to her.

ROWLEY. Certainly.

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SIR PETER T. Though when it is known that we are reconciled, people will laugh at me ten times more.

ROWLEY. Let them laugh, and retort their malice only by showing them you are happy in spite of it.

SIR PETER T. I faith, so I will! And if I'm not mistaken, we may yet be the happiest couple in the country.

ROWLEY. Nay, Sir Peter, he who once lays aside suspicion—

SIR PETER T. Hold, Master Rowley! if you have any regard for me, let me never hear you utter anything like a sentiment. I have had enough of them to serve me the rest of my life. *[exunt]*

SCENE III.

The library *[in JOSEPH SURFACE'S house]*

Enter JOSEPH SURFACE and LADY SNEERWELL

LADY SNEER. Impossible! Will not Sir Peter immediately be reconciled to Charles, and, of course, no longer oppose his union with Maria? The thought is distraction to me.

JOSEPH S. Can passion furnish a remedy?

LADY SNEER. No, nor cunning neither. O! I was a fool, an idiot, to league with such a blunderer!

JOSEPH S. Lady Sneerwell, I am the greatest sufferer; yet you see I bear the accident with calmness.

LADY SNEER. Because the disappointment doesn't reach your heart; your interest only attached you to Maria. Had you felt for her what I have for that ungrateful libertine, neither your temper nor hypocrisy could prevent your showing the sharpness of your vexation.

JOSEPH S. But why should your reproaches fall on me for this disappointment?

LADY SNEER. Are you not the cause of it? Had you not a sufficient field for your roguery in imposing upon Sir Peter, and supplanting your brother, but you must endeavor to seduce his wife? I hate such an avarice of crimes; 'tis an unfair monopoly, and never prospers.

JOSEPH S. Well, I admit I have been to blame. I confess I deviated from the direct road of wrong, but I don't think we're so totally defeated neither.

LADY SNEER. No!

JOSEPH S. You tell me you have made a trial of Snake since we met, and that you still believe him faithful to us.

LADY SNEER. I do believe so.

JOSEPH S. And that he has undertaken, should it be necessary, to swear and prove, that Charles is at this time contracted by vows and honor to your ladyship, which some of his former letters to you will serve to support?

LADY SNEER. This, indeed, might have assisted.

JOSEPH S. Come, come; it is not too late yet. *[knocking at the door]* But hark! this is probably my uncle, Sir Oliver; retire to that room, we'll consult farther when he is gone.

LADY SNEER. Well, but if he should find you out too?

JOSEPH S. Oh, I have no fear of that. Sir Peter will hold his tongue for his own credit's sake; and you may depend on it I shall soon discover Sir Oliver's weak side!

LADY SNEER. I have no diffidence of your abilities! only be constant to one roguery at a time. *[exit LADY SNEERWELL]*

JOSEPH S. I will, I will. So! 'tis confounded hard, after such bad fortune, to be baited by one's confederate in evil. Well, at all events my character is so much better than Charles's that I certainly—hey!—what!—this is not Sir Oliver, but old Stanley again. Plague on't that he should return to tease me just now. I shall have Sir Oliver come and find him here—and—

Enter SIR OLIVER SURFACE

Gad's life, Mr. Stanley, why have you come back to plague me at this time? You must not stay now, upon my word.

SIR OLIVER S. Sir, I hear your uncle Oliver is expected here, and though he has been so penurious to you, I'll try what he'll do for me.

JOSEPH S. Sir, 'tis impossible for you to stay now, so I must beg—come any other time, and I promise you, you shall be assisted.

SIR OLIVER S. No; Sir Oliver and I must be acquainted.

JOSEPH S. Zounds, sir! then I insist on your quitting the room directly.

SIR OLIVER S. Nay, sir—

JOSEPH S. Sir, I insist on't; here, William! show this gentleman out. Since you compel

me, sir, not one moment, this is such insolence!
[*going to push him out*]

Enter CHARLES SURFACE

CHARLES S. Hey day! what's the matter now!
What the devil, have you got hold of my little
broker here? Zounds, brother! don't hurt little
Premium. What's the matter, my little fellow?

JOSEPH S. So! he has been with you too,
has he?

CHARLES S. To be sure he has. Why he's as
honest a little—— But sure, Joseph, you have
not been borrowing money too, have you?

JOSEPH S. Borrowing! no! But, brother, you
know we expect Sir Oliver here every——

CHARLES S. Oh, Gad, that's true! Noll
mustn't find the little broker here, to be sure.

JOSEPH S. Yet Mr. Stanley misists——

CHARLES S. Stanley! why his name's Pre-
mium.

JOSEPH S. No, sir, Stanley.

CHARLES S. No, no, Premium.

JOSEPH S. Well, no matter which—but——

CHARLES S. Ay, ay, Stanley or Premium, 'tis
the same thing, as you say; for I suppose he
goes by half a hundred names, besides A. B. at
the coffee-house. [*knocking*]

JOSEPH S. 'Sdeath, here's Sir Oliver at the
door. Now I beg, Mr. Stanley——

CHARLES S. Ay, ay, and I beg, Mr. Pre-
mium——

SIR OLIVER S. Gentlemen——

JOSEPH S. Sir, by heaven you shall go!

CHARLES S. Ay, out with him, certainly!

SIR OLIVER. This violence——

JOSEPH S. Sir, 'tis your own fault.

CHARLES S. Out with him, to be sure. [*both
forcing SIR OLIVER out*]

Enter SIR PETER and LADY TEAZLE,
MARIA, and ROWLEY

SIR PETER T. My old friend, Sir Oliver, hey!
What in the name of wonder, here are dutiful
nephews; assault their uncle at a first visit!

LADY T. Indeed, Sir Oliver, 'twas well we
came in to rescue you.

ROWLEY. Truly, it was; for I perceive, Sir
Oliver, the character of old Stanley was no
protection to you.

SIR OLIVER S. Nor of Premium either: the
necessities of the former could not extort a
shilling from that benevolent gentleman; and

now, egad, I stood a chance of faring worse
than my ancestors, and being knocked down
without being bid for.

JOSEPH S. Charles!

CHARLES S. Joseph!

JOSEPH S. 'Tis now complete!

CHARLES S. Very!

SIR OLIVER S. Sir Peter, my friend, and
Rowley too—look on that elder nephew of
mine. You know what he has already received
from my bounty; and you also know how
gladly I would have regarded half my fortune
as held in trust for him; judge then my disap-
pointment in discovering him to be destitute
of faith, charity, and gratitude.

SIR PETER T. Sir Oliver, I should be more
surprised at this declaration, if I had not my-
self found him to be mean, treacherous, and
hypocritical.

LADY T. And if the gentleman pleads not
guilty to these, pray let him call *me* to his
character.

SIR PETER T. Then, I believe, we need add
no more, if he knows himself, he will consider
it as the most perfect punishment that he is
known to the world.

CHARLES S. [*aside*] If they talk this way to
Honesty, what will they say to me, by and by?

SIR OLIVER S. As for that prodigal, his
brother, there——

CHARLES S. [*aside*] Ay, now comes my turn;
the damned family pictures will ruin me.

JOSEPH S. Sir Oliver—uncle, will you honor
me with a hearing?

CHARLES S. [*aside*] Now if Joseph would
make one of his long speeches, I might recol-
lect myself a little.

SIR OLIVER S. [*to JOSEPH*] I suppose you
would undertake to justify yourself entirely.

JOSEPH S. I trust I could.

SIR OLIVER S. [*to CHARLES*] Well, sir! and
you could justify yourself too, I suppose?

CHARLES S. Not that I know of, Sir Oliver.

SIR OLIVER S. What! Little Premium has
been let too much into the secret, I suppose?

CHARLES S. True, sir; but they were *family*
secrets, and should not be mentioned again,
you know.

ROWLEY. Come, Sir Oliver, I know you can-
not speak of Charles's follies with anger.

SIR OLIVER S. Odd's heart, no more can I;
nor with gravity either. Sir Peter, do you know

THE DRAMA · RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN

the rogue bargained with me for all his ancestors; sold me judges and generals by the foot, and maiden aunts as cheap as broken china.

CHARLES S. To be sure, Sir Oliver, I did make a little free with the family canvas, that's the truth on't. My ancestors may rise in judgment against me, there's no denying it; but believe me sincere when I tell you—and upon my soul I would not say so if I was not—that if I do not appear mortified at the exposure of my follies, it is because I feel at this moment the warmest satisfaction in seeing you, my liberal benefactor.

SIR OLIVER S. Charles, I believe you; give me your hand again; the ill-looking little fellow over the settee has made your peace.

CHARLES S. Then, sir, my gratitude to the original is still increased.

LADY T. Yet, I believe, Sir Oliver, here is one whom Charles is still more anxious to be reconciled to.

SIR OLIVER S. Oh, I have heard of his attachment there; and, with the young lady's pardon, if I construe right—that blush——

SIR PETER T. Well, child, speak your sentiments!

MARIA. Sir, I have little to say, but that I shall rejoice to hear that he is happy; for me—whatever claim I had to his affection, I willingly resign to one who has a better title.

CHARLES S. How, Maria!

SIR PETER T. Hey day! what's the mystery now? While he appeared an incorrigible rake, you would give your hand to no one else; and now that he is likely to reform, I'll warrant you won't have him.

MARIA. His own heart and Lady Sneerwell know the cause.

CHARLES S. Lady Sneerwell!

JOSEPH S. Brother, it is with great concern I am obliged to speak on this point, but my regard to justice compels me, and Lady Sneerwell's injuries can no longer be concealed. [*opens the door*]

Enter LADY SNEERWELL

SIR PETER T. Sol another French milliner! Egad, he has one in every room of the house, I suppose.

LADY SNEER. Ungrateful Charles! Well may you be surprised, and feel for the indelicate situation your perfidy has forced me into.

CHARLES S. Pray, uncle, is this another plot of yours? For, as I have life, I don't understand it.

JOSEPH S. I believe, sir, there is but the evidence of one person more necessary to make it extremely clear.

SIR PETER T. And that person, I imagine, is Mr. Snake. Rowley, you were perfectly right to bring him with us, and pray let him appear.

ROWLEY. Walk in, Mr. Snake.

Enter SNAKE

I thought his testimony might be wanted; however, it happens unluckily that he comes to confront Lady Sneerwell, not to support her.

LADY SNEER. A villain! Treacherous to me at last! Speak, fellow; have you too conspired against me?

SNAKE. I beg your ladyship ten thousand pardons; you paid me extremely liberally for the lie in question; but I unfortunately have been offered double to speak the truth.

SIR PETER T. Plot and counter-plot, egad!

LADY SNEER. The torments of shame and dis-
appointment on you all. [*going*]

LADY T. Hold, Lady Sneerwell; before you go, let me thank you for the trouble you and that gentleman have taken, in writing letters from me to Charles, and answering them yourself; and let me also request you to make my respects to the scandalous college, of which you are president, and inform them that Lady Teazle, licentiate, begs leave to return the diploma they gave her, as she leaves off practice, and kills characters no longer.

LADY SNEER. You too, madam—provoking—insolent. May your husband live these fifty years. [*exit*]

SIR PETER T. Oons! what a fury!

LADY T. A malicious creature, indeed!

SIR PETER T. Hey! Not for her last wish?

LADY T. Oh, no!

SIR OLIVER S. Well, sir, and what have you to say now?

JOSEPH S. Sir, I am so confounded, to find that Lady Sneerwell could be guilty of suborning Mr. Snake in this manner, to impose on us all, that I know not what to say; however, lest her revengeful spirit should prompt her to injure my brother, I had certainly better follow her directly. [*exit*]

SIR PETER T. Moral to the last drop!

SIR OLIVER S. Ay, and marry her, Joseph, if you can. Oil and vinegar, egad! you'll do very well together.

ROWLEY. I believe we have no more occasion for Mr. Snake at present?

SNAKE. Before I go, I beg pardon once for all, for whatever uneasiness I have been the humble instrument of causing to the parties present.

SIR PETER T. Well, well, you have made 10 atonement by a good deed at last.

SNAKE. But I must request of the company that it shall never be known.

SIR PETER T. Hey! What the plague! Are you ashamed of having done a right thing 15 once in your life?

SNAKE. Ah, sir! consider; I live by the badness of my character. I have nothing but my infamy to depend on! and if it were once known that I had been betrayed into an honest 20 action, I should lose every friend I have in the world.

SIR OLIVER S. Well, well, we'll not traduce you by saying anything in your praise, never fear. [*exit SNAKE*] 25

SIR PETER T. There's a precious rogue!

LADY T. See, Sir Oliver, there needs no persuasion now to reconcile your nephew and Maria.

SIR OLIVER S. Ay, ay, that's as it should be, 30 and, egad, we'll have the wedding tomorrow morning.

CHARLES S. Thank you, dear uncle!

SIR PETER T. What, you rogue! don't you ask the girl's consent first?

CHARLES S. Oh, I have done that a long time—a minute ago—and she has looked *yes*.

MARIA. For shame, Charles! I protest, Sir Peter, there has not been a word.

SIR OLIVER S. Well, then, the fewer the 40 better. May your love for each other never know abatement!

SIR PETER T. And may you live as happily together as Lady Teazle and I intend to do!

CHARLES S. Rowley, my old friend, I am 45 sure you congratulate me; and I suspect that I owe you much.

SIR OLIVER S. You do indeed, Charles.

ROWLEY. If my efforts to serve you had not succeeded, you would have been in my debt 50 for the attempt: but deserve to be happy, and you overpay me.

SIR PETER T. Ay, honest Rowley always said you would reform.

CHARLES S. Why, as to reforming, Sir Peter, I'll make no promises, and that I take to be 5 a proof that I intend to set about it; but here shall be my monitor—my gentle guide. Ah! can I leave the virtuous path those eyes illumine?

Though thou, dear maid, shouldst waive thy beauty's sway,

Thou still must rule, because I will obey:

An humble fugitive from Folly view,

No sanctuary near but Love and you.

[*to the audience*]

15 You can, indeed, each anxious fear remove,
For even Scandal dies if you approve.

EPILOGUE

BY MR. COLMAN⁴¹

Spoken by Lady Teazle

I, who was late so volatile and gay,
Like a trade wind must now blow all one 25 way,

Bend all my cares, my studies, and my vows,
To one dull rusty weathercock—my spouse!
So wills our virtuous bard—the motley Bayes⁴²
Of crying epilogues and laughing plays!

30 Old bachelors, who marry smart young wives,
Learn from our play to regulate your lives:
Each bring his dear to town, all faults upon
her,

London will prove the very source of honor.

35 Plunged fairly in, like a cold bath it serves,

When principles relax, to brace the nerves.

Such is my case; and yet I must deplore

That the gay dream of dissipation's o'er.

And say, ye fair, was ever lively wife,

40 Born with a genius for the highest life,

Like me untimely blasted in her bloom,

Like me condemn'd to such a dismal doom?

Save money—when I just knew how to waste 45 it!

Leave London—just as I began to taste it!

Must I then watch the early crowing cock,

The melancholy ticking of a clock;

⁴¹ George Colman, the elder, theater manager and playwright.

⁴² In *The Rehearsal* by Buckingham, Bayes was a burlesque of Dryden; by extension, the name means simply dramatist.

In a lone rustic hall for ever pounded,⁴³
With dogs, cats, rats, and squalling brats sur-
rounded?

With humble curate can I now retire
(While good Sir Peter boozes with the squire),
And at backgammon mortify my soul,
That pants for loo⁴⁴ or flutters at a vole⁴⁵
Seven's the main!⁴⁶ Dear sound that must ex-
pire,

Lost at hot cockles⁴⁷ round a Christmas fire!
The transient hour of fashion too soon spent,
Farewell the tranquil mind, farewell content!
Farewell the plumed head, the cushioned tête,
That takes the cushion from its proper seat!
The spirit-stirring drum! card drums⁴⁸ I mean,

⁴³ impounded.

⁴⁴ a card game.

⁴⁵ a slam in cards.

⁴⁶ the "point" in dice.

⁴⁷ blindman's buff

⁴⁸ parties.

Spadille—odd trick—pam—basto—king and
queen!⁴⁹

And you, ye knockers, that, with brazen throat,
The welcome visitors' approach denote;

5 Farewell all quality of high renown,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious
town!

Farewell! your revels I partake no more,
And Lady Teazle's occupation's o'er!

10 All this I told our bard; he smiled, and said
'twas clear

I ought to play deep tragedy next year;
Meanwhile he drew wise morals from his play,
And in these solemn periods stalk'd away:—

15 "Blest were the fair like you! her faults who
stopp'd,

And closed her follies when the curtain
dropp'd!

No more in vice or error to engage,

20 Or play the fool at large on life's great stage."

⁴⁹ names of cards in the game of ombre.

LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN

OSCAR WILDE

Wilde (1856–1900) was educated in Dublin and at Oxford, where he won a poetry prize and dabbled in the aesthetic life under the influence of Pater. He wrote undistinguished early poetry, fiction (The Picture of Dorian Gray), four comedies of manners, other plays, and the popular Ballad of Reading Gaol, a work based on his imprisonment on charges of homosexuality. At one time Wilde toured America, giving lectures and impressing audiences with his strange mannerisms and his wit. Broken and disillusioned, he died in Paris. His

place in the theater is relatively secure (see I, 403). Criticism of his way of life varies from stern moral disapproval to understanding sympathy.

Dramatis Personæ

LORD WINDERMERE
LORD DARLINGTON
LORD AUGUSTUS LORTON
MR. CECIL GRAHAM
MR. DUMBY

MR. HOPPER

PARKER, *butler*

LADY WINDERMERE

THE DUCHESS OF BERWICK

LADY AGATHA CARLISLE

LADY PLYMDALE

LADY JEDBURGH

LADY STUTFIELD

MRS. COWPER-COWPER

MRS. ERLYNNE

ROSALIE, *maid*

THE SCENES OF THE PLAY

ACT I. Morning-Room in Lord Windermere's House 15

ACT II. Drawing-Room in Lord Windermere's House

ACT III. Lord Darlington's Rooms

ACT IV. Same as Act I 20

TIME—The Present

PLACE—London

The action of the play takes place within twenty-four hours, beginning on a Tuesday afternoon at five o'clock, and ending the next day at 1:30 P.M.

ACT I

SCENE—*morning-room of LORD WINDERMERE'S house in Carlton House Terrace. Doors c. and R. Bureau with books and papers R. Sofa with small tea-table L. Window opening on to terrace L. Table R.*

LADY WINDERMERE is at table R. arranging roses in a blue bowl.

Enter PARKER

PARKER. Is your ladyship at home this afternoon?

LADY W. Yes—who has called?

PARKER. Lord Darlington, my lady.

LADY W. [*hesitates for a moment*] Show him up—and I'm at home to anyone who calls. 45

PARKER. Yes, my lady. [*exit c.*]

LADY W. It's best for me to see him before to-night. I'm glad he's come.

Enter PARKER (c.)

PARKER. Lord Darlington.

Enter LORD D. (c.) Exit PARKER

LORD D. How do you do, Lady Windermere?

5 LADY W. How do you do, Lord Darlington? No, I can't shake hands with you. My hands are all wet with these roses. Aren't they lovely? They came up from Selby this morning.

LORD D. They are quite perfect. [*sees a fan lying on the table*] And what a wonderful fan! May I look at it?

LADY W. Do. Pretty, isn't it! It's got my name on it, and everything. I have only just seen it myself. It's my husband's birthday present to me. You know to-day is my birthday?

LORD D. No? Is it really?

LADY W. Yes; I'm of age to-day. Quite an important day in my life, isn't it? That is why I am giving this party to-night. Do sit down. 20 [*still arranging flowers*]

LORD D. [*sitting down*] I wish I had known it was your birthday, Lady Windermere. I would have covered the whole street in front of your house with flowers to walk on. They are made for you. [*a short pause*]

LADY W. Lord Darlington, you annoyed me last night at the Foreign Office. I am afraid you are going to annoy me again.

LORD D. I, Lady Windermere?

30 *Enter PARKER and FOOTMAN (c.) with tray and tea-things*

LADY W. Put it there, Parker. That will do. [*wipes her hands with her pocket-handkerchief, goes to tea-table L. and sits down*] Won't you come over, Lord Darlington? [*exit PARKER c.*]

LORD D. [*takes chair and goes across L. c.*] I am quite miserable, Lady Windermere. You 40 must tell me what I did. [*sits down at table L.*]

LADY W. Well, you kept paying me elaborate compliments the whole evening.

LORD D. [*smiling*] Ah, nowadays we are all of us so hard up, that the only pleasant things to pay are compliments. They're the only things we can pay.

LADY W. [*shaking her head*] No, I am talking very seriously. You mustn't laugh, I am quite serious. I don't like compliments, and I 50 don't see why a man should think he is pleasing a woman enormously when he says to her a whole heap of things that he doesn't mean.

THE DRAMA · OSCAR WILDE

LORD D. Ah, but I did mean them. [*takes tea which she offers him*]

LADY W. [*gravely*] I hope not. I should be sorry to have to quarrel with you, Lord Darlington. I like you very much, you know that. But I shouldn't like you at all if I thought you were what most other men are. Believe me, you are better than most other men, and I sometimes think you pretend to be worse.

LORD D. We all have our little vanities, Lady Windermere.

LADY W. Why do you make that your special one? [*still seated at table l.*]

LORD D. [*still seated l. c.*] Oh, nowadays so many conceited people go about Society pretending to be good, that I think it shows rather a sweet and modest disposition to pretend to be bad. Besides, there is this to be said. If you pretend to be good, the world takes you very seriously. If you pretend to be bad, it doesn't. Such is the astounding stupidity of optimism.

LADY W. Don't you *want* the world to take you seriously, then, Lord Darlington?

LORD D. No, not the world. Who are the people the world takes seriously? All the dull people one can think of, from the bishops down to the bores. I should like *you* to take me very seriously, Lady Windermere, *you* more than anyone else in life.

LADY W. Why—why me?

LORD D. [*after a slight hesitation*] Because I think we might be great friends. Let us be great friends. You may want a friend some day.

LADY W. Why do you say that?

LORD D. Oh!—we all want friends at times.

LADY W. I think we're very good friends already, Lord Darlington. We can always remain so as long as you don't—

LORD D. Don't what?

LADY W. Don't spoil it by saying extravagant, silly things to me. You think I am a Puritan, I suppose? Well, I have something of the Puritan in me. I was brought up like that. I am glad of it. My mother died when I was a mere child. I lived always with Lady Julia, my father's eldest sister, you know. She was stern to me, but she taught me what the world is forgetting, the difference that there is between what is right and what is wrong. *She* allowed of no compromise. *I* allow of none.

LORD D. My dear Lady Windermere!

LADY W. [*leaning back on the sofa*] You look on me as being behind the age.—Well, I am! I should be sorry to be on the same level as an age like this.

LORD D. You think the age very bad?

LADY W. Yes. Nowadays people seem to look on life as a speculation. It is not a speculation. It is a sacrament. Its ideal is Love. Its purification is sacrifice.

LORD D. [*smiling*] Oh, anything is better than being sacrificed!

LADY W. [*leaning forward*] Don't say that.

LORD D. I do say it. I feel it—I know it.

Enter PARKER (c.)

PARKER. The men want to know if they are to put the carpets on the terrace for to-night, my lady?

LADY W. You don't think it will rain, Lord Darlington, do you?

LORD D. I won't hear of its raining on your birthday!

LADY W. Tell them to do it at once, Parker. [*exit PARKER c.*]

LORD D. [*still seated*] Do you think, then—of course I am only putting an imaginary instance—do you think, that in the case of a young married couple, say about two years married, if the husband suddenly becomes the intimate friend of a woman of—well, more than doubtful character, is always calling upon her, lurching with her, and probably paying her bills—do you think that the wife should not console herself?

LADY W. [*frowning*] Console herself?

LORD D. Yes, I think she should—I think she has the right.

LADY W. Because the husband is vile should the wife be vile also?

LORD D. Vileness is a terrible word, Lady Windermere.

LADY W. It is a terrible thing, Lord Darlington.

LORD D. Do you know I am afraid that good people do a great deal of harm in this world. Certainly the greatest harm they do is that they make badness of such extraordinary importance. It is absurd to divide people into good and bad. People are either charming or tedious. I take the side of the charming, and

you, Lady Windermere, can't help belonging to them.

LADY W. Now, Lord Darlington. [*rising and crossing R., front of him*] Don't stir, I am merely going to finish my flowers. [*goes to table R. C.*]

LORD D. [*rising and moving chair*] And I must say I think you are very hard on modern life, Lady Windermere. Of course there is much against it, I admit. Most women, for instance, nowadays, are rather mercenary.

LADY W. Don't talk about such people.

LORD D. Well, then, setting mercenary people aside, who, of course, are dreadful, do you think seriously that women who have committed what the world calls a fault should never be forgiven?

LADY W. [*standing at table*] I think they should never be forgiven.

LORD D. And me? Do you think that there should be the same laws for men as there are for women?

LADY W. Certainly!

LORD D. I think life too complex a thing to be settled by these hard-and-fast rules.

LADY W. If we had "these hard-and-fast rules," we should find life much more simple.

LORD D. You allow of no exceptions?

LADY W. None!

LORD D. Ah, what a fascinating Puritan you are, Lady Windermere!

LADY W. The adjective was unnecessary, Lord Darlington.

LORD D. I couldn't help it. I can resist everything except temptation.

LADY W. You have the modern affectation of weakness.

LORD D. [*looking at her*] It's only an affectation, Lady Windermere.

Enter PARKER (C.)

PARKER. The Duchess of Berwick and Lady Agatha Carlisle. [*exit PARKER (C.)*]

Enter the DUCHESS OF B. and LADY A. C. (C.)

DUCHESS OF B. [*coming down C. and shaking hands*] Dear Margaret, I am so pleased to see you. You remember Agatha, don't you? [*crossing L. C.*] How do you do, Lord Darlington? I won't let you know my daughter, you are far too wicked.

LORD D. Don't say that, Duchess. As a wicked man I am a complete failure. Why, there are lots of people who say I have never really done anything wrong in the whole course of my life. Of course they only say it behind my back.

DUCHESS OF B. Isn't he dreadful? Agatha, this is Lord Darlington. Mind you don't believe a word he says. [*LORD DARLINGTON crosses R. C.*] No, no tea, thank you, dear. [*crosses and sits on sofa*] We have just had tea at Lady Markby's. Such bad tea, too. It was quite undrinkable. I wasn't at all surprised. Her own son-in-law supplies it. Agatha is looking forward so much to your ball to-night, dear Margaret.

LADY W. [*seated L. C.*] Oh, you mustn't think it is going to be a ball, Duchess. It is only a dance in honor of my birthday. A small and early.

LORD D. [*standing L. C.*] Very small, very early, and very select, Duchess.

DUCHESS OF B. [*on sofa L.*] Of course it's going to be select. But we know *that*, dear Margaret, about *your* house. It is really one of the few houses in London where I can take Agatha, and where I feel perfectly secure about poor Berwick. I don't know what Society is coming to. The most dreadful people seem to go everywhere. They certainly come to my parties—the men get quite furious if one doesn't ask them. Really, someone should make a stand against it.

LADY W. I will, Duchess, I will have no one in my house about whom there is any scandal.

LORD D. (R. C.) Oh, don't say that, Lady Windermere. I should never be admitted! [*sitting*]

DUCHESS OF B. Oh, men don't matter. With women it is different. We're good. Some of us are, at least. But we are positively getting elbowed into the corner. Our husbands would really forget our existence if we didn't nag at them from time to time, just to remind them that we have a perfect legal right to do so.

LORD D. It's a curious thing, Duchess, about the game of marriage—a game, by the way, that is going out of fashion—the wives hold all the honors, and invariably lose the odd trick.

DUCHESS OF B. The odd trick? Is that the

THE DRAMA · OSCAR WILDE

husband, Lord Darlington?

LORD D. It would be rather a good name for the modern husband.

DUCHESS OF B. Dear Lord Darlington, how thoroughly depraved you are!

LADY W. Lord Darlington is trivial.

LORD D. Ah, don't say that, Lady Windermere.

LADY W. Why do you *talk* so trivially about life, then?

LORD D. Because I think that life is far too important a thing ever to talk seriously about it. [*moves up c.*]

DUCHESS OF B. What does he mean? Do, as a concession to my poor wits, Lord Darlington, 15 just explain to me what you really mean?

LORD D. [*coming down back of table*] I think I had better not, Duchess. Nowadays to be intelligible is to be found out. Good-bye! [*shakes hands with duchess*] And now [*goes up stage*] Lady Windermere, good-bye. I may come to-night, mayn't I? Do let me come.

LADY W. [*standing up stage with LORD D.*] Yes, certainly. But you are not to say foolish, insincere things to people.

LORD D. [*smiling*] Ah, you are beginning to reform me. It is a dangerous thing to reform anyone, Lady Windermere. [*bows, and exit c.*]

DUCHESS OF B. [*who has risen, goes c.*] What a charming, wicked creature! I like him so 30 much. I'm quite delighted he's gone! How sweet you're looking! Where *do* you get your gowns? And now I must tell you how sorry I am for you, dear Margaret. [*crosses to sofa and sits with LADY W.*] Agatha, darling!

LADY A. Yes, mamma. [*risés*]

DUCHESS OF B. Will you go and look over the photograph album that I see there?

LADY A. Yes, mamma. [*goes to table L.*]

DUCHESS OF B. Dear girl! She is so fond of photographs of Switzerland. Such a pure taste, I think. But I really am so sorry for you, Margaret.

LADY W. [*smiling*] Why, Duchess?

DUCHESS OF B. Oh, on account of that horrid 45 woman. She dresses so well, too, which makes it much worse, sets such a dreadful example. Augustus—you know my disreputable brother—such a trial to us all—well, Augustus is completely infatuated about her. It is quite scandalous, for she is absolutely inadmissible into 50 society. Many a woman has a past, but I am

told that she has at least a dozen, and that they all fit.

LADY W. Whom are you talking about, Duchess?

5 DUCHESS OF B. About Mrs. Erlynne.

LADY W. Mrs. Erlynne? I never heard of her, Duchess. And what *has* she to do with me?

DUCHESS OF B. My poor child! Agatha, darling!

10 LADY A. Yes, mamma.

DUCHESS OF B. Will you go out on the terrace and look at the sunset?

LADY A. Yes, mamma. [*exit through window L.*]

DUCHESS OF B. Sweet girl! So devoted to sunsets! Shows such refinement of feeling, does it not? After all, there is nothing like nature, is there?

LADY W. But what is it, Duchess? Why do 20 you talk to me about this person?

DUCHESS OF B. Don't you really know? I assure you we're all so distressed about it. Only last night at dear Lady Jansen's everyone was saying how extraordinary it was that, of all 25 men in London, Windermere should behave in such a way.

LADY W. My husband—what has *he* to do with any woman of that kind?

DUCHESS OF B. Ah, what indeed, dear? That 30 is the point. He goes to see her continually, and stops for hours at a time, and while he is there she is not at home to anyone. Not that many ladies call on her, dear, but she has a great many disreputable men friends—my own 35 brother in particular, as I told you—and that is what makes it so dreadful about Windermere. We looked upon *him* as being such a model husband, but I am afraid there is no doubt about it. My dear nieces—you know the Saville girls, don't you?—such nice domestic 40 creatures—plain, dreadfully plain, but so good—well, they're always at the window doing fancy work, and making ugly things for the poor, which I think so useful of them in these dreadful socialistic days, and this terrible 45 woman has taken a house in Curzon Street, right opposite them—such a respectable street, too. I don't know what we're coming to! And they tell me that Windermere goes there four 50 and five times a week—they *see* him. They can't help it—and although they never talk scandal, they—well, of course—they remark

on it to everyone. And the worst of it all is that I have been told that this woman has got a great deal of money out of somebody, for it seems that she came to London six months ago without anything at all to speak of, and now she has this charming house in Mayfair, drives her pony in the Park every afternoon, and all—well, all—since she has known poor dear Windermere.

LADY W. Oh, I can't believe it!

DUCHESS OF B. But it's quite true, my dear. The whole of London knows it. That is why I felt it was better to come and talk to you, and advise you to take Windermere away at once to Homburg or to Aix¹ where he'll have something to amuse him, and where you can watch him all day long. I assure you, my dear, that on several occasions after I was first married I had to pretend to be very ill, and was obliged to drink the most unpleasant mineral waters, merely to get Berwick out of town. He was so extremely susceptible. Though I am bound to say he never gave away any large sums of money to anybody. He is far too high principled for that.

LADY W. [*interrupting*] Duchess, Duchess, it's impossible! [*using and crossing stage c.*] We are only married two years. Our child is but six months old. [*sits in chair B. of L. table*]

DUCHESS OF B. Ah, the dear, pretty baby! How is the little darling? Is it a boy or a girl? I hope a girl!—Ah, no, I remember it's a boy! I'm so sorry. Boys are so wicked. My boy is excessively immoral. You wouldn't believe at what hours he comes home. And he's only left Oxford a few months—I really don't know what they teach them there.

LADY W. Are *all* men bad?

DUCHESS OF B. Oh, all of them, my dear, all of them, without any exception. And they never grow any better. Men become old, but they never become good.

LADY W. Windermere and I married for love.

DUCHESS OF B. Yes, we begin like that. It was only Berwick's brutal and incessant threats of suicide that made me accept him at all, and before the year was out he was running after all kinds of petticoats, every color, every shape, every material. In fact, before the honeymoon

was over, I caught him winking at my maid, a most pretty, respectable girl. I dismissed her at once without a character.—No, I remember I passed her on to my sister, poor dear Sir George is so short-sighted. I thought it wouldn't matter. But it did, though—it was most unfortunate. [*uses*] And now, my dear child, I must go, as we are dining out. And mind you don't take this little aberration of Windermere's too much to heart. Just take him abroad, and he'll come back to you all right.

LADY W. Come back to me? [*c*]

DUCHESS OF B. [*L. c.*] Yes, dear, these wicked women get our husbands away from us, but they always come back, slightly damaged, of course. And don't make scenes, men hate them!

LADY W. It is very kind of you, Duchess, to come and tell me all this. But I can't believe that my husband is untrue to me.

DUCHESS OF B. Pretty child! I was like that once. Now I know that all men are monsters. [*LADY W. rings bell*] The only thing to do is to feed the wretches well. A good cook does wonders, and that I know you have. My dear Margaret, you are not going to cry?

LADY W. You needn't be afraid, Duchess, I never cry.

DUCHESS OF B. That's quite right, dear. Crying is the refuge of plain women, but the ruin of pretty ones. Agatha, darling.

LADY A. [*entering L.*] Yes, mamma. [*stands back of table L. c.*]

DUCHESS OF B. Come and bid good-bye to Lady Windermere, and thank her for your charming visit. [*coming down again*] And by the way, I must thank you for sending a card to Mr. Hopper—he's that rich young Australian people are taking such notice of just at present. His father made a great fortune by selling some kind of food in circular tins—most palatable, I believe—I fancy it is the thing the servants always refuse to eat. But the son is quite interesting. I think he's attracted by dear Agatha's clever talk. Of course, we should be very sorry to lose her, but I think that a mother who doesn't part with a daughter every season has no real affection. We're coming to-night, dear. [*PARKER opens c. doors*] And remember my advice, take the poor fellow out of town at once, it is the only thing to do. Good-bye, once more; come, Agatha. [*exeunt*]

¹ Continental watering places.

THE DRAMA · OSCAR WILDE

DUCHESS and LADY A. (c.)]

LADY W. How horrible! I understand now what Lord Darlington meant by the imaginary instance of the couple not two years married. Oh! it can't be true—she spoke of enormous sums of money paid to this woman. I know where Arthur keeps his bank book—in one of the drawers of that desk. I might find out by that, I will find out. [*opens drawer*] No, it is some hideous mistake. [*rises and goes c.*] Some silly scandal! He loves me! He loves me! But why should I not look? I am his wife, I have a right to look! [*returns to bureau, takes out book and examines it, page by page, smiles and gives a sigh of relief*] I knew it, there is not a word of truth in this stupid story. [*puts book back in drawer. As she does so, starts and takes out another book*] A second book—private—locked! [*tries to open it, but fails. Sees paper knife on bureau, and with it cuts cover from book. Begins to start at the first page*] Mrs. Erlynne—£600—Mrs. Erlynne—£700—Mrs. Erlynne—£400. Oh! it is true! it is true! How horrible! [*throws book on floor*]

Enter LORD W. (c.)

LORD W. Well, dear, has the fan been sent home yet? [*going R. c. sees book*] Margaret, you have cut open my bank book. You have no right to do such a thing!

LADY W. You think it wrong that you are found out, don't you?

LORD W. I think it wrong that a wife should spy on her husband.

LADY W. I did not spy on you. I never knew of this woman's existence till half an hour ago. Someone who pitied me was kind enough to tell me what everyone in London knows already—your daily visits to Curzon Street, your mad infatuation, the monstrous sums of money you squander on this infamous woman! [*crossing L.*]

LORD W. Margaret, don't talk like that of Mrs. Erlynne, you don't know how unjust it is!

LADY W. [*turning to him*] You are very jealous of Mrs. Erlynne's honor. I wish you had been jealous of mine.

LORD W. Your honor is untouched, Margaret. You don't think for a moment that— [*puts book back into desk*]

LADY W. I think that you spend your money strangely. That is all. Oh, don't imagine I mind about the money. As far as I am concerned, you may squander everything we have. But what I do mind is that you who have loved me, you who have taught me to love you, should pass from the love that is given to the love that is bought. Oh, it's horrible! [*sits on sofa*] And it is I who feel degraded. You don't feel anything, I feel stained, utterly stained. You can't realize how hideous the last six months seem to me now—every kiss you have given me is tainted in my memory.

LORD W. [*crossing to her*] Don't say that, Margaret, I never loved anyone in the whole world but you.

LADY W. [*rises*] Who is this woman, then? Why do you take a house for her?

LORD W. I did not take a house for her.

LADY W. You gave her the money to do it, which is the same thing.

LORD W. Margaret, as far as I have known Mrs. Erlynne—

LADY W. Is there a Mr. Erlynne—or is he a myth?

LORD W. Her husband died many years ago. She is alone in the world.

LADY W. No relations? [*a pause*]

LORD W. None.

LADY W. Rather curious, isn't it? [*L.*]

LORD W. (*L. c.*). Margaret, I was saying to you—and I beg you to listen to me—that as far as I have known Mrs. Erlynne, she has conducted herself well. If years ago—

LADY W. Oh! [*crossing R. c.*] I don't want details about her life.

LORD W. I am not going to give you any details about her life. I tell you simply this—Mrs. Erlynne was once honored, loved, respected. She was well born, she had a position—she lost everything—threw it away, if you like. That makes it all the more bitter. Misfortunes one can endure—they come from outside, they are accidents. But to suffer for one's own faults—ah! there is the sting of life. It was twenty years ago, too. She was little more than a girl then. She had been a wife for even less time than you have.

LADY W. I am not interested in her—and—you should not mention this woman and me in the same breath. It is an error of taste. [*sitting R. at desk*]

LORD W. Margaret, you could save this woman. She wants to get back into society, and she wants you to help her. [*crossing to her*]

LADY W. Me!

LORD W. Yes, you.

LADY W. How impertinent of her! [*a pause*]

LORD W. Margaret, I came to ask you a great favor, and I still ask it of you, though you have discovered what I had intended you should never have known, that I have given Mrs. Erlynne a large sum of money. I want you to send her an invitation for our party to-night. [*standing L. of her*]

LADY W. You are mad. [*rises*]

LORD W. I entreat you. People may chatter about her, do chatter about her, of course, but they don't know anything definite against her. She has been to several houses—not to houses where you would go, I admit, but still to houses where women who are in what is called Society nowadays do go. That does not content her. She wants you to receive her once.

LADY W. As a triumph for her, I suppose.

LORD W. No, but because she knows that you are a good woman—and that if she comes here once she will have a chance of a happier, a surer life, than she has had. She will make no further effort to know you. Won't you help a woman who is trying to get back?

LADY W. No! If a woman really repents, she never wishes to return to the society that has made or seen her ruin.

LORD W. I beg of you.

LADY W. [*crossing to door R.*] I am going to dress for dinner, and don't mention the subject again this evening. Arthur [*going to him c.*], you fancy because I have no father or mother that I am alone in the world and you can treat me as you choose. You are wrong, I have friends, many friends.

LORD W. (L. C.) Margaret, you are talking foolishly, recklessly. I won't argue with you, but I insist upon your asking Mrs. Erlynne to-night.

LADY W. (R. C.) I shall do nothing of the kind. [*crossing L. c.*]

LORD W. (C.) You refuse?

LADY W. Absolutely!

LORD W. Ah, Margaret, do this for my sake; it is her last chance.

LADY W. What has that to do with me?

LORD W. How hard good women are!

LADY W. How weak bad men are!

LORD W. Margaret, none of us men may be good enough for the women we marry—that is quite true—but you don't imagine I would ever—oh, the suggestion is monstrous!

LADY W. Why should you be different from other men? I am told that there is hardly a husband in London who does not waste his life over some shameful passion.

LORD W. I am not one of them.

LADY W. I am not sure of that

LORD W. You are sure in your heart. But don't make chasm after chasm between us. God knows the last few minutes have thrust us wide enough apart. Sit down and write the card.

LADY W. Nothing in the whole world would induce me.

LORD W. [*crossing to the bureau*] Then I will. [*rings electric bell, sits down and writes card*]

LADY W. You are going to invite this woman? [*crossing to him*]

LORD W. Yes. [*pause*]

Enter PARKER

LORD W. Parker!

PARKER. Yes, my lord. [*comes down L. c.*]

LORD W. Have this note sent to Mrs. Erlynne at No. 84A Curzon Street. [*crossing to L. c. and giving note to PARKER*] There is no answer. [*exit PARKER (C.)*]

LADY W. Arthur, if that woman comes here I shall insult her.

LORD W. Margaret, don't say that.

LADY W. I mean it.

LORD W. Child, if you did such a thing, there's not a woman in London who wouldn't pity you.

LADY W. There is not a good woman in London who would not applaud me. We have been too lax. We must make an example. I propose to begin to-night. [*picking up fan*] Yes, you gave me this fan today; it was your birthday present. If that woman crosses my threshold, I shall strike her across the face with it.

LORD W. Margaret, you couldn't do such a thing.

LADY W. You don't know me! [*moves R.*]

Enter PARKER

LADY W. Parker!

PARKER. Yes, my lady.

LADY W. I shall dine in my own room. I 5
don't want dinner, in fact. See that everything
is ready by half-past ten. And, Parker, be sure
you pronounce the names of the guests very
distinctly to-night. Sometimes you speak so fast
that I miss them. I am particularly anxious to 10
hear the names quite clearly, so as to make no
mistake. You understand, Parker?

PARKER. Yes, my lady.

LADY W. That will do! [*exit PARKER (C.)*]
[*speaking to LORD W.*] Arthur, if that woman 15
comes here—I warn you—

LORD W. Margaret, you'll ruin us!

LADY W. Us! From this moment my life is
separate from yours. But if you wish to avoid
a public scandal, write at once to this woman, 20
and tell her that I forbid her to come here!

LORD W. I will not!—I cannot—she must
come!

LADY W. Then I shall do exactly as I have
said. [*goes R.*] You leave me no choice. 25
[*exit R.*]

LORD W. [*calling after her*] Margaret! Mar-
garet! [*a pause*] My God! What shall I do! I
dare not tell her who this woman really is. The
shame would kill her. [*sinks down into a chair* 30
and buries his face in his hands.]

ACT II

SCENE—*Drawing-room in LORD W.'s house.*
Door R. U. opening into ballroom, where band
is playing. Door L. through which guests are
entering. Door L. U. opens on an illuminated
terrace. Palms, flowers, and brilliant lights.
Room crowded with guests. LADY W. is receiv-
ing them.

DUCHESS OF B. [*up C.*] So strange Lord
Windermere isn't here. Mr. Hopper is very
late, too. You have kept those five dances for
him, Agatha? [*comes down*]

LADY A. Yes, mamma.

DUCHESS OF B. [*sitting on sofa*] Just let me
see your card. I'm so glad Lady Windermere
has revived cards.—They're a mother's only
safeguard. You dear simple little thing! 50
[*scratches out two names*] No nice girl should
ever waltz with such particularly younger sons!

It looks so fast! The last two dances you must
pass on the terrace with Mr. Hopper.

Enter MR. DUMBY and LADY PLYMDALE from
the ballroom

LADY A. Yes, mamma.

DUCHESS OF B. [*fanning herself*] The air is
so pleasant there.

PARKER. Mrs. Cowper-Cowper. Lady Stut-
field. Sir James Royston. Mr. Guy Berkeley. 10

These people enter as announced

DUMBY. Good evening, Lady Stutfield. I
suppose this will be the last ball of the season?

LADY S. I suppose so, Mr. Dumby. It's been
a delightful season, hasn't it?

DUMBY. Quite delightful! Good evening,
Duchess. I suppose this will be the last ball of
the season?

DUCHESS OF B. I suppose so, Mr. Dumby.
It has been a very dull season, hasn't it?

DUMBY. Dreadfully dull! Dreadfully dull!

MRS. C.-C. Good evening, Mr. Dumby. I
suppose this will be the last ball of the season?

DUMBY. Oh, I think not. There'll probably
be two more. [*wanders back to LADY P.*]

PARKER. Mr. Rufford. Lady Jedburgh and
Miss Graham. Mr. Hopper.

These people enter as announced

HOPPER. How do you do, Lady Windermere?
How do you do, Duchess? [*boots to*
LADY A.]

DUCHESS OF B. Dear Mr. Hopper, how nice
of you to come so early. We all know how you
are run after in London.

HOPPER. Capital place, London! They are
not nearly so exclusive in London as they are
in Sydney.

DUCHESS OF B. Ah! we know your value, Mr.
Hopper. We wish there were more like you. It
would make life so much easier. Do you know,
Mr. Hopper, dear Agatha and I are so much
interested in Australia. It must be so pretty
with all the dear little kangaroos flying about.
Agatha has found it on the map. What a curi-
ous shape it is! Just like a large packing-case.
However, it is a very young country, isn't it?

HOPPER. Wasn't it made at the same time as
the others, Duchess?

DUCHESS OF B. How clever you are, Mr.
Hopper. You have a cleverness quite of your

own. Now I mustn't keep you.

HOPPER. But I should like to dance with Lady Agatha, Duchess.

DUCHESS OF B. Well, I *hope* she has a dance left. Have you got a dance left, Agatha?

LADY A. Yes, mamma.

DUCHESS OF B. The next one?

LADY A. Yes, mamma.

HOPPER. May I have the pleasure? [LADY AGATHA bows]

DUCHESS OF B. Mind you take great care of my little chatter-box, Mr. Hopper. [LADY A. and MR. H. pass into ballroom]

Enter LORD W. (c.)

LORD W. Margaret, I want to speak to you

LADY W. In a moment. [*the music stops*]

PARKER. Lord Augustus Lorton.

Enter LORD A.

LORD A. Good evening, Lady Windermere.

DUCHESS OF B. Sir James, will you take me into the ballroom? Augustus has been dining with us to-night. I really have had quite enough of dear Augustus for the moment. [SIR JAMES B. gives the duchess his arm and escorts her into the ballroom]

PARKER. Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Bowden Lord and Lady Paisley. Lord Darlington.

These people enter as announced

LORD A. [*coming up to* LORD W.] Want to speak to you particularly, dear boy. I'm worn to a shadow. Know I don't look it. None of us men do look what we really are. Demmed good thing, too. What I want to know is this. Who is she? Where does she come from? Why hasn't she got any demmed relations? Demmed nuisance, relations! But they make one so demmed respectable.

LORD W. You are talking of Mrs. Erlynne, I suppose? I only met her six months ago. Till then I never knew of her existence.

LORD A. You have seen a good deal of her since then.

LORD W. [*coldly*] Yes, I have seen a good deal of her since then. I have just seen her.

LORD A. Egad! the women are very down on her. I have been dining with Arabella this evening! By Jove! you should have heard what she said about Mrs. Erlynne. She didn't leave a rag on her. . . . [*aside*] Berwick and I told

her that didn't matter much, as the lady in question must have an extremely fine figure. You should have seen Arabella's expression! . . . But, look here, dear boy I don't know what to do about Mrs. Erlynne. Egad! I might be married to her; she treats me with such demmed indifference. She's deuced clever, too! She explains everything. Egad! She explains you. She has got any amount of explanations for you—and all of them different

LORD W. No explanations are necessary about my friendship with Mrs. Erlynne.

LORD A. Hem! Well, look here, dear old fellow. Do you think she will ever get into this demmed thing called Society? Would you introduce her to your wife? No use beating about the confounded bush. Would you do that?

LORD W. Mrs. Erlynne is coming here to-night

LORD A. Your wife has sent her a card?

LORD W. Mrs. Erlynne has received a card.

LORD A. Then she's all right, dear boy. But why didn't you tell me that before? It would have saved me a heap of worry and demmed misunderstandings! [LADY A. and MR. H. cross and exit on terrace L. U. E.]

PARKER. Mr. Cecil Graham!

Enter MR. CECIL G.

CECIL G. [*bows to* LORD W., *passes over and shakes hands with* LORD W.] Good evening, Arthur. Why don't you ask me how I am? I like people to ask me how I am. It shows a wide-spread interest in my health. Now tonight I am not at all well. Been dining with my people. Wonder why it is one's people are always so tedious? My father would talk morality after dinner. I told him he was old enough to know better. But my experience is that as soon as people are old enough to know better, they don't know anything at all. Hullo, Tuppy! Hear you're going to be married again; thought you were tired of that game.

LORD A. You're excessively trivial, my dear boy, excessively trivial!

CECIL G. By the way, Tuppy, which is it? Have you been twice married and once divorced, or twice divorced and once married? I say, you've been twice divorced and once married. It seems so much more probable.

LORD A. I have a very bad memory. I really don't remember which. [*moves away R.*]

THE DRAMA · OSCAR WILDE

LADY P. Lord Windermere, I've something most particular to ask you.

LORD W. I am afraid—if you will excuse me—I must join my wife.

LADY P. Oh, you mustn't dream of such a thing. It's most dangerous nowadays for a husband to pay any attention to his wife in public. It always makes people think that he beats her when they're alone. The world has grown so suspicious of anything that looks like a happy married life. But I'll tell you what it is at supper. [*moves towards door of ballroom*]

LORD W. (c.) Margaret, I must speak to you.

LADY W. Will you hold my fan for me, Lord Darlington? Thanks. [*comes down to him*]

LORD W. [*crossing to her*] Margaret, what you said before dinner was, of course, impossible?

LADY W. That woman is not coming here to-night!

LORD W. (R. C.) Mrs. Erlynne is coming here, and if you in any way annoy or wound her, you will bring shame and sorrow on us both. Remember that! Ah, Margaret! only trust me! A wife should trust her husband!

LADY W. (c.) London is full of women who trust their husbands. One can always recognize them. They look so thoroughly unhappy. I am not going to be one of them. [*moves up*] Lord Darlington, will you give me back my fan, please? Thanks. . . . A useful thing, a fan, isn't it? . . . I want a friend to-night, Lord Darlington. I didn't know I would want one so soon.

LORD D. Lady Windermere! I knew the time would come some day; but why to-night!

LORD W. I will tell her. I must. It would be terrible if there were any scene. Margaret—

PARKER. Mrs. Erlynne.

[LORD W. starts. MRS. E. enters, very beautifully dressed and very dignified. LADY W. clutches at her fan, then lets it drop on the floor. She bows coldly to MRS. E., who bows to her sweetly in turn, and sails into the room]

LORD D. You have dropped your fan, Lady Windermere. [*picks it up and hands it to her*]

MRS. E. (c.) How do you do again, Lord Windermere? How charming your sweet wife looks! Quite a picture!

LORD W. [*in a low voice*] It was terribly rash

of you to come!

MRS. E. [*smiling*] The wisest thing I ever did in my life. And, by the way, you must pay me a good deal of attention this evening. I am afraid of the women. You must introduce me to some of them. The men I can always manage. How do you do, Lord Augustus? You have quite neglected me lately. I have not seen you since yesterday. I am afraid you're faithless. Everyone told me so.

LORD A. (R.) Now really, Mrs. Erlynne, allow me to explain.

MRS. E. (R. C.) No, dear Lord Augustus, you can't explain anything. It is your chief charm.

LORD A. Ah! if you find charms in me, Mrs. Erlynne—[*they converse together. LORD W. moves uneasily about the room watching MRS. E.*]

LORD D. [*to LADY W.*] How pale you are!

LADY W. Cowards are always pale.

LORD D. You look faint. Come out on the terrace.

LADY W. Yes. [*to PARKER*] Parker, send my cloak out.

MRS. E. [*crossing to her*] Lady Windermere, how beautifully your terrace is illuminated. Reminds me of Prince Doria's at Rome. [*LADY W. bows coldly, and goes off with LORD D.*] Oh, how do you do, Mr. Graham? Isn't that your aunt, Lady Jedburgh? I should so much like to know her.

CECIL G. [*after a moment's hesitation and embarrassment*] Oh, certainly, if you wish it. Aunt Caroline, allow me to introduce Mrs. Erlynne.

MRS. E. So pleased to meet you, Lady Jedburgh. [*sits beside her on the sofa*] Your nephew and I are great friends. I am so much interested in his political career. I think he's sure to be a wonderful success. He thinks like a Tory, and talks like a Radical, and that's so important nowadays. He's such a brilliant talker, too. But we all know from whom he inherits that. Lord Allendale was saying to me only yesterday, in the Park, that Mr. Graham talks almost as well as his aunt.

LADY J. (R.) Most kind of you to say these charming things to me! [*MRS. E. smiles and continues conversation*]

DUMBY [*to CECIL G.*] Did you introduce Mrs. Erlynne to Lady Jedburgh?

CECIL G. Had to, my dear fellow. Couldn't help it. That woman can make one do anything she wants. How, I don't know.

DUMBY. Hope to goodness she won't speak to me! [*saunters towards LADY P.*]

MRS. E. [*C. to LADY J.*] On Thursday? With great pleasure. [*rises and speaks to LORD W. laughing*] What a bore it is to have to be civil to these old dowagers. But they always insist on it.

LADY P. [*to MR. D.*] Who is that well-dressed woman talking to Windermere?

DUMBY. Haven't got the slightest idea. Looks like an *édition de luxe* of a wicked French novel, meant specially for the English market.

MRS. E. So that is poor Dumby with Lady Plymdale? I hear she is frightfully jealous of him. He doesn't seem anxious to speak to me to-night. I suppose he is afraid of her. Those straw-colored women have dreadful tempers. Do you know, I think I'll dance with you first. Windermere. [*LORD W. bites his lip and frowns*] It will make Lord Augustus so jealous! Lord Augustus! [*LORD A. comes down*] Lord Windermere insists on my dancing with him first, and, as it's his own house, I can't well refuse. You know I would much sooner dance with you.

LORD A. [*with a low bow*] I wish I could think so, Mrs. Erlynne.

MRS. E. You know it far too well! I can fancy a person dancing through life with you and finding it charming.

LORD A. [*placing his hand on his white waistcoat*] Oh, thank you, thank you. You are the most adorable of all ladies!

MRS. E. What a nice speech! So simple and so sincere! Just the sort of speech I like. Well, you shall hold my bouquet. [*goes towards ballroom on LORD W.'s arm*] Ah, Mr. Dumby, how are you? I am so sorry I have been out the last three times you have called. Come and lunch on Friday.

DUMBY [*with perfect nonchalance*] De-lighted. [*LADY P. glares with indignation at MR. D. LORD A. follows MRS. E. and LORD W. into the ballroom holding bouquet*]

LADY P. [*to MR. D.*] What an absolute brute you are! I never can believe a word you say! Why did you tell me you didn't know her? What do you mean by calling on her three

times running? You are not to go to lunch there; of course you understand that?

DUMBY. My dear Laura, I wouldn't dream of going!

LADY P. You haven't told me her name yet. Who is she?

DUMBY. [*coughs slightly and smooths his hair*] She's a Mrs. Erlynne.

LADY P. That woman!

DUMBY. Yes, that is what everyone calls her.

LADY P. How very interesting! How intensely interesting! I really must have a good stare at her. [*goes to door of ballroom and looks in*] I have heard the most shocking things about her. They say she is ruining poor Windermere. And Lady Windermere, who goes in for being so proper, invites her! How extremely amusing! It takes a thoroughly good woman to do a thoroughly stupid thing. You are to lunch there on Friday.

DUMBY. Why?

LADY P. Because I want you to take my husband with you. He has been so attentive lately that he has become a perfect nuisance. Now, this woman is just the thing for him. He'll dance attendance upon her as long as she lets him, and won't bother me. I assure you, women of that kind are most useful. They form the basis of other people's marriages.

DUMBY. What a mystery you are!

LADY P. [*looking at him*] I wish you were!

DUMBY. I am—to myself. I am the only person in the world I should like to know thoroughly, but I don't see any chance of it just at present. [*they pass into the ballroom, and LADY W. and LORD D. enter from the terrace*]

LADY W. Yes. Her coming here is monstrous, unbearable. I know now what you meant to-day at tea-time. Why didn't you tell me right out? You should have!

LORD D. I couldn't! A man can't tell these things about another man! But if I had known he was going to make you ask her here to-night, I think I would have told you. That insult, at any rate, you would have been spared.

LADY W. I did not ask her. He insisted on her coming—against my entreaties—against my commands. Oh! the house is tainted for me! I feel that every woman here sneers at me as she dances by with my husband. What have I done to deserve this? I gave him all my life. He took it—used it—spoiled it! I am degraded

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in my own eyes; and I lack courage—I am a coward! [*sits down on sofa*]

LORD D. If I know you at all, I know that you can't live with a man who treats you like this! What sort of life would you have with him? You would feel that he was lying to you every moment of the day. You would feel that the look in his eyes was false, his voice false, his touch false, his passion false. He would come to you when he was weary of others; you would have to comfort him. He would come to you when he was devoted to others; you would have to charm him. You would have to be to him the mask of his real life, the cloak to hide his secret.

LADY W. You are right—you are terribly right. But where am I to turn? You said you would be my friend, Lord Darlington.—Tell me, what am I to do? Be my friend now.

LORD D. Between men and women there is no friendship possible. There is passion, enmity, worship, love, but no friendship. I love you—

LADY W. No, no! [*rises*]

LORD D. Yes, I love you! You are more to me than anything in the whole world. What does your husband give you? Nothing. Whatever is in him he gives to this wretched woman, whom he has thrust into your society, into your home, to shame you before every one. I offer you my life—

LADY W. Lord Darlington!

LORD D. My life—my whole life. Take it, and do with it what you will. . . . I love you—love you as I have never loved any living thing. From the moment I met you I loved you, loved you blindly, adoringly, madly! You did not know it then—you know it now! Leave this house to-night. I won't tell you that the world matters nothing, or the world's voice, or the voice of Society. They matter a good deal. They matter far too much. But there are moments when one has to choose between living one's own life, fully, entirely, completely—or dragging out some false, shallow, degrading existence that the world in its hypocrisy demands. You have that moment now. Choose! Oh, my love, choose!

LADY W. [*moving slowly away from him, and looking at him with startled eyes*] I have not the courage.

LORD D. [*following her*] Yes; you have the

courage. There may be six months of pain, of disgrace even, but when you no longer bear his name, when you bear mine, all will be well. Margaret, my love, my wife that shall be some day—yes, my wife! You know it! What are you now? This woman has the place that belongs by right to you. Oh! go—go out of this house, with head erect, with a smile upon your lips, with courage in your eyes. All London will know why you did it; and who will blame you? No one. If they do, what matter? Wrong? What is wrong? It's wrong for a man to abandon his wife for a shameless woman. It is wrong for a wife to remain with a man who so dishonors her. You said once you would make no compromise with things. Make none now. Be brave! Be yourself!

LADY W. I am afraid of being myself. Let me think! Let me wait! My husband may return to me. [*sits down on sofa*]

LORD D. And you would take him back! You are not what I thought you were. You are just the same as every other woman. You would stand anything rather than face the curse of a world whose praise you would despise. In a week you will be driving with this woman in the Park. She will be your constant guest—your dearest friend. You would endure anything rather than break with one blow this monstrous tie. You are right. You have no courage; none.

LADY W. Ah, give me time to think. I cannot answer you now. [*passes her hand nervously over her brow*]

LORD D. It must be now or not at all.

LADY W. [*rising from the sofa*] Then not at all! [*a pause*]

LORD D. You break my heart!

LADY W. Mine is already broken. [*a pause*]

LORD D. To-morrow I leave England. This is the last time I shall ever look on you. You will never see me again. For one moment our lives met—our souls touched. They must never meet or touch again. Good-bye, Margaret. [*exit*]

LADY W. How alone I am in life! How terribly alone! [*the music stops*]

Enter the DUCHESS OF B. and LORD P. laughing and talking. Other guests come in from ballroom

DUCHESS OF B. Dear Margaret, I've just been

having such a delightful chat with Mrs. Erlynne. I am so sorry for what I said to you this afternoon about her. Of course, she must be all right if *you* invite her. A most attractive woman, and has such sensible views on life. Told me she entirely disapproved of people marrying more than once, so I feel quite safe about poor Augustus. Can't imagine why people speak against her. It's those horrid nieces of mine—the Saville girls—they're always talking scandal. Still, I should go to Homburg, dear, I really should. She is just a little too attractive. But where is Agatha? Oh, there she is. [LADY A. and MR. H. enter from the terrace L. U. E.] Mr. Hopper, I am very angry with you. You have taken Agatha out on the terrace, and she is so delicate.

HOPPER (L. C.) Awfully sorry, Duchess. We went out for a moment and then got chatting together.

DUCHESS OF B. (C.) Ah, about dear Australia, I suppose?

HOPPER. Yes.

DUCHESS OF B. Agatha, darling! [*beckons her over*]

LADY A. Yes, mamma!

DUCHESS OF B. [*aside*] Did Mr. Hopper definitely—

LADY A. Yes, mamma.

DUCHESS OF B. And what answer did you give him, dear child?

LADY A. Yes, mamma.

DUCHESS OF B. [*affectionately*] My dear one! You always say the right thing, Mr. Hopper! James! Agatha has told me everything. How cleverly you have both kept your secret.

HOPPER. You don't mind my taking Agatha off to Australia, then, Duchess?

DUCHESS OF B. [*indignantly*] To Australia? Oh, don't mention that dreadful vulgar place

HOPPER. But she said she'd like to come with me.

DUCHESS OF B. [*severely*] Did you say that, Agatha?

LADY A. Yes, mamma.

DUCHESS OF B. Agatha, you say the most silly things possible. I think on the whole that Grosvenor Square would be a more healthy place to reside in. There are lots of vulgar people live in Grosvenor Square, but at any rate there are no horrid kangaroos crawling about. But we'll talk about that to-morrow. James, you

can take Agatha down. You'll come to lunch, of course, James. At half-past one instead of two. The Duke will wish to say a few words to you, I am sure.

5 HOPPER. I should like to have a chat with the Duke, Duchess. He has not said a single word to me yet.

DUCHESS OF B. I think you'll find he will have a great deal to say to you to-morrow. 10 [*exit LADY A. with MR. H.*] And now good night, Margaret. I'm afraid it's the old, old story, dear. Love—well, not love at first sight, but love at the end of the season, which is so much more satisfactory.

15 LADY W. Good night, Duchess. [*exit the DUCHESS OF B. on LORD P.'s arm*]

LADY P. My dear Margaret, what a handsome woman your husband has been dancing with! I should be quite jealous if I were you! 20 Is she a great friend of yours?

LADY W. No!

LADY P. Really? Good night, dear. [*looks at MR. D. and exit*]

DUMBY. Awful manners young Hopper has!

25 CECIL C. Ah! Hopper is one of Nature's gentlemen, the worst type of gentleman I know.

DUMBY. Sensible woman, Lady Windermere. Lots of wives would have objected to Mrs. Erlynne coming. But Lady Windermere has that uncommon thing called common sense.

CECIL C. And Windermere knows that nothing looks so like innocence as an indiscretion.

35 DUMBY. Yes, dear Windermere is becoming almost modern. Never thought he would. [*bows to LADY W. and exit*]

LADY J. Good night, Lady Windermere. What a fascinating woman Mrs. Erlynne is! 40 She is coming to lunch on Thursday, won't you come too? I expect the Bishop and dear Lady Merton.

LADY W. I am afraid I am engaged, Lady Jedburgh.

45 LADY J. So sorry. Come, dear. [*exeunt LADY J. and MISS G.*]

Enter MRS. E. and LORD W.

MRS. E. Charming ball it has been! Quite 50 reminds me of old days. [*sits on the sofa*] And I see that there are just as many fools in society as there used to be. So pleased to find that

nothing has altered! Except Margaret. She's grown quite pretty. The last time I saw her—twenty years ago—she was a fright in flannel. Positive fright, I assure you. The dear Duchess! and that sweet Lady Agatha! Just the type of girl I like. Well, really, Windermere, if I am to be the Duchess's sister-in-law—

LORD W. [*sitting L. of her*] But are you—? [*exit MR. CECIL G. with rest of guests. LADY W. watches with a look of scorn and pain* MRS. E. and her husband. They are unconscious of her presence]

MRS. E. Oh, yes! He's to call to-morrow at twelve o'clock. He wanted to propose to-night. In fact he did. He kept on proposing. Poor Augustus, you know how he repeats himself. Such a bad habit! But I told him I wouldn't give him an answer till to-morrow. Of course I am going to take him. And I dare say I'll make him an admirable wife, as wives go. And there is a great deal of good in Lord Augustus. Fortunately it is all on the surface. Just where good qualities should be. Of course you must help me in this matter.

LORD W. I am not called on to encourage Lord Augustus, I suppose?

MRS. E. Oh, no! I do the encouraging. But you will make me a handsome settlement, Windermere, won't you?

LORD W. [*frowning*] Is that what you want to talk to me about to-night?

MRS. E. Yes.

LORD W. [*with a gesture of impatience*] I will not talk of it here.

MRS. E. [*laughing*] Then we will talk of it on the terrace. Even business should have a picturesque background. Should it not, Windermere? With a proper background women can do anything.

LORD W. Won't to-morrow do as well?

MRS. E. No; you see, to-morrow I am going to accept him. And I think it would be a good thing if I was able to tell him that—well, what shall I say—£2000 a year left me by a third cousin—or a second husband—or some distant relative of that kind. It would be an additional attraction, wouldn't it? You have a delightful opportunity now of paying me a compliment, Windermere. But you are not very clever at paying compliments. I am afraid Margaret doesn't encourage you in that excellent habit. It's a great mistake on her part. When men give

up saying what is charming, they give up thinking what is charming. But seriously, what do you say to £2000? £2500, I think. In modern life margin is everything. Windermere, don't you think the world an intensely amusing place? I do! [*exit on terrace with LORD W. Music strikes up in ballroom*]

LADY W. To stay in this house any longer is impossible. To-night a man who loves me offered me his whole life. I refused it. It was foolish of me. I will offer him mine now. I will give him mine. I will go to him! [*puts on cloak and goes to door, then turns back. Sits down at table and writes a letter, puts it into an envelope and leaves it on table*] Arthur has never understood me. When he reads this, he will. He may do as he chooses now with his life. I have done with mine as I think best, as I think right. It is he who has broken the bond of marriage—not I. I only break its bondage. [*exit*]

PARKER enters L. and crosses towards the ballroom R. Enter MRS. E.

MRS. E. Is Lady Windermere in the ballroom?

PARKER. Her ladyship has just gone out.

MRS. E. Gone out? She's not on the terrace?

PARKER. No, madam. Her ladyship has just gone out of the house.

MRS. E. [*starts and looks at the servant with a puzzled expression on her face*] Out of the house?

PARKER. Yes, madam—her ladyship told me she had left a letter for his lordship on the table.

MRS. E. A letter for Lord Windermere?

PARKER. Yes, madam.

MRS. E. Thank you. [*exit PARKER. The music in the ballroom stops*] Gone out of her house! A letter addressed to her husband! [*goes over to table and looks at letter. Takes it up and lays it down again with a shudder of fear*] No, no! It would be impossible! Life doesn't repeat its tragedies like that! Oh, why does this horrible fancy come across me? Why do I remember now the one moment of my life I most wish to forget? Does life repeat its tragedies? [*tears letter open and reads it, then sinks down into a chair with a gesture of anguish*] Oh, how terrible! the same words that twenty years ago I wrote to her father!

and how bitterly I have been punished for it! No; my punishment, my real punishment is to-night, is now! [*still seated R.*]

Enter LORD W. (L. U. E.)

LORD W. Have you said good night to my wife?

MRS. E. [*crushing letter in her hand*] Yes.

LORD W. Where is she?

MRS. E. She is very tired. She has gone to bed. She said she had a headache.

LORD W. I must go to her. You'll excuse me?

MRS. E. [*rising hurriedly*] Oh, no! It's nothing serious. She's only very tired, that is all. Besides, there are people still in the supper-room. She wants you to make her apologies to them. She said she didn't wish to be disturbed. [*drops letter*] She asked me to tell you.

LORD W. [*picks up letter*] You have dropped something.

MRS. E. Oh, yes, thank you, that is mine. [*puts out her hand to take it*]

LORD W. [*still looking at letter*] But it's my wife's handwriting, isn't it?

MRS. E. [*takes the letter quickly*] Yes, it's—
an address. Will you ask them to call my carriage, please?

LORD W. Certainly. [*goes L. and exit*]

MRS. E. Thanks.—What can I do? What can I do? I feel a passion awakening within me that I never felt before. What can it mean? The daughter must not be like the mother—that would be terrible. How can I save her? How can I save my child? A moment may ruin a life. Who knows that better than I? Windermere must be got out of the house; that is absolutely necessary. [*goes L.*] But how shall I do it? It must be done somehow. Ah!

Enter LORD A. (R. U. E.) carrying bouquet

LORD A. Dear lady, I am in such suspense! May I not have an answer to my request?

MRS. E. Lord Augustus, listen to me. You are to take Lord Windermere down to your club at once and keep him there as long as possible. You understand?

LORD A. But you said you wished me to keep early hours!

MRS. E. [*nervously*] Do what I tell you. Do what I tell you.

LORD A. And my reward?

MRS. E. Your reward? Your reward? Oh!

ask me that to-morrow. But don't let Windermere out of your sight to-night. If you do I will never forgive you. I will never speak to you again. I'll have nothing to do with you.
5 Remember you are to keep Windermere at your club, and don't let him come back to-night. [*exit*]

LORD A. Well, really, I might be her husband already. Positively I might. [*follows her in a bewildered manner.*]

ACT III

SCENE.—LORD DARLINGTON'S rooms. A large sofa is in front of fireplace R. At the back of the stage a curtain is drawn across the window. Doors L. and R. Table R. with writing materials. Table C. with syphons, glasses, and Tantalus frame.² Table L. with cigars and cigarette box. Lamps lit.

LADY W. [*standing by the fireplace*] Why doesn't he come? This waiting is horrible. He should be here. Why is he not here, to wake by passionate words some fire within me? I am cold—cold as a loveless thing. Arthur must have read my letter by this time. If he cared for me, he would have come after me, would have taken me back by force. But he doesn't care. He's entrained by this woman—fascinated by her—dominated by her. If a woman wants to hold a man, she has merely to appeal to what is worst in him. We make gods of men, and they leave us. Others make brutes of them, and they fawn and are faithful. How hideous life is! . . . Oh! it was mad of me to come here, horribly mad. And yet which is the worst, I wonder, to be at the mercy of a man who loves one, or the wife of a man who in one's own house dishonors one? What woman knows? What woman in the whole world? But will he love me always, this man to whom I am giving my life? What do I bring him? Lips that have lost the note of joy, eyes that are blighted by tears, chill hands and icy heart. I bring him nothing. I must go back—no; I can't go back,

² a contrivance for holding two or three decanters of liquor, which, however, cannot be poured from until a metal bar over the stoppers is unlocked or removed (a tantalizing arrangement for anyone but the owner); see Tantalus in *The American College Dictionary* and compounds of the term in *OED*.

my letter has put me in their power—Arthur would not take me back! That fatal letter! No! Lord Darlington leaves England to-morrow. I will go with him—I have no choice. [*sits down for a few moments. Then starts up and puts on her cloak*] No, no! I will go back, let Arthur do with me what he pleases. I can't wait here. It has been madness my coming. I must go at once. As for Lord Darlington—Oh! here he is! What shall I do? What can I say to him? Will he let me go away at all? I have heard that men are brutal, horrible. . . . Oh! [*hides her face in her hands*]

Enter MRS. E. (L.)

MRS. E. Lady Windermere! [*LADY W. starts and looks up. Then recoils in contempt*] Thank Heaven I am in time. You must go back to your husband's house immediately.

LADY W. Must?

MRS. E. [*authoritatively*] Yes, you must! There is not a second to be lost. Lord Darlington may return at any moment.

LADY W. Don't come near me!

MRS. E. Oh! you are on the brink of ruin; you are on the brink of a hideous precipice. You must leave this place at once, my carriage is waiting at the corner of the street. You must come with me and drive straight home. [*LADY W. throws off her cloak and flings it on the sofa*] What are you doing?

LADY W. Mrs. Erlynne—if you had not come here, I would have gone back. But now that I see you, I feel that nothing in the whole world would induce me to live under the same roof as Lord Windermere. You fill me with horror. There is something about you that stirs the wildest rage within me. And I know why you are here. My husband sent you to lure me back that I might serve as a blind to whatever relations exist between you and him.

MRS. E. Oh! You don't think that—you can't.

LADY W. Go back to my husband, Mrs. Erlynne. He belongs to you and not to me. I suppose he is afraid of a scandal. Men are such cowards. They outrage every law of the world, and are afraid of the world's tongue. But he had better prepare himself. He shall have a scandal. He shall have the worst scandal there has been in London for years. He shall see his

name in every vile paper, mine on every hideous placard.

MRS. E. No—no—

LADY W. Yes! he shall. Had he come himself, I admit I would have gone back to the life of degradation you and he had prepared for me—I was going back—but to stay himself at home, and send you as his messenger—oh! it was infamous—infamous.

MRS. E. [*C.*] Lady Windermere, you wrong me horribly—you wrong your husband horribly. He doesn't know you are here—he thinks you are safe in your own house. He thinks you are asleep in your own room. He never read the mad letter you wrote to him!

LADY W. [*R.*] Never read it!

MRS. E. No—he knows nothing about it.

LADY W. How simple you think me! [*going to her*] You are lying to me!

MRS. E. [*restraining herself*] I am not. I am telling you the truth.

LADY W. If my husband didn't read my letter, how is it that you are here? Who told you I had left the house you were shameless enough to enter? Who told you where I had gone to? My husband told you, and sent you to decoy me back. [*crosses L.*]

MRS. E. (*R. C.*) Your husband has never seen the letter. I—saw it, I opened it. I—read it.

LADY W. [*turning to her*] You opened a letter of mine to my husband? You wouldn't dare!

MRS. E. Dare! Oh! to save you from the abyss into which you are falling, there is nothing in the world I would not dare, nothing in the whole world. Here is the letter. Your husband has never read it. He never shall read it. [*going to fireplace*] It should never have been written. [*tears it and throws it into the fire*]

LADY W. [*with infinite contempt in her voice and look*] How do I know that was my letter after all? You seem to think the commonest device can take me in!

MRS. E. Oh! Why do you disbelieve everything I tell you! What object do you think I have in coming here, except to save you from utter ruin, to save you from the consequence of a hideous mistake? That letter that is burning now *was* your letter. I swear it to you!

LADY W. [*slowly*] You took good care to burn it before I had examined it. I cannot

trust you. You, whose whole life is a lie, how could you speak the truth about anything? [*sits down*]

MRS. E. [*hurriedly*] Think as you like about me—say what you choose against me, but go back, go back to the husband you love.

LADY W. [*sullenly*] I do not love him!

MRS. E. You do, and you know that he loves you.

LADY W. He does not understand what love is. He understands it as little as you do—but I see what you want. It would be a great advantage for you to get me back. Dear Heaven! what a life I would have then! Living at the mercy of a woman who has neither mercy nor pity in her, a woman whom it is an infamy to meet, a degradation to know, a vile woman, a woman who comes between husband and wife!

MRS. E. [*with a gesture of despair*] Lady Windermere, Lady Windermere, don't say such terrible things. You don't know how terrible they are, how terrible and how unjust. Listen, you must listen! Only go back to your husband, and I promise you never to communicate with him again on any pretext—never to see him—never to have anything to do with his life or yours. The money that he gave me, he gave me not through love, but through hatred, not in worship, but in contempt. The hold I have over him—

LADY W. [*rising*] Ah! you admit you have a hold!

MRS. E. Yes, and I will tell you what it is. It is his love for you, Lady Windermere.

LADY W. You expect me to believe that?

MRS. E. You must believe it! It is true. It is his love for you that has made him submit to—oh! call it what you like, tyranny, threats, anything you choose. But it is his love for you. His desire to spare you—shame, yes, shame and disgrace.

LADY W. What do you mean? You are insolent! What have I to do with you?

MRS. E. [*humbly*] Nothing. I know it—but I tell you that your husband loves you—that you may never meet with such love again in your whole life—that such love you will never meet—and that if you throw it away, the day may come when you will starve for love and it will not be given to you, beg for love and it will be denied you—Oh! Arthur loves you!

LADY W. Arthur? And you tell me there is

nothing between you?

MRS. E. Lady Windermere, before Heaven your husband is guiltless of all offense towards you! And I—I tell you that had it ever occurred to me that such a monstrous suspicion would have entered your mind, I would have died rather than have crossed your life or his—oh! died, gladly died! [*moves away to sofa R.*]

LADY W. You talk as if you had a heart. Women like you have no hearts. Heart is not in you. You are bought and sold [*sits L. C.*]

MRS. E. [*starts, with a gesture of pain. Then restrains herself, and comes over to where LADY W. is sitting. As she speaks, she stretches out her hands towards her, but does not dare to touch her*] Believe what you choose about me, I am not worth a moment's sorrow. But don't spoil your beautiful young life on my account! You don't know what may be in store for you, unless you leave this house at once. You don't know what it is to fall into the pit, to be despised, mocked, abandoned, sneered at—to be an outcast! to find the door shut against one, to have to creep in by hideous byways, afraid every moment lest the mask should be stripped from one's face, and all the while to hear the laughter, the horrible laughter of the world, a thing more tragic than all the tears the world has ever shed. You don't know what it is. One pays for one's sin, and then one pays again, and all one's life one pays. You must never know that.—As for me, if suffering be an expiation, then at this moment I have expiated all my faults, whatever they have been; for tonight you have made a heart in one who had it not, made it and broken it—But let that pass. I may have wrecked my own life, but I will not let you wreck yours. You—why, you are a mere girl, you would be lost. You haven't got the kind of brains that enables a woman to get back. You have neither the wit nor the courage. You couldn't stand dishonor. No! Go back, Lady Windermere, to the husband who loves you, whom you love. You have a child, Lady Windermere. Go back to that child who even now, in pain or in joy, may be calling to you. [*LADY W. rises*] God gave you that child. He will require from you that you make his life fine, that you watch over him. What answer will you make to God if his life is ruined through you? Back to your house, Lady Win-

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dermere—your husband loves you. He has never swerved for a moment from the love he bears you. But even if he had a thousand loves, you must stay with your child. If he was harsh to you, you must stay with your child. If he ill-treated you, you must stay with your child. If he abandoned you, your place is with your child. [LADY W. bursts into tears and buries her face in her hands] [rushing to her] Lady Windermere!

LADY W. [holding out her hands to her, helplessly, as a child might do] Take me home. Take me home.

MRS. E. [is about to embrace her. Then restrains herself. There is a look of wonderful joy in her face] Come! Where is your cloak? [getting it from sofa] Here. Put it on. Come at once! [they go to the door]

LADY W. Stop! Don't you hear voices?

MRS. E. No, no! There is no one!

LADY W. Yes, there is! Listen! Oh! that is my husband's voice! He is coming in! Save me! Oh, it's some plot! You have sent for him! [voices outside]

MRS. E. Silence! I am here to save you if I can. But I fear it is too late! There! [points to the curtain across the window] The first chance you have, slip out, if you ever get a chance!

LADY W. But you!

MRS. E. Oh! never mind me. I'll face them. [LADY W. hides herself behind the curtain]

LORD A. [outside] Nonsense, dear Windermere, you must not leave me!

MRS. E. Lord Augustus! Then it is I who am lost! [hesitates for a moment, then looks round and sees door n., and exit through it]

Enter LORD D., MR. D., LORD W., LORD A. L., and CECIL G.

DUMBY. What a nuisance their turning us out of the club at this hour! It's only two o'clock. [sinks into a chair] The lively part of the evening is only just beginning. [yawns and closes his eyes]

LORD W. It is very good of you, Lord Darlington, allowing Augustus to force our company on you, but I'm afraid I can't stay long.

LORD D. Really! I am so sorry! You'll take a cigar, won't you?

LORD W. Thanks! [sits down]

LORD A. [to LORD W.] My dear boy, you must not dream of going. I have a great deal to

talk to you about, of demmed importance, too. [sits down with him at L. table]

CECIL G. Oh! we all know what that is! Tuppy can't talk about anything but Mrs. Erlynne!

LORD W. Well, that is no business of yours is it, Cecil?

CECIL G. None! That is why it interests me. My own business always bores me to death. I prefer other people's.

LORD D. Have something to drink, you fellows. Cecil, you'll have a whiskey and soda?

CECIL G. Thanks. [goes to the table with LORD D.] Mrs. Erlynne looked very handsome to-night, didn't she?

LORD D. I am not one of her admirers.

CECIL G. I usen't to be, but I am now. Why! she actually made me introduce her to poor dear Aunt Caroline. I believe she is going to lunch there.

LORD D. [in surprise] No?

CECIL G. She is, really.

LORD D. Excuse me, you fellows. I'm going away to-morrow. And I have to write a few letters. [goes to writing-table and sits down]

DUMBY. Clever woman, Mrs. Erlynne.

CECIL G. Hallo, Dumby! I thought you were asleep.

DUMBY. I am, I usually am!

LORD A. A very clever woman. Knows perfectly well what a demmed fool I am—knows it as well as I do myself. [CECIL G. comes towards him laughing] Ah! you may laugh, my boy, but it is a great thing to come across a woman who thoroughly understands one.

DUMBY. It is an awfully dangerous thing. They always end by marrying one.

CECIL G. But I thought, Tuppy, you were never going to see her again. Yes! you told me so yesterday evening at the club. You said you'd heard—[whispering to him]

LORD A. Oh, she's explained that.

CECIL G. And the Wiesbaden affair?

LORD A. She's explained that, too.

DUMBY. And her income, Tuppy? Has she explained that?

LORD A. [in a very serious voice] She's going to explain that to-morrow. [CECIL G. goes back to C. table]

DUMBY. Awfully commercial, women nowadays. Our grandmothers threw their caps over the mills, of course, but by Jove, their grand-

daughters only throw their caps over mills that can raise the wind for them.

LORD A. You want to make her out a wicked woman. She is not!

CECIL G. Oh! Wicked women bother one. Good women bore one. That is the only difference between them.

LORD A. [*puffing a cigar*] Mrs. Erlynne has a future before her.

DUMBY. Mrs. Erlynne has a past before her.

LORD A. I prefer women with a past. They're always so denimed amusing to talk to.

CECIL G. Well, you'll have lots of topics of conversation with *her*, Tuppy. [*rising and going to him*]

LORD A. You're getting annoying, dear boy, you're getting denimed annoying.

CECIL G. [*puts his hands on his shoulders*] Now, Tuppy, you've lost your figure and you've lost your character. Don't lose your temper; you have only got one.

LORD A. My dear boy, if I wasn't the most good-natured man in London—

CECIL G. We'd treat you with more respect, wouldn't we, Tuppy? [*strolls away*]

DUMBY. The youth of the present day are quite monstrous. They have absolutely no respect for dyed hair. [*LORD A looks round angrily*]

CECIL G. Mrs. Erlynne has a very great respect for dear Tuppy.

DUMBY. Then Mrs. Erlynne sets an admirable example to the rest of her sex. It is perfectly brutal the way most women nowadays behave to men who are not their husbands.

LORD W. Dumby, you are ridiculous, and Cecil, you let your tongue run away with you. You must leave Mrs. Erlynne alone. You don't really know anything about her, and you're always talking scandal against her.

CECIL G. [*coming towards him* L. C.] My dear Arthur, I never talk scandal. I only talk gossip.

LORD W. What is the difference between scandal and gossip?

CECIL G. Oh! gossip is charming! History is merely gossip. But scandal is gossip made tedious by morality. Now I never moralize. A man who moralizes is usually a hypocrite, and a woman who moralizes is invariably plain. There is nothing in the whole world so unbecoming to a woman as a Nonconformist con-

science. And most women know it, I'm glad to say.

LORD A. Just my sentiments, dear boy, just my sentiments.

CECIL G. Sorry to hear it, Tuppy; whenever people agree with me, I always feel I must be wrong.

LORD A. My dear boy, when I was your age—

CECIL G. But you never were, Tuppy, and you never will be. [*goes up c.*] I say, Darlington, let us have some cards. You'll play, Arthur, won't you?

LORD W. No, thanks, Cecil.

DUMBY. [*with a sigh*] Good Heavens! how marriage ruins a man! It's as demoralizing as cigarettes, and far more expensive.

CECIL G. You'll play, of course, Tuppy?

LORD A. [*pouting himself out a brandy and soda at table*] Can't, dear boy. Promised Mrs. Erlynne never to play or drink again.

CECIL G. Now, my dear Tuppy, don't be led astray into the paths of virtue. Reformed, you would be perfectly tedious. That is the worst of women. They always want one to be good. And if we are good, when they meet us, they don't love us at all. They like to find us quite irretrievably bad, and to leave us quite unattractively good.

LORD D. [*rising from R. table, where he has been writing letters*] They always do find us bad!

DUMBY. I don't think we are bad. I think we are all good except Tuppy.

LORD D. No, we are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars. [*sits down at C. table*]

DUMBY. We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars? Upon my word, you are very romantic to-night, Darlington.

CECIL G. Too romantic! You must be in love. Who is the girl?

LORD D. The woman I love is not free, or thinks she isn't. [*glances instinctively at LORD W. while he speaks*]

CECIL G. A married woman, then! Well, there's nothing in the world like the devotion of a married woman. It's a thing no married man knows anything about.

LORD D. Oh! she doesn't love me. She is a good woman. She is the only good woman I have ever met in my life.

CECIL G. The only good woman you have ever met in your life?

LORD D. Yes!

CECIL G. [*lighting a cigarette*] Well, you are a lucky fellow! Why, I have met hundreds of good women. I never seem to meet any but good women. The world is perfectly packed with good women. To know them is a middle-class education.

LORD D. This woman has purity and innocence. She has everything we men have lost.

CECIL G. My dear fellow, what on earth should we men do going about with purity and innocence? A carefully thought-out buttonhole is much more effective.

DUMBY. She doesn't really love you then?

LORD D. No, she does not!

DUMBY. I congratulate you, my dear fellow. In this world there are only two tragedies. One is not getting what one wants, and the other is getting it. The last is much the worst, the last is a real tragedy! But I am interested to hear she does not love you. How long could you love a woman who didn't love you, Cecil?

CECIL G. A woman who didn't love me? Oh, all my life!

DUMBY. So could I. But it's so difficult to meet one.

LORD D. How can you be so conceited, Dumby?

DUMBY. I didn't say it as a matter of conceit. I said it as a matter of regret. I have been wildly, madly adored. I am sorry I have. It has been an immense nuisance. I should like to be allowed a little time to myself, now and then.

LORD A. [*looking round*] Time to educate yourself, I suppose.

DUMBY. No, time to forget all I have learned. That is much more important, dear Tuppy. [*LORD A. moves uneasily in his chair*]

LORD D. What cynics you fellows are!

CECIL G. What is a cynic? [*sitting on the back of the sofa*]

LORD D. A man who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing.

CECIL G. And a sentimentalist, my dear Darlington, is a man who sees an absurd value in everything, and doesn't know the market price of any single thing.

LORD D. You always amuse me, Cecil. You talk as if you were a man of experience.

CECIL G. I am. [*moves up to front of fireplace*]

LORD D. You are far too young!

CECIL G. That is a great error. Experience is a question of instinct about life. I have got it. Tuppy hasn't. Experience is the name Tuppy gives to his mistakes. That is all. [*LORD A. looks round indignantly*]

DUMBY. Experience is the name everyone gives to their mistakes.

CECIL G. [*standing with his back to fireplace*] One shouldn't commit any. [*sees LADY W.'s fan on sofa*]

DUMBY. Life would be very dull without them.

CECIL G. Of course you are quite faithful to this woman you are in love with, Darlington, to this good woman?

LORD D. Cecil, if one really loves a woman, all other women in the world become absolutely meaningless to one. Love changes one—I am changed.

CECIL G. Dear me! How very interesting. Tuppy, I want to talk to you. [*LORD A. takes no notice*]

DUMBY. It's no use talking to Tuppy. You might as well talk to a brick wall.

CECIL G. But I like talking to a brick wall—it's the only thing in the world that never contradicts me! Tuppy!

LORD A. Well, what is it? What is it? [*rising and going over to CECIL G.*]

CECIL G. Come over here. I want you particularly. [*aside*] Darlington has been moralizing and talking about the purity of love, and that sort of thing, and he has got some woman in his rooms all the time.

LORD A. No, really! really!

CECIL G. [*in a low voice*] Yes, here is her fan. [*points to the fan*]

LORD A. [*chuckling*] By Jove! By Jove!

LORD W. [*up by door*] I am really off now, Lord Darlington. I am sorry you are leaving England so soon. Pray call on us when you come back! My wife and I will be charmed to see you!

LORD D. [*up stage with LORD W.*] I am afraid I shall be away for many years. Good night!

CECIL G. Arthur!

LORD W. What?

CECIL G. I want to speak to you for a moment. No, do come!

ACT IV

SCENE—*Same as in Act I*

LORD W. [*putting on his coat*] I can't—I'm off!

CECIL G. It is something very particular. It will interest you enormously.

LORD W. [*smiling*] It is some of your nonsense, Cecil.

CECIL G. It isn't. It isn't really!

LORD A. [*going to him*] My dear fellow, you mustn't go yet. I have a lot to talk to you about. And Cecil has something to show you.

LORD W. [*walking over*] Well, what is it?

CECIL G. Darlington has got a woman here in his rooms. Here is her fan. Amusing, isn't it? [*a pause*]

LORD W. Good God! [*seizes the fan—DUMBY rises*]

CECIL G. What is the matter?

LORD W. Lord Darlington!

LORD D. [*turning round*] Yes!

LORD W. What is my wife's fan doing here in your rooms? Hands off, Cecil. Don't touch me.

LORD D. Your wife's fan?

LORD W. Yes, here it is!

LORD D. [*walking towards him*] I don't know!

LORD W. You must know. I demand an explanation. [*to CECIL G.*] Don't hold me, you fool.

LORD D. [*aside*] She is here after all!

LORD W. Speak, sir! Why is my wife's fan here? Answer me, by God! I'll search your rooms, and if my wife's here, I'll—
[*moves*]

LORD D. You shall not search my rooms. You have no right to do so. I forbid you.

LORD W. You scoundrel! I'll not leave your room till I have searched every corner of it! What moves behind that curtain? [*rushes towards the curtain c.*]

MRS. E. [*enters behind B*] Lord Windermere!

LORD W. Mrs. Erlynne! [*everyone starts and turns round. LADY W. slips out from behind the curtain and glides from the room L.*]

MRS. E. I am afraid I took your wife's fan in mistake for my own, when I was leaving your house to-night. I am so sorry. [*takes fan from him. LORD W. looks at her in contempt. LORD D. in mingled astonishment and anger. LORD A. turns away. The other men smile at each other*]

5 LADY W. [*lying on sofa*] How can I tell him? I can't tell him. It would kill me. I wonder what happened after I escaped from that horrible room. Perhaps she told them the true reason of her being there, and the real meaning of that—fatal fan of mine. Oh, if he knows—how can I look him in the face again? He would never forgive me. [*touches bell*] How securely one thinks one lives out of reach of temptation, sir, folly. And then suddenly—
10 Oh! Life is terrible. It rules us, we do not rule it.

Enter ROSALIE (R.)

ROSALIE. Did your ladyship ring for me?

LADY W. Yes. Have you found out at what time Lord Windermere came in last night?

ROSALIE. His lordship did not come in till five o'clock.

LADY W. Five o'clock! He knocked at my door this morning, didn't he?

ROSALIE. Yes, my lady—at half-past nine. I told him your ladyship was not awake yet.

LADY W. Did he say anything?

ROSALIE. Something about your ladyship's fan. I didn't quite catch what his lordship said. Has the fan been lost, my lady? I can't find it, and Parker says it was not left in any of the rooms. He has looked in all of them and on the terrace as well.

LADY W. It doesn't matter. Tell Parker not to trouble. That will do. [*exit ROSALIE*] [*rising*] She is sure to tell him. I can fancy a person doing a wonderful act of self-sacrifice, doing it spontaneously, recklessly, nobly—and afterwards finding out that it costs too much. Why should she hesitate between her ruin and mine? . . . How strange! I would have publicly disgraced her in my own house. She accepts public disgrace in the house of another
45 to save me. . . . There is a bitter irony in things, a bitter irony in the way we talk of good and bad women. . . . Oh, what a lesson! and what a pity that in life we only get our lessons when they are of no use to us! For even if she doesn't tell, I must. Oh! the shame of it, the shame of it! To tell it is to live through it all again. Actions are the first trag-

edy in life, words are the second. Words are perhaps the worst. Words are merciless. . . . Oh! [*starts as LORD W. enters*]

LORD W. [*kisses her*] Margaret—how pale you look!

LADY W. I slept very badly.

LORD W. [*sitting on sofa with her*] I am so sorry. I came in dreadfully late, and I didn't like to wake you. You are crying, dear.

LADY W. Yes, I am crying, for I have something to tell you, Arthur.

LORD W. My dear child, you are not well. You've been doing too much. Let us go away to the country. You'll be all right at Selby. The season is almost over. There is no use staying on. Poor darling! We'll go away to-day, if you like. [*Rises*] We can easily catch the 4:30. I'll send a wire to Fannen. [*crosses and sits down at table to write a telegram*]

LADY W. Yes; let us go away to-day. No, I can't go away to-day, Arthur. There is someone I must see before I leave town—someone who has been kind to me.

LORD W. [*rising and leaning over sofa*] Kind to you?

LADY W. Far more than that. [*rises and goes to him*] I will tell you, Arthur, but only love me, love me as you used to love me.

LORD W. Used to? You are not thinking of that wretched woman who came here last night? [*coming round and sitting n. of her*] You don't still imagine—no, you couldn't.

LADY W. I don't. I know now I was wrong and foolish.

LORD W. It was very good of you to receive her last night—but you are never to see her again.

LADY W. Why do you say that? [*a pause*]

LORD W. [*holding her hand*] Margaret, I thought Mrs. Erlynne was a woman more sinned against than sinning, as the phrase goes. I thought she wanted to be good, to get back into a place that she had lost by a moment's folly, to lead again a decent life. I believed what she told me—I was mistaken in her. She is bad—as bad as a woman can be.

LADY W. Arthur, Arthur, don't talk so bitterly about any woman. I don't think now that people can be divided into the good and the bad, as though they were two separate races or creations. What are called good women may have terrible things in them, mad moods of

recklessness, assertion, jealousy, sin. Bad women, as they are termed, may have in them sorrow, repentance, pity, sacrifice. And I don't think Mrs. Erlynne a bad woman—I know she's not.

LORD W. My dear child, the woman's impossible. No matter what harm she tries to do us, you must never see her again. She is inadmissible anywhere.

LADY W. But I want to see her. I want her to come here.

LORD W. Never!

LADY W. She came here once as *your* guest. She must come now as *mine*. That is but fair.

LORD W. She should never have come here.

LADY W. [*rising*] It is too late, Arthur, to say that now. [*moves away*]

LORD W. [*rising*] Margaret, if you knew where Mrs. Erlynne went last night, after she left this house, you would not sit in the same room with her. It was absolutely shameless, the whole thing.

LADY W. Arthur, I can't bear it any longer I must tell you. Last night—

25 Enter PARKER with a tray on which lie
LADY W.'s fan and a card

PARKER. Mrs. Erlynne has called to return your ladyship's fan which she took away by mistake last night. Mrs. Erlynne has written a message on the card.

LADY W. Oh, ask Mrs. Erlynne to be kind enough to come up. [*reads card*] Say I shall be very glad to see her. [*exit PARKER*] She wants to see me, Arthur.

LORD W. [*takes card and looks at it*] Margaret, I beg you not to. Let me see her first, at any rate. She's a very dangerous woman. She is the most dangerous woman I know. You don't realize what you're doing.

LADY W. It is right that I should see her.

LORD W. My child, you may be on the brink of a great sorrow. Don't go to meet it. It is absolutely necessary that I should see her before you do.

LADY W. Why should it be necessary?

Enter PARKER

PARKER. Mrs. Erlynne.

Enter MRS. E. Exit PARKER

MRS. E. How do you do, Lady Winder-

mere? [to LORD W.] How do you do? Do you know, Lady Windermere, I am so sorry about your fan. I can't imagine how I made such a silly mistake. Most stupid of me. And as I was driving in your direction, I thought I would take the opportunity of returning your property in person, with many apologies for my carelessness, and of bidding you good-bye.

LADY W. Good-bye? [*moves towards sofa with MRS. E. and sits down beside her*] Are you going away, then, Mrs. Erylne?

MRS. E. Yes; I am going to live abroad again. The English climate doesn't suit me. My heart is affected here, and that I don't like. I prefer living in the south. London is too full of fogs and—serious people, Lord Windermere. Whether the fogs produce the serious people or whether the serious people produce the fogs, I don't know, but the whole thing rather gets on my nerves, and so I'm leaving this afternoon by the Club Train.

LADY W. This afternoon? But I wanted so much to come and see you.

MRS. E. How kind of you! But I am afraid I have to go.

LADY W. Shall I never see you again, Mrs. Erylne?

MRS. E. I am afraid not. Our lives lie too far apart. But there is a little thing I would like you to do for me. I want a photograph of you, Lady Windermere—would you give me one? You don't know how gratified I should be.

LADY W. Oh, with pleasure. There is one on that table. I'll show it to you. [*goes across to the table*]

LORD W. [*coming up to MRS. E. and speaking in a low voice*] It is monstrous your intruding yourself here after your conduct last night.

MRS. E. [*with an amused smile*] My dear Windermere, manners before morals!

LADY W. [*returning*] I'm afraid it is very flattering—I am not so pretty as that. [*showing photograph*]

MRS. E. You are much prettier. But haven't you got one of yourself with your little boy?

LADY W. I have. Would you prefer one of those?

MRS. E. Yes.

LADY W. I'll go and get it for you, if you'll excuse me for a moment. I have one upstairs.

MRS. E. So sorry, Lady Windermere, to give you so much trouble.

LADY W. [*moves to door R.*] No trouble at all, Mrs. Erylne.

MRS. E. Thanks so much. [*exit LADY W. (R.)*] You seem rather out of temper this morning, Windermere. Why should you be? Margaret and I get on charmingly together.

LORD W. I can't bear to see you with her. Besides, you have not told me the truth, Mrs. Erylne.

MRS. E. I have not told *her* the truth, you mean.

LORD W. [*standing C.*] I sometimes wish you had. I should have been spared then the misery, the anxiety, the annoyance of the last six months. But rather than my wife should know—that the mother whom she was taught to consider as dead, the mother whom she has mourned as dead, is living—a divorced woman going about under an assumed name, a bad woman preying upon life, as I know you now to be—rather than that, I was ready to supply you with money to pay bill after bill, extravagance after extravagance, to risk what occurred yesterday, the first quarrel I have ever had with my wife. You don't understand what that means to me. How could you? But I tell you that the only bitter words that ever came from those sweet lips of hers were on your account, and I hate to see you next her. You sully the innocence that is in her. [*moves L. C.*] And then I used to think that with all your faults you were frank and honest. You are not.

MRS. E. Why do you say that?

LORD W. You made me get you an invitation to my wife's ball.

MRS. E. For my daughter's ball—yes.

LORD W. You came, and within an hour of your leaving the house, you are found in a man's rooms—you are disgraced before everyone. [*goes up stage C.*]

MRS. E. Yes.

LORD W. [*turning round on her*] Therefore I have a right to look upon you as what you are—a worthless, vicious woman. I have the right to tell you never to enter this house, never to attempt to come near my wife—

MRS. E. [*coldly*] My daughter, you mean.

LORD W. You have no right to claim her as your daughter. You left her, abandoned her, when she was but a child in the cradle, abandoned her for your lover, who abandoned you in turn.

THE DRAMA · OSCAR WILDE

MRS. E. [*rising*] Do you count that to his credit, Lord Windermere—or to mine?

LORD W. To his, now that I know you.

MRS. E. Take care—you had better be careful.

LORD W. Oh, I am not going to mince words for you. I know you thoroughly.

MRS. E. [*looking steadily at him*] I question that.

LORD W. I *do* know you. For twenty years of your life you lived without your child, without a thought of your child. One day you read in the papers that she had married a rich man. You saw your hideous chance. You knew that to spare her the ignominy of learning that a woman like you was her mother, I would endure anything. You began your blackmailing.

MRS. E. [*shrugging her shoulders*] Don't use ugly words, Windermere. They are vulgar. I saw my chance, it is true, and took it.

LORD W. Yes, you took it—and spoiled it all last night by being found out.

MRS. E. [*with a strange smile*] You are quite right, I spoiled it all last night.

LORD W. And as for your blunder in taking my wife's fan from here, and then leaving it about in Darlington's rooms, it is unpardonable. I can't bear the sight of it now. I shall never let my wife use it again. The thing is soiled for me. You should have kept it and not brought it back.

MRS. E. I think I *shall* keep it. [*goes up*] It's extremely pretty. [*takes up fan*] I shall ask Margaret to give it to me.

LORD W. I hope my wife will give it you.

MRS. E. Oh, I'm sure she will have no objection.

LORD W. I wish that at the same time she would give you a miniature she kisses every night before she prays— It's the miniature of a young, innocent-looking girl with beautiful dark hair.

MRS. E. Ah, yes, I remember. How long ago that seems! [*goes to sofa and sits down*] It was done before I was married. Dark hair and an innocent expression were the fashion then, Windermere! [*a pause*]

LORD W. What do you mean by coming here this morning? What is your object? [*crossing L. C. and sitting*]

MRS. E. [*with a note of irony in her voice*] To bid good-bye to my dear daughter, of

course. [*LORD W. bites his under lip in anger.*]

MRS. E. *looks at him, and her voice and manner become serious. In her accents as she talks there is a note of deep tragedy. For a moment she reveals herself*] Oh, don't imagine I am going to have a pathetic scene with her, weep on her neck and tell her who I am, and all that kind of thing. I have no ambition to play the part of a mother. Only once in my life have I known a mother's feelings. That was last night.

They were terrible—they made me suffer—they made me suffer too much. For twenty years, as you say, I have lived childless—I want to live childless still. [*hiding her feelings with a trivial laugh*] Besides, my dear Windermere, how on earth could I pose as a mother with a grown-up daughter? Margaret is twenty-one, and I have never admitted that I am more than twenty-nine, or thirty at the most. Twenty-nine when there are pink shades, thirty when there are not. So you see what difficulties it would involve. No, as far as I am concerned, let your wife cherish the memory of this dead, stainless mother. Why should I interfere with her illusions? I find it hard enough to keep my own. I lost one illusion last night. I thought I had no heart. I find I have, and a heart doesn't suit me, Windermere. Somehow it doesn't go with modern dress. It makes one look old. [*takes up hand-mirror from table and looks into it*] And it spoils one's career at critical moments.

LORD W. You fill me with horror—with absolute horror.

MRS. E. [*rising*] I suppose, Windermere, you would like me to retire into a convent or become a hospital nurse or something of that kind, as people do in silly modern novels. That is stupid of you, Arthur; in real life we don't do such things—not as long as we have any good looks left, at any rate. No—what consoles one nowadays is not repentance, but pleasure. Repentance is quite out of date. And, besides, if a woman really repents, she has to go to a bad dressmaker, otherwise no one believes in her. And nothing in the world would induce me to do that. No; I am going to pass entirely out of your two lives. My coming into them has been a mistake—I discovered that last night.

LORD W. A fatal mistake.

MRS. E. [*smiling*] Almost fatal.

LORD W. I am sorry now I did not tell my wife the whole thing at once.

MRS. E. I regret my bad actions. You regret your good ones—that is the difference between us.

LORD W. I don't trust you. I *will* tell my wife. It's better for her to know, and from me. It will cause her infinite pain—it will humiliate her terribly, but it's right that she should know.

MRS. E. You propose to tell her?

LORD W. I am going to tell her.

MRS. E. [*going up to him*] If you do, I will make my name so infamous that it will mar every moment of her life. It will ruin her and make her wretched. If you dare to tell her, there is no depth of degradation I will not sink to, no pit of shame I will not enter. You shall not tell her—I forbid you.

LORD W. Why?

MRS. E. [*after a pause*] If I said to you that I cared for her, perhaps loved her even—you would sneer at me, wouldn't you?

LORD W. I should feel it was not true. A mother's love means devotion, unselfishness, sacrifice. What could you know of such things?

MRS. E. You are right. What could I know of such things? Don't let us talk any more about it; as for telling my daughter who I am, that I do not allow. It is my secret, it is not yours. If I make up my mind to tell her, and I think I will, I shall tell her before I leave this house—if not, I shall never tell her.

LORD W. [*angrily*] Then let me beg of you to leave our house at once. I will make your excuses to Margaret.

Enter LADY W. (R.) *She goes over to* MRS. E. *with the photograph in her hand. LORD W. moves to back of sofa, and anxiously watches* MRS. E. *as the scene progresses*

LADY W. I am so sorry, Mrs. Erlynne, to have kept you waiting. I couldn't find the photograph anywhere. At last I discovered it in my husband's dressing-room—he had stolen it.

MRS. E. [*takes the photograph from her and looks at it*] I am not surprised—it is charming. [*goes over to sofa with* LADY W. *and sits down beside her. Looks again at the photograph*] And so that is your little boy! What is he called?

LADY W. Gerard, after my dear father.

MRS. E. [*laying the photograph down*] Really?

LADY W. Yes. If it had been a girl, I would have called it after my mother. My mother had the same name as myself, Margaret.

MRS. E. My name is Margaret, too.

LADY W. Indeed!

MRS. E. Yes. [*pause*] You are devoted to your mother's memory. Lady Windermere—your husband tells me.

LADY W. We all have ideals in life. At least we all should have. Mine is my mother.

MRS. E. Ideals are dangerous things. Realities are better. They wound, but they are better.

LADY W. [*shaking her head*] If I lost my ideals, I should lose everything.

MRS. E. Everything?

LADY W. Yes. [*pause*]

MRS. E. Did your father often speak to you of your mother?

LADY W. No, it gave him too much pain. He told me how my mother had died a few months after I was born. His eyes filled with tears as he spoke. Then he begged me never to mention her name to him again. It made him suffer even to hear it. My father—my father really died of a broken heart. His was the most ruined life I know.

MRS. E. [*rising*] I am afraid I must go now, Lady Windermere.

LADY W. [*rising*] Oh, no, don't.

MRS. E. I think I had better. My carriage must have come back by this time. I sent it to Lady Jedburgh's with a note.

LADY W. Arthur, would you mind seeing if Mrs. Erlynne's carriage has come back?

MRS. E. Pray don't trouble Lord Windermere, Lady Windermere.

LADY W. Yes, Arthur, do go, please. [*LORD W. hesitates for a moment and looks at* MRS. E. *She remains quite impassive. He leaves the room*]

[*To* MRS. E.] Oh, what am I to say to you? You saved me last night! [*goes toward her*]

MRS. E. Hush—don't speak of it.

LADY W. I must speak of it. I can't let you think that I am going to accept this sacrifice. I am not. It is too great. I am going to tell my husband everything. It is my duty.

MRS. E. It is not your duty—at least you

have duties to others besides him. You say you owe me something?

LADY W. I owe you everything.

MRS. E. Then pay your debt by silence. That is the only way in which it can be paid. Don't spoil the one good thing I have done in my life by telling it to anyone. Promise me that what passed last night will remain a secret between us. You must not bring misery into your husband's life. Why spoil his love? You must not spoil it. Love is easily killed. Oh, how easily love is killed! Pledge me your word, Lady Windermere, that you will *never* tell him. I insist upon it.

LADY W. [*with bowed head*] It is your will, not mine.

MRS. E. Yes, it is my will. And never forget your child—I like to think of you as a mother. I like you to think of yourself as one.

LADY W. [*looking up*] I always will now. Only once in my life I have forgotten my own mother—that was last night. Oh, if I had remembered her, I should not have been so foolish, so wicked.

MRS. E. [*with a slight shudder*] Hush, last night is quite over.

Enter LORD W.

LORD W. Your carriage has not come back yet, Mrs. Erlynne.

MRS. E. It makes no matter. I'll take a hansom. There is nothing in the world so respectable as a good Shrewsbury and Talbot. And now, dear Lady Windermere, I am afraid it is really good-bye. [*moves up c.*] Oh, I remember. You'll think me absurd, but do you know, I've taken a great fancy to this fan that I was silly enough to run away with last night from your ball. Now, I wonder would you give it to me? Lord Windermere says you may. I know it is his present.

LADY W. Oh, certainly, if it will give you any pleasure. But it has my name on it. It has "Margaret" on it.

MRS. E. But we have the same Christian name.

LADY W. Oh, I forgot. Of course, do have it. What a wonderful chance our names being the same!

MRS. E. Quite wonderful. Thanks—it will always remind me of you. [*shakes hands with her*]

Enter PARKER

PARKER. Lord Augustus Lorton. Mrs. Erlynne's carriage has come.

Enter LORD A.

LORD A. Good morning, dear boy. Good morning, Lady Windermere. [*sees MRS. E.*] Mrs. Erlynne!

MRS. E. How do you do, Lord Augustus? Are you quite well this morning?

LORD A. [*coldly*] Quite well, thank you, Mrs. Erlynne.

MRS. E. You don't look at all well, Lord Augustus. You stop up too late—it is so bad for you. You really should take more care of yourself. Good-bye, Lord Windermere. [*goes towards door with a bow to LORD A. Suddenly smiles, and looks back at him*] Lord Augustus! Won't you see me to my carriage? You might carry the fan.

LORD W. Allow me!

MRS. E. No, I want Lord Augustus. I have a special message for the dear Duchess. Won't you carry the fan, Lord Augustus?

LORD A. If you really desire it, Mrs. Erlynne.

MRS. E. [*laughing*] Of course I do. You'll carry it so gracefully. You would carry off anything gracefully, dear Lord Augustus. [*when she reaches the door she looks back for a moment at LORD W. Their eyes meet. Then she turns, and exit c., followed by LORD A.*]

LADY W. You will never speak against Mrs. Erlynne again, Arthur, will you?

LORD W. [*gravely*] She is better than one thought her.

LADY W. She is better than I am.

LORD W. [*smiling as he strokes her hair*] Child, you and she belong to different worlds. Into your world evil has never entered.

LADY W. Don't say that, Arthur. There is the same world for all of us, and good and evil, sin and innocence, go through it hand in hand. To shut one's eyes to half of life that one may live securely is as though one blinded oneself that one might walk with more safety in a land of pit and precipice.

LORD W. [*moves down with her*] Darling, why do you say that?

LADY W. [*sits on sofa*] Because I, who had shut my eyes to life, came to the brink. And one who had separated us—

LORD W. We were never parted.

LADY W. We never must be again. Oh, Arthur, don't love me less, and I will trust you more. I will trust you absolutely. Let us go to Selby. In the Rose Garden at Selby, the roses are white and red.

Enter LORD A.

LORD A. Arthur, she has explained everything! [LADY W. looks horribly frightened. LORD W. starts. LORD A. takes LORD W. by the arm, and brings him to front of stage] My dear fellow, she has explained every demmed thing. We all wronged her immensely. It was entirely for my sake she went to Darlington's rooms—called first at the club. Fact is, wanted to put me out of suspense, and being told I had gone on—followed—naturally frightened when she

heard a lot of men coming in—retired to another room—I assure you, most gratifying to me, the whole thing. We all behaved brutally to her. She is just the woman for me. Suits me down to the ground. All the condition she makes is that we live out of England—a very good thing, too!—Demmed clubs, demmed climate, demmed cooks, demmed everything! Sick of it all.

LADY W. [frightened] Has Mrs. Fylyne—?

LORD A. [advancing towards her with a bow] Yes, Lady Windermere, Mrs. Fylyne has done me the honor of accepting my hand.

LORD W. Well, you are certainly marrying a very clever woman.

LADY W. [taking her husband's hand] Ah! you're marrying a very good woman.

THE TWELVE-POUND LOOK *

JAMES M. BARRIE

Sir James M. Barrie (1860–1937) was born in Scotland and studied at Edinburgh University. As journalist and novelist in the nineties, he slowly made his way up the literary ladder. The dramatized version of his novel, *The Little Minister*, “made” him in a commercial sense. Although Barrie (see I, 404) has been called egotist, sentimentalist, children’s writer, canny Scot, the “Great Comforter,” and other names, he remains a capable and successful playwright; from an early burlesque of Ibsen, Barrie progressed to a high place in early twentieth-

century British drama with *The Admirable Crichton*, *Quality Street*, and *What Every Woman Knows*. One critic has written that the dramatist’s charm lay in his being “inoffensive.” This is negative and misleading; Barrie could show up the human race as well as comfort it. In a positive way, outside the theater, the Great Comforter became a baronet in 1913, received the Order of Merit, and assumed the posts of Rector (1922) and Chancellor (1930) of Edinburgh University.

* Reprinted from *Half Hours* by James M. Barrie; copyright 1914 by Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1943 by Cynthia Asquith; used by permission of the publishers.

If quite convenient (as they say about cheques) you are to conceive that the scene is laid in your own house, and that HARRY SIMS

is you. Perhaps the ornamentation of the house is a trifle ostentatious, but if you cavil at that we are willing to re-decorate: you don't get out of being HARRY SIMS on a mere matter of plush and dados. It pleases us to make him a city man, but (rather than lose you) he can be turned with a scrape of the pen into a K. C.,¹ fashionable doctor, Secretary of State, or what you will. We conceive him of a pleasant roundness with a thick red neck, but we shall waive that point if you know him to be thin.

It is that day in your career when everything went wrong just when everything seemed to be superlatively right.

IN HARRY'S case it was a woman who did the mischief. She came to him in his great hour and told him she did not admire him. Of course he turned her out of the house and was soon himself again, but it spoilt the morning for him. This is the subject of the play, and quite enough too.

HARRY is to receive the honour of knighthood in a few days, and we discover him in the sumptuous "snuggery" of his home in Kensington (or is it Westminster?), rehearsing the ceremony with his wife. They have been at it all the morning, a pleasing occupation. MRS. SIMS (as we may call her for the last time, as it were, and strictly as a good-natured joke) is wearing her presentation gown, and personates the august one who is about to dub her HARRY knight. She is seated regally. Her jewelled shoulders proclaim aloud her husband's generosity. She must be an extraordinarily proud and happy woman, yet she has a drawn face and shrinking ways as if there were some one near her of whom she is afraid. She claps her hands, as the signal to HARRY. He enters bowing, and with a graceful swerve of the leg. He is only partly in costume, the sword and the real stockings not having arrived yet. With a gliding motion that is only delayed while one leg makes up to the other, he reaches his wife, and, going on one knee, raises her hand superbly to his lips. She taps him on the shoulder with a paper-knife and says huskily, "Rise, Sir Harry." He rises, bows, and glides about the room, going on his knees to various articles of furniture, and rises from each a knight. It is a

radiant domestic scene, and HARRY is as dignified as if he knew that royalty was rehearsing it at the other end.

5 SIR HARRY. [*complacently*] Did that seem all right, eh?

LADY SIMS. [*much relieved*] I think perfect.

SIR HARRY. But was it dignified?

LADY SIMS. Oh, very. And it will be still 10 more so when you have the sword.

SIR HARRY. The sword will lend it an air. There are really the five moments—[*suiting the action to the word*]*—the glide—the dip—the kiss—the tap—and you back out a knight.* It's short, but it's a very beautiful ceremony. 15 [*kindly*] Anything you can suggest?

LADY SIMS. No—oh no. [*nervously, seeing him pause to kiss the tassel of a cushion*] You don't think you have practised till you know 20 what to do almost too well? [*He has been in a blissful temper, but such niggling criticism would try any man*]

SIR HARRY. I do not. Don't talk nonsense. Wait till your opinion is asked for.

25 LADY SIMS. [*abashed*] I'm sorry, Harry. [*a perfect butler appears and presents a card*] "The Flora Typewriting Agency."

SIR HARRY. Ah, yes. I telephoned them to send some one. A woman, I suppose, Tombes?

30 TOMBES. Yes, Sir Harry.

SIR HARRY. Show her in here. [*He has very lately become a stickler for etiquette*] And, Tombes, strictly speaking, you know, I am not Sir Harry till Thursday.

35 TOMBES. Beg pardon, sir, but it is such a satisfaction to us.

SIR HARRY. [*good-naturedly*] Ah, they like it downstairs, do they?

TOMBES. [*unbending*] Especially the females, Sir Harry.

SIR HARRY. Exactly. You can show her in. Tombes. [*the butler departs on his mighty task*] You can tell the woman what she is wanted for, Emmy, while I change. [*He is too modest to boast about himself, and prefers to keep a wife in the house for that purpose*] You can tell her the sort of things about me that will come better from you. [*smiling happily*] You heard what Tombes said, "Especially the 50 females." And he is right. Success! The women like it even better than the men. And rightly. For they share. You share, Lady Sims. Not a

¹ King's Counsel (or possibly a colloquial shortening of K. C. B., Knight Commander of the Bath).

woman will see that gown without being sick with envy of it. I know them. Have all our lady friends in to see it. It will make them ill for a week. [*These sentiments carry him off lightheartedly, and presently the disturbing element is shown in. She is a mere typist, dressed in uncommonly good taste, but at contemptibly small expense, and she is carrying her typewriter in a friendly way rather than as a badge of slavery, as of course it is. Her eye is clear, and in odd contrast to LADY SIMS, she is self-reliant and serene*]

KATE. [*respectfully, but she should have waited to be spoken to*] Good morning, madam.

LADY SIMS. [*in her nervous way, and scarcely noticing that the typist is a little too ready with her tongue*] Good morning. [*As a first impression she rather likes the woman, and the woman, though it is scarcely worth mentioning, rather likes her. LADY SIMS has a maid for buttoning and unbuttoning her, and probably another for waiting on the maid, and she gazes with a little envy perhaps at a woman who does things for herself*] Is that the type-writing machine?

KATE. [*who is getting it ready for use*] Yes. [*not "Yes, madam," as it ought to be*] I suppose if I am to work here I may take this off. I get on better without it. [*She is referring to her hat*]

LADY SIMS. Certainly. [*But the hat is already off*] I ought to apologise for my gown. I am to be presented this week, and I was trying it on. [*Her tone is not really apologetic. She is rather clinging to the glory of her gown, mistfully, as if not absolutely certain, you know, that it is a glory*]

KATE. It is beautiful, if I may presume to say so. [*She frankly admires it. She probably has a best, and a second best of her own; that sort of thing*]

LADY SIMS. [*with a flush of pride in the gown*] Yes, it is very beautiful. [*The beauty of it gives her courage*] Sit down, please.

KATE. [*the sort of woman who would have sat down in any case*] I suppose it is some copying you want done? I got no particulars. I was told to come to this address, but that was all.

LADY SIMS. [*almost with the humility of a servant*] Oh, it is not work for me, it is for my

husband, and what he needs is not exactly copying. [*swelling, for she is proud of HARRY*] He wants a number of letters answered—hundreds of them—letters and telegrams of congratulation.

KATE. [*as if it were all in the day's work*] Yes?

LADY SIMS. [*remembering that HARRY expects every wife to do her duty*] My husband is a remarkable man. He is about to be knighted. [*pause, but KATE does not fall to the floor*] He is to be knighted for his services to—[*on reflection*—for his services. [*She is conscious that she is not doing HARRY justice*] He can explain it so much better than I can

KATE. [*in her business-like way*] And I am to answer the congratulations?

LADY SIMS. [*afraid that it will be a hard task*] Yes.

KATE. [*blithely*] It is work I have had some experience of. [*she proceeds to type*]

LADY SIMS. But you can't begin till you know what he wants to say.

KATE. Only a specimen letter. Won't it be the usual thing?

LADY SIMS. [*to whom this is a new idea*] Is there a usual thing?

KATE. Oh, yes. [*she continues to type, and LADY SIMS, half-mesmerised, gazes at her nimble fingers. The useless woman watches the useful one, and she sighs, she could not tell why*]

LADY SIMS. How quickly you do it! It must be delightful to be able to do something, and to do it well.

KATE. [*thankfully*] Yes, it is delightful.

LADY SIMS. [*again remembering the source of all her greatness*] But, excuse me, I don't think that will be any use. My husband wants me to explain to you that his is an exceptional case. He did not try to get this honour in any way. It was a complete surprise to him—

KATE. [*who is a practical KATE and no dealer in sarcasm*] That is what I have written.

LADY SIMS. [*in whom sarcasm would meet a dead wall*] But how could you know?

KATE. I only guessed.

LADY SIMS. Is that the usual thing?

KATE. Oh, yes.

LADY SIMS. They don't try to get it?

KATE. I don't know. That is what we are told to say in the letters. [*To her at present the*

only important thing about the letters is that they are ten shillings the hundred]

LADY SIMS. *[returning to surer ground]* I should explain that my husband is not a man who cares for honours. So long as he does his duty—

KATE. Yes, I have been putting that in.

LADY SIMS. Have you? But he particularly wants it to be known that he would have declined a title were it not—

KATE. I have got it here.

LADY SIMS. What have you got?

KATE. *[reading]* "Indeed, I would have asked to be allowed to decline had it not been that I want to please my wife."

LADY SIMS. *[heavily]* But how could you know it was that?

KATE. Is it?

LADY SIMS. *[who after all is the one with the right to ask questions]* Do they all accept it for that reason?

KATE. That is what we are told to say in the letters.

LADY SIMS. *[thoughtlessly]* It is quite as if you knew my husband.

KATE. I assure you, I don't even know his name.

LADY SIMS. *[suddenly showing that she knows him]* Oh, he wouldn't like that! *[And it is here that HARRY re-enters in his city garments, looking so gay, feeling so jolly that we bleed for him. However, the annoying KATHERINE is to get a shock also]*

LADY SIMS. This is the lady, Harry.

SIR HARRY. *[shooting his cuffs]* Yes, yes. Good morning, my dear. *[Then they see each other, and their mouths open, but not for words. After the first surprise KATE seems to find some humour in the situation, but HARRY lowers like a thundercloud]*

LADY SIMS. *[who has seen nothing]* I have been trying to explain to her—

SIR HARRY. Eh—what? *[he controls himself]* Leave it to me, Emmy; I'll attend to her. *[LADY SIMS goes, with a dread fear that somehow she has vexed her lord, and then HARRY attends to the intruder]*

SIR HARRY. *[with concentrated scorn]* You!

KATE. *[as if agreeing with him]* Yes, it's funny.

SIR HARRY. The shamelessness of your daring to come here.

KATE. Believe me, it is not less a surprise to me than it is to you. I was sent here in the ordinary way of business. I was given only the number of the house. I was not told the name.

5 SIR HARRY. *[withering her]* The ordinary way of business! This is what you have fallen to—a typist!

KATE. *[unwithered]* Think of it!

SIR HARRY. After going through worse 10 straits, I'll be bound.

KATE. *[with some grim memories]* Much worse straits.

SIR HARRY. *[alas, laughing coarsely]* My congratulations!

15 KATE. Thank you, Harry.

SIR HARRY. *[who is annoyed, as any man would be, not to find her abject]* Eh? What was that you called me, madam?

KATE. Isn't it Harry? On my soul, I almost 20 forget.

SIR HARRY. It isn't Harry to you. My name is Sims, if you please.

KATE. Yes, I had not forgotten that. It was my name, too, you see.

25 SIR HARRY. *[in his best manner]* It was your name till you forfeited the right to bear it.

KATE. Exactly.

SIR HARRY. *[gloating]* I was furious to find 30 you here, but on second thoughts it pleases me. *[from the depths of his moral nature]* There is a grim justice in this.

KATE. *[sympathetically]* Tell me?

SIR HARRY. Do you know what you were 35 brought here to do?

KATE. I have just been learning. You have been made a knight, and I was summoned to answer the messages of congratulation.

SIR HARRY. That's it, that's it. You come on 40 this day as my servant!

KATE. I, who might have been Lady Sims.

SIR HARRY. And you are her typist instead. And she has four men-servants. Oh, I am glad you saw her in her presentation gown.

45 KATE. I wonder if she would let me do her washing, Sir Harry? *[Her want of taste disgusts him]*

SIR HARRY. *[with dignity]* You can go. The mere thought that only a few flights of stairs 50 separates such as you from my innocent children—*[He will never know why a new light has come into her face]*

KATE. [*slowly*] You have children?
 SIR HARRY. [*inflated*] Two. [*He wonders why she is so long in answering*]
 KATE. [*resorting to impertinence*] Such a nice number.
 SIR HARRY. [*with an extra turn of the screw*] Both boys.
 KATE. Successful in everything. Are they like you, Sir Harry?
 SIR HARRY. [*expanding*] They are very like me.
 KATE. That's nice. [*even on such a subject as this she can be ribald*]
 SIR HARRY. Will you please to go.
 KATE. Heigho! What shall I say to my employer?
 SIR HARRY. That is no affair of mine.
 KATE. What will you say to Lady Sims?
 SIR HARRY. I flatter myself that whatever I say, Lady Sims will accept without comment. [*She smiles, heaven knows why, unless her next remark explains it*]
 KATE. Still the same Harry.
 SIR HARRY. What do you mean?
 KATE. Only that you have the old confidence in your profound knowledge of the sex.
 SIR HARRY. [*beginning to think as little of her intellect as of her morals*] I suppose I know my wife.
 KATE. [*hopelessly dense*] I suppose so. I was only remembering that you used to think you knew her in the days when I was the lady. [*He is merely wasting his time on her, and he indicates the door. She is not sufficiently the lady to retire worsted*] Well, good-bye, Sir Harry. Won't you ring, and the four men-servants will show me out? [*But he hesitates*]
 SIR HARRY. [*in spite of himself*] As you are here, there is something I want to get out of you. [*wishing he could ask it less eagerly*] Tell me, who was the man? [*The strange woman—it is evident now that she has always been strange to him—smiles tolerantly*]
 KATE. You never found out?
 SIR HARRY. I could never be sure.
 KATE. [*reflectively*] I thought that would worry you.
 SIR HARRY. [*sneering*] It's plain that he soon left you.
 KATE. Very soon.
 SIR HARRY. As I could have told you. [*But still she surveys him with the smile of Mona*

Lisa. The badgered man has to entreat] Who was he? It was fourteen years ago, and cannot matter to any of us now. Kate, tell me who he was? [*It is his first youthful moment, and perhaps because of that she does not wish to hurt him*]
 KATE. [*shaking a motherly head*] Better not ask.
 SIR HARRY. I do ask. Tell me.
 KATE. It is kinder not to tell you.
 SIR HARRY. [*violently*] Then, by James, it was one of my own pals. Was it Bernard Roche? [*she shakes her head*] It may have been some one who comes to my house still.
 KATE. I think not. [*reflecting*] Fourteen years! You found my letter that night when you went home?
 SIR HARRY. [*impatient*] Yes.
 KATE. I propped it against the decanters. I thought you would be sure to see it there. It was a room not unlike this, and the furniture was arranged in the same attractive way. How it all comes back to me. Don't you see me, Harry, in hat and cloak, putting the letter there, taking a last look round, and then stealing out into the night to meet——
 SIR HARRY. Whom?
 KATE. Him. Hours pass, no sound in the room but the tick-tock of the clock, and then about midnight you return alone. You take——
 SIR HARRY. [*gruffly*] I wasn't alone.
 KATE. [*the picture spoilt*] No? oh. [*plainly*] Here have I all these years been conceiving it wrongly. [*she studies his face*] I believe something interesting happened?
 SIR HARRY. [*growling*] Something profoundly annoying.
 KATE. [*coaxing*] Do tell me.
 SIR HARRY. We won't go into that. Who was the man? Surely a husband has a right to know with whom his wife bolted.
 KATE. [*who is detestably ready with her tongue*] Surely the wife has a right to know how he took it. [*The woman's love of bargaining comes to her aid*] A fair exchange. You tell me what happened, and I will tell you who he was.
 SIR HARRY. You will? Very well. [*It is the first point on which they have agreed, and, forgetting himself, he takes a place beside her on the fire-seat. He is thinking only of what he is*

to tell her, but she, woman-like, is conscious of their proximity]

KATE. [*tastelessly*] Quite like old times. [*he moves away from her indignantly*] Go on, Harry.

SIR HARRY. [*who has a manful shrinking from saying anything that is to his disadvantage*] Well, as you know, I was dining at the club that night.

KATE. Yes.

SIR HARRY. Jack Lamb drove me home. Mabbett Green was with us, and I asked them to come in for a few minutes.

KATE. Jack Lamb, Mabbett Green? I think I remember them. Jack was in Parliament.

SIR HARRY. No, that was Mabbett. They came into the house with me and—[*with sudden horror*—was it him?

KATE. [*bewildered*] Who?

SIR HARRY. Mabbett?

KATE. What?

SIR HARRY. The man?

KATE. What man? [*understanding*] Oh, no. I thought you said he came into the house with you.

SIR HARRY. It might have been a blind.

KATE. Well, it wasn't. Go on.

SIR HARRY. They came in to finish a talk we had been having at the club.

KATE. An interesting talk, evidently.

SIR HARRY. The papers had been full that evening of the elopement of some countess woman with a fiddler. What was her name?

KATE. Does it matter?

SIR HARRY. No. [*Thus ends the countess*] 35 We had been discussing the thing and—[*he pulls a wry face*—and I had been rather warm—

KATE. [*with horrid relish*] I begin to see. You had been saying it served the husband 40 right, that the man who could not look after his wife deserved to lose her. It was one of your favorite subjects. Oh, Harry, say it was that!

SIR HARRY. [*sourly*] It may have been some- 45 thing like that.

KATE. And all the time the letter was there, waiting; and none of you knew except the clock. Harry, it is sweet of you to tell me. [*His face is not sweet. The illiterate woman has used the wrong adjective*] I forget what I said 50 precisely in the letter.

SIR HARRY. [*pulverising her*] So do I. But I have it still.

KATE. [*not pulverised*] Do let me see it again. [*She has observed his eye wandering to* 5 *the desk*]

SIR HARRY. You are welcome to it as a gift. [*The fateful letter, a poor little dead thing, is brought to light from a locked drawer*]

KATE. [*taking it*] Yes, this is it. Harry, how 10 you did crumple it! [*she reads, not without curiosity*] "Dear husband—I call you that for the last time—I am off. I am what you call making a bolt of it. I won't try to excuse myself nor to explain, for you would not accept the 15 excuses nor understand the explanation. It will be a little shock to you, but only to your pride; what will astound you is that any woman could be such a fool as to leave such a man as you. I am taking nothing with me that belongs to 20 you. May you be very happy.—Your ungrateful Kate. P.S.—You need not try to find out who he is. You will try, but you won't succeed." [*she folds the nasty little thing up*] I may really have it for my very own?

25 SIR HARRY. You really may.

KATE. [*impudently*] If you would care for a typed copy—?

SIR HARRY. [*in a voice with which he used to frighten his grandmother*] None of your 30 sauce! [*wincing*] I had to let them see it in the end.

KATE. I can picture Jack Lamb eating it.

SIR HARRY. A peevish parson's daughter.

KATE. That is all I was.

SIR HARRY. We searched for the two of you high and low.

KATE. Private detectives?

SIR HARRY. They couldn't get on the track of you.

40 KATE. [*smiling*] No?

SIR HARRY. But at last the courts let me serve the papers by advertisement on a man unknown, and I got my freedom.

KATE. So I saw. It was the last I heard of 45 you.

SIR HARRY. [*each word a blow for her*] And I married again just as soon as ever I could.

KATE. They say that is always a compliment to the first wife.

50 SIR HARRY. [*violently*] I showed them.

KATE. You soon let them see that if one woman was a fool, you still had the pick of

the basket to choose from.

SIR HARRY. By James, I did.

KATE. [*bringing him to earth again*] But still, you wondered who he was.

SIR HARRY. I suspected everybody—even my pals. I felt like jumping at their throats and crying, "It's you!"

KATE. You had been so admirable to me, an instinct told you that I was sure to choose another of the same.

SIR HARRY. I thought, it can't be money, so it must be looks. Some dolly face, [*he stares at her in perplexity*] He must have had something wonderful about him to make you willing to give up all that you had with me.

KATE. [*as if he was the stupid one*] Poor Harry.

SIR HARRY. And it couldn't have been going on for long, for I would have noticed the change in you.

KATE. Would you?

SIR HARRY. I knew you so well.

KATE. You amazing man.

SIR HARRY. So who was he? Out with it.

KATE. You are determined to know?

SIR HARRY. Your promise. You gave your word.

KATE. If I must—[*She is the villain of the piece, but it must be conceded that in this matter she is reluctant to pain him*] I am sorry I promised. [*looking at him steadily*] There was no one, Harry, no one at all.

SIR HARRY. [*rising*] If you think you can play with me—

KATE. I told you that you wouldn't like it.

SIR HARRY. [*rasping*] It is unbelievable.

KATE. I suppose it is, but it is true.

SIR HARRY. Your letter itself gives you the lie.

KATE. That was intentional. I saw that if the truth were known you might have a difficulty in getting your freedom; and as I was getting mine it seemed fair that you should have yours also. So I wrote my good-bye in words that would be taken to mean what you thought they meant, and I knew the law would back you in your opinion. For the law, like you, Harry, has a profound understanding of women.

SIR HARRY. [*trying to straighten himself*] I don't believe you yet.

KATE. [*looking not unkindly into the soul of this man*] Perhaps that is the best way to take

it. It is less unflattering than the truth. But you were the only one. [*summing up her life*] You sufficed.

SIR HARRY. Then what mad impulse—

5 KATE. It was no impulse, Harry. I had thought it out for a year.

SIR HARRY. A year? [*dazed*] One would think to hear you that I hadn't been a good husband to you.

10 KATE. [*with a sad smile*] You were a good husband according to your lights.

SIR HARRY. [*stoutly*] I think so.

KATE. And a moral man, and chatty, and quite the philanthropist.

15 SIR HARRY. [*on sure ground*] All women envied you.

KATE. How you loved me to be envied.

SIR HARRY. I swaddled you in luxury.

KATE. [*making her great revelation*] That 20 was it.

SIR HARRY. [*blankly*] What?

KATE. [*who can be serene because it is all over*] How you beamed at me when I sat at the head of your fat dinners in my fat jewellery, 25 surrounded by our fat friends.

SIR HARRY. [*aggrieved*] They weren't so fat.

KATE. [*a side issue*] All except those who were so thin. Have you ever noticed, Harry, that many jewels make women either incredibly 30 fat or incredibly thin?

SIR HARRY. [*shouting*] I have not. [*Is it worth while to argue with her any longer?*] We had all the most interesting society of the day. It wasn't only business men. There were politicians, painters, writers—

KATE. Only the glorious, dazzling successes. Oh, the fat talk while we ate too much—about who had made a hit and who was slipping back, and what the noo house cost and the 40 noo motor and the gold soup-plates, and who was to be the noo knight.

SIR HARRY. [*who it will be observed is unanswerable from first to last*] Was anybody getting on better than me, and consequently 45 you?

KATE. Consequently me! Oh, Harry, you and your sublime religion.

SIR HARRY. [*honest heart*] My religion? I never was one to talk about religion, but—

50 KATE. Pooh, Harry, you don't even know what your religion was and is and will be till the day of your expensive funeral. [*And here*

is the lesson that life has taught her] One's religion is whatever he is most interested in, and yours is Success.

SIR HARRY. [*quoting from his morning paper*] Ambition—it is the last infirmity of noble minds.

KATE. Noble minds!

SIR HARRY. [*at last grasping what she is talking about*] You are not saying that you left me because of my success?

KATE. Yes, that was it. [*And now she stands revealed to him*] I couldn't endure it. If a failure had come now and then—but your success was suffocating me. [*She is rigid with emotion*] The passionate craving I had to be done with it, to find myself among people who had not got on.

SIR HARRY. [*with proper spirit*] There are plenty of them.

KATE. There were none in our set. When they began to go down-hill they rolled out of our sight.

SIR HARRY. [*clenching it*] I tell you I am worth a quarter of a million.

KATE. [*unabashed*] That is what you are worth to yourself. I'll tell you what you are worth to me: exactly twelve pounds. For I made up my mind that I could launch myself on the world alone if I first proved my mettle by earning twelve pounds; and as soon as I had earned it I left you.

SIR HARRY. [*in the scales*] Twelve pounds!

KATE. That is your value to a woman. If she can't make it she has to stick to you.

SIR HARRY. [*remembering perhaps a rectory garden*] You valued me at more than that when you married me.

KATE. [*seeing it also*] Ah, I didn't know you then. If only you had been a man, Harry.

SIR HARRY. A man? What do you mean by a man?

KATE. [*leaving the garden*] Haven't you heard of them? They are something fine; and every woman is loath to admit to herself that her husband is not one. When she marries, even though she has been a very trivial person, there is in her some vague stirring toward a worthy life, as well as a fear of her capacity for evil. She knows her chance lies in him. If there is something good in him, what is good in her finds it, and they join forces against the baser parts. So I didn't give you up willingly,

Harry. I invented all sorts of theories to explain you. Your hardness—I said it was a fine want² of mawkishness. Your coarseness—I said it goes with strength. Your contempt for the weak—I called it virility. Your want of ideals was clear-sightedness. Your ignoble views of women—I tried to think them funny. Oh, I clung to you to save myself. But I had to let go; you had only the one quality, Harry, success; you had it so strong that it swallowed all the others.

SIR HARRY. [*not to be diverted from the main issue*] How did you earn that twelve pounds?

KATE. It took me nearly six months; but I earned it fairly. [*She presses her hand on the typewriter as lovingly as many a woman has pressed a rose*] I learned this. I hired it and taught myself. I got some work through a friend, and with my first twelve pounds I paid for my machine. Then I considered that I was free to go, and I went.

SIR HARRY. All this going on in my house while you were living in the lap of luxury! [*she nods*] By God, you were determined.

KATE. [*briefly*] By God, I was.

SIR HARRY. [*staring*] How you must have hated me.

KATE. [*smiling at the childish word*] Not a bit—after I saw that there was a way out. From that hour you amused me, Harry; I was even sorry for you, for I saw that you couldn't help yourself. Success is just a fatal gift.

SIR HARRY. Oh, thank you.

KATE. [*thinking, dear friends in front, of you and me perhaps*] Yes, and some of your most successful friends knew it. One or two of them used to look very sad at times, as if they thought they might have come to something if they hadn't got on.

SIR HARRY. [*who has a horror of sacrilege*] The battered crew you live among now—what are they but folk who have tried to succeed and failed?

KATE. That's it; they try, but they fail.

SIR HARRY. And always will fail.

KATE. Always. Poor souls—I say of them. Poor soul—they say of me. It keeps us human. That is why I never tire of them.

SIR HARRY. [*comprehensively*] Bah! Kate, I tell you I'll be worth half a million yet.

KATE. I'm sure you will. You're getting stout, Harry.

² lack.

SIR HARRY. No, I'm not.

KATE. What was the name of that fat old fellow who used to fall asleep at our dinner-parties?

SIR HARRY. If you mean Sir William Crackley—

KATE. That was the man. Sir William was to me a perfect picture of the grand success. He had got on so well that he was very, very stout, and when he sat on a chair it was thus [*her hands meeting in front of her*—as if he were holding his success together. That is what you are working for, Harry. You will have that and the half million about the same time.

SIR HARRY. [*who has surely been very patient*] Will you please to leave my house?

KATE. [*putting on her gloves, soiled things*] But don't let us part in anger. How do you think I am looking, Harry, compared to the dull, inert thing that used to roll round in your padded carriages?

SIR HARRY. [*in masterly fashion*] I forget what you were like. I'm very sure you never could have held a candle to the present Lady Sims.

KATE. That is a picture of her, is it not?

SIR HARRY. [*seizing his chance again*] In her wedding-gown. Painted by an R.A.³

KATE. [*wickedly*] A knight?

SIR HARRY. [*deceived*] Yes

KATE. [*who likes LADY SIMS: a piece of presumption on her part*] It is a very pretty face.

SIR HARRY. [*with the pride of possession*] Acknowledged to be a beauty everywhere.

KATE. There is a merry look in the eyes, and character in the chin.

SIR HARRY. [*like an auctioneer*] Noted for her wit.

KATE. All her life before her when that was painted. It is a *spirituelle*⁴ face too. [*Suddenly she turns on him with anger, for the first and only time in the play*] Oh, Harry, you brute!

SIR HARRY. [*staggered*] Eh, What?

KATE. That dear creature capable of becoming a noble wife and mother—she is the spiritless woman of no account that I saw here a few minutes ago. I forgive you for myself, for I escaped, but that poor lost soul, oh, Harry, Harry.

SIR HARRY. [*waving her to the door*] I'll thank you— If ever there was a woman proud of her husband and happy in her married life, that woman is Lady Sims.

KATE. I wonder.

SIR HARRY. Then you needn't wonder.

KATE. [*slowly*] If I was a husband—it is my advice to all of them—I would often watch my wife quietly to see whether the twelve-pound look was not coming into her eyes. Two boys, did you say, and both like you?

SIR HARRY. What is that to you?

KATE. [*with glistening eyes*] I was only thinking that somewhere there are two little girls who, when they grow up—the dear, pretty girls who are all meant for the men that don't get on! Well, good-bye, Sir Harry.

SIR HARRY. [*showing a little human weakness, it is to be feared*] Say first that you're sorry.

KATE. For what?

SIR HARRY. That you left me. Say you regret it bitterly. You know you do. [*She smiles and shakes her head. He is pettish. He makes a terrible announcement*] You have spoilt the day for me.

KATE. [*to hearten him*] I am sorry for that, but it is only a pin-prick, Harry. I suppose it is a little pating in the moment of your triumph to find that there is—one old friend—who does not think you a success; but you will soon forget it. Who cares what a typist thinks?

SIR HARRY. [*heartened*] Nobody. A typist at eighteen shillings a week!

KATE. [*proudly*] Not a bit of it, Harry. I double that.

SIR HARRY. [*neatly*] Magnificent! [*There is a timid knock at the door*]

LADY SIMS. May I come in?

SIR HARRY. [*rather appealingly*] It is Lady Sims.

KATE. I won't tell. She is afraid to come into her husband's room without knocking!

SIR HARRY. She is not. [*uxoriously*] Come in, dearest. [*Dearest enters carrying the sword. She might have had the sense not to bring it in while this annoying person is here*]

LADY SIMS. [*thinking she has brought her welcome with her*] Harry, the sword has come.

SIR HARRY. [*who will dote on it presently*] Oh, all right.

LADY SIMS. But I thought you were so eager

³ a member of the Royal Academy.

⁴ intelligent, alive.

to practice with it. [*The person smiles at this. He wishes he had not looked to see if she was smiling*]

SIR HARRY. [*sharply*] Put it down. [LADY SIMS flushes a little as she lays the sword aside]

KATE. [*with her confounded courtesy*] It is a beautiful sword, if I may say so.

LADY SIMS. [*helped*] Yes. [*The person thinks she can put him in the wrong, does she? He'll show her*]

SIR HARRY. [*with one eye on KATE*] Emmy, the one thing your neck needs is more jewels.

LADY SIMS. [*faltering*] More!

SIR HARRY. Some ropes of pearls. I'll see to it. It's a bagatelle to me. [KATE conceals her chagrin, so she had better be shown the door. He rings] I won't detain you any longer, miss.

KATE. Thank you.

LADY SIMS. Going already? You have been very quick.

SIR HARRY. The person doesn't suit, Emmy.

LADY SIMS. I'm sorry.

KATE. So am I, madam, but it can't be helped. Good-bye, your ladyship—good-bye, Sir Harry. [*There is a suspicion of an impertinent curtsy, and she is escorted off the premises by TOMBES. The air of the room is purified by her going. SIR HARRY notices it at once*]

LADY SIMS. [*whose tendency is to say the wrong thing*] She seemed such a capable woman.

SIR HARRY. [*on his hearth*] I don't like her style at all.

LADY SIMS. [*meekly*] Of course you know best. [*This is the right kind of woman*]

SIR HARRY. [*rather anxious for corroboration*]

Lord, how she winced when I said I was to give you those ropes of pearls.

LADY SIMS. Did she? I didn't notice. I suppose so.

SIR HARRY. [*frowning*] Suppose? Surely I know enough about women to know that.

LADY SIMS. Yes, oh yes.

SIR HARRY. [*odd that so confident a man should ask this*] Emmy, I know you well, don't

10 I? I can read you like a book, eh?

LADY SIMS. [*nervously*] Yes, Harry.

SIR HARRY. [*jovially, but with an inquiring eye*] What a different existence yours is from that poor lonely wretch's.

LADY SIMS. Yes, but she has a very contented face.

SIR HARRY. [*with a stamp of his foot*] All put on. What?

LADY SIMS. [*timidly*] I didn't say anything.

20 SIR HARRY. [*snapping*] One would think you envied her.

LADY SIMS. Envied? Oh no—but I thought she looked so alive. It was while she was working the machine.

25 SIR HARRY. Alive! That's no life. It is you that are alive. [*curtly*] I'm busy, Emmy. [*he sits at his writing table*]

LADY SIMS. [*dutifully*] I'm sorry; I'll go, Harry. [*inconsequently*] Are they very ex-

30 pensive?

SIR HARRY. What?

LADY SIMS. Those machines? [*When she has gone the possible meaning of her question startles him. The curtain hides him from us, but we may be sure that he will soon be bland again. We have a comfortable feeling, you and I, that there is nothing of HARRY SIMS in us.*]

RIDERS TO THE SEA*

JOHN M. SYNGE

Synge (1871-1909) left Trinity College, Dublin, to travel, and eventually settled down in Paris, where he lived a bohemian existence. He was luckily set on a new track by Yeats, who suggested that he write of the primitive existence on the Aran Isles. *Riders to the Sea* (1904), a modern classic, was the result. It has been called the greatest of one-act plays and has been compared with Greek tragedy in its impact on an audience. Synge later became a prominent director of the Abbey Theatre and, with six plays to his credit, seemed destined for the heights, cancer cut off his career at the age of thirty-eight. His *Playboy of the Western World* (1907), a comedy which offended Irish audiences at first, is a notable effort. Along with other prominent dramatists Synge belongs to the Irish literary renaissance as one of its most revered prophets (see I, 404).

Persons

MAURYA, AN OLD WOMAN
BARTLEY, HER SON
CATHLEEN, HER DAUGHTER
NORA, A YOUNGER DAUGHTER
MEN AND WOMEN

SCENE—An Island off the West of Ireland Cottage kitchen, with nets, oilskins, spinning wheel, some new boards standing by the wall, etc. CATHLEEN, a girl of about twenty, finishes kneading cake, and puts it down in the pot-oven by the fire, then wipes her hands, and begins to spin at the wheel. NORA, a young girl, puts her head in at the door

NORA. [*in a low voice*] Where is she?

CATHLEEN. She's lying down, God help her, and may be sleeping, if she's able. [*NORA comes in softly, and takes a bundle from under her shawl*]

CATHLEEN. [*spinning the wheel rapidly*] What is it you have?

NORA. The young priest is after bringing them. It's a shirt and a plain stocking were got off a drowned man in Donegal. [*CATHLEEN stops her wheel with a sudden movement and leans out to listen*]

NORA. We're to find out if it's Michael's they are, some time herself will be down looking by the sea.

CATHLEEN. How would they be Michael's, Nora? How would he go the length of that way to the far north?

NORA. The young priest says he's known the like of it. "If it's Michael's they are," says he, "you can tell herself he's got a clean burial by the grace of God, and if they're not his, let no one say a word about them, for she'll be getting her death," says he, "with crying and lamenting." [*the door which NORA half closed is blown open by a gust of wind*]

CATHLEEN. [*looking out anxiously*] Did you ask him would he stop Bartley going this day with the horses to the Galway fair?

NORA. "I won't stop him," says he, "but let you not be afraid. Herself does be saying prayers half through the night, and the Almighty God won't leave her destitute," says he, "with no son living."

CATHLEEN. Is the sea bad by the white rocks, Nora?

NORA. Middling bad, God help us. There's a great roaring in the west, and it's worse it'll be getting when the tide's turned to the wind.

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[*she goes over to the table with the bundle*]
Shall I open it now?

CATHLEEN. Maybe she'd wake up on us, and come in before we'd done. [*coming to the table*] It's a long time we'll be, and the two of us crying.

NORA. [*goes to the inner door and listens*] She's moving about on the bed. She'll be coming in a minute.

CATHLEEN. Give me the ladder, and I'll put them up in the turf-loft, the way she won't know of them at all, and maybe when the tide turns, she'll be going down to see would he be floating from the east. [*they put the ladder against the gable of the chimney; CATHLEEN goes up a few steps and hides the bundle in the turf-loft. MAURYA comes from the inner room*]

MAURYA. [*looking up at CATHLEEN and speaking querulously*] Isn't it turf enough you have for this day and evening?

CATHLEEN. There's a cake baking at the fire for a short space [*throwing down the turf*] and Bartley will want it when the tide turns if he goes to Connemara. [*NORA picks up the turf and puts it round the pot-oven*]

MAURYA. [*sitting down on a stool at the fire*] He won't go this day with the wind rising from the south and west. He won't go this day, for the young priest will stop him surely.

NORA. He'll not stop him, mother, and I heard Eamon Simon and Stephen Pheety and Colum Shawn saying he would go.

MAURYA. Where is he itself?

NORA. He went down to see would there be another boat sailing in the week, and I'm thinking it won't be long till he's here now, for the tide's turning at the green head, and the hooker's tacking from the east.

CATHLEEN. I hear some one passing the big stones.

NORA. [*looking out*] He's coming now, and he in a hurry.

BARTLEY. [*comes in and looks round the room; speaking sadly and quietly*] Where is the bit of new rope, Cathleen, was bought in Connemara?

CATHLEEN. [*coming down*] Give it to him, Nora; it's on a nail by the white boards. I hung it up this morning, for the pig with the black feet was eating it.

NORA. [*giving him a rope*] Is that it, Bartley?

MAURYA. You'd do right to leave that rope,

Bartley, hanging by the boards. [*BARTLEY takes the rope*] It will be wanting in this place, I'm telling you, if Michael is washed up tomorrow morning, or the next morning, or any morning in the week, for it's a deep grave we'll make him by the grace of God.

BARTLEY. [*beginning to work with the rope*] I've no halter the way I can ride down on the mare, and I must go now quickly. This is the one boat going for two weeks or beyond it, and the fair will be a good fair for horses I heard them saying below.

MAURYA. It's a hard thing they'll be saying below if the body is washed up and there's no man in it to make the coffin, and I after giving a big price for the finest white boards you'd find in Connemara. [*she looks round at the boards*]

BARTLEY. How would it be washed up, and we after looking each day for nine days, and a strong wind blowing a while back from the west and south?

MAURYA. If it wasn't found itself, that wind is raising the sea, and there was a star up against the moon, and it rising in the night. If it was a hundred horses, or a thousand horses you had itself, what is the price of a thousand horses against a son where there is one son only?

BARTLEY. [*working at the halter, to CATHLEEN*] Let you go down each day, and see the sheep aren't jumping in on the rye, and if the jobber comes, you can sell the pig with the black feet if there is a good price going.

MAURYA. How would the like of her get a good price for a pig?

BARTLEY. [*to CATHLEEN*] If the west wind holds with the last bit of the moon, let you and Nora get up weed enough for another cock for the kelp. It's hard set we'll be from this day with no one in it but one man to work.

MAURYA. It's hard set we'll be surely the day you're drownd'd with the rest. What way will I live and the girls with me, and I an old woman looking for the grave? [*BARTLEY lays down the halter, takes off his old coat, and puts on a newer one of the same flannel*]

BARTLEY. [*to NORA*] Is she coming to the pier?

NORA. [*looking out*] She's passing the green head and letting fall her sails.

BARTLEY. [*getting his purse and tobacco*]

I'll have half an hour to go down, and you'll see me coming again in two days, or in three days, or maybe in four days if the wind is bad.

MAURYA. [*turning round to the fire, and putting her shawl over her head*] Isn't it a hard and cruel man won't hear a word from an old woman, and she holding him from the sea?

CATHLEEN. It's the life of a young man to be going on the sea, and who would listen to an old woman with one thing and she saying it over?

BARTLEY. [*taking the halter*] I must go now quickly. I'll ride down on the red mare, and the gray pony'll run behind me. . . . The blessing of God on you. [*he goes out*]

MAURYA. [*crying out as he is in the door*] He's gone now, God spare us, and we'll not see him again. He's gone now, and when the black night is falling, I'll have no son left me in the world.

CATHLEEN. Why wouldn't you give him your blessing and be looking round in the door? Isn't it sorrow enough is on every one in this house without your sending him out with an unlucky word behind him, and a hard word in his ear? [*MAURYA takes up the tongs and begins raking the fire aimlessly without looking round*]

NORA. [*turning toward her*] You're taking away the turf from the cake.

CATHLEEN. [*crying out*] The Son of God forgive us, Nora, we're after forgetting his bit of bread. [*she comes over to the fire*]

NORA. And it's destroyed he'll be going till dark night, and he after eating nothing since the sun went up.

CATHLEEN. [*turning the cake out of the oven*] It's destroyed he'll be, surely. There's no sense left on any person in a house where an old woman will be talking forever. [*MAURYA sways herself on her stool*]

CATHLEEN. [*cutting off some of the bread and rolling it in a cloth; to MAURYA*] Let you go down now to the spring well and give him this and he passing. You'll see him then and the dark word will be broken, and you can say "God speed you," the way he'll be easy in his mind.

MAURYA. [*taking the bread*] Will I be in it as soon as himself?

CATHLEEN. If you go now quickly.

MAURYA. [*standing up unsteadily*] It's hard

set I am to walk.

CATHLEEN. [*looking at her anxiously*] Give her the stick, Nora, or maybe she'll slip on the big stones.

5 NORA. What stick?

CATHLEEN. The stick Michael brought from Connemara.

MAURYA. [*taking a stick NORA gives her*] In the big world the old people do be leaving things after them for their sons and children, but in this place it is the young men do be leaving things behind for them that do be old. [*she goes out slowly. NORA goes over to the ladder*]

15 CATHLEEN. Wait, Nora, maybe she'd turn back quickly. She's that sorry, God help her, you wouldn't know the thing she'd do.

NORA. Is she gone round by the bush?

CATHLEEN. [*looking out*] She's gone now. 20 Throw it down quickly, for the Lord knows when she'll be out of it again.

NORA. [*getting the bundle from the loft*] The young priest said he'd be passing tomorrow, and we might go down and speak to him below if it's Michael's they are surely.

CATHLEEN. [*taking the bundle*] Did he say what way they were found?

NORA. [*coming down*] "There were two men," says he, "and they rowing round with 30 poteen¹ before the cocks crowed, and the oar of one of them caught the body, and they passing the black cliffs of the north."

CATHLEEN. [*trying to open the bundle*] Give me a knife, Nora; the string's perished with the salt water, and there's a black knot on 35 it you wouldn't loosen in a week.

NORA. [*giving her a knife*] I've heard tell it was a long way to Donegal.

CATHLEEN. [*cutting the string*] It is surely. 40 There was a man in here a while ago—the man sold us that knife—and he said if you set off walking from the rocks beyond, it would be seven days you'd be in Donegal.

NORA. And what time would a man take, 45 and he floating? [*CATHLEEN opens the bundle and takes out a bit of a stocking. They look at them eagerly*]

CATHLEEN. [*in a low voice*] The Lord spare us, Nora! isn't it a queer hard thing to say if 50 it's his they are surely?

¹ moonshine, bootleg whisky.

NORA. I'll get his shirt off the hook the way we can put the one flannel on the other. [*she looks through some clothes hanging in the corner*] It's not with them, Cathleen, and where will it be?

CATHLEEN. I'm thinking Bartley put it on him in the morning, for his own shirt was heavy with the salt in it. [*pointing to the corner*] There's a bit of a sleeve was of the same stuff. Give me that, and it will do. [*NORA brings it to her, and they compare the flannel*] It's the same stuff, Nora; but if it is itself, aren't there great rolls of it in the shops of Galway, and isn't it many another man may have a shirt of it as well as Michael himself?

NORA. [*who has taken up the stocking and counted the stitches, crying out*] It's Michael, Cathleen, it's Michael; God spare his soul, and what will herself say when she hears this story, and Bartley on the sea?

CATHLEEN. [*taking the stocking*] It's a plain stocking.

NORA. It's the second one of the third pair I knitted, and I put up three score stitches, and I dropped four of them.

CATHLEEN. [*counts the stitches*] It's that number is in it. [*crying out*] Ah, Nora, isn't it a bitter thing to think of him floating that way to the far north, and no one to keen² him but the black hags³ that do be flying on the sea?

NORA. [*swinging herself round, and throwing out her arms on the clothes*] And isn't it a pitiful thing when there is nothing left of a man who was a great rower and fisher but a bit of an old shirt and a plain stocking?

CATHLEEN. [*after an instant*] Tell me is herself coming, Nora? I hear a little sound on the path.

NORA. [*looking out*] She is, Cathleen. She's coming up to the door.

CATHLEEN. Put these things away before she'll come in. Maybe it's easier she'll be after giving her blessing to Bartley, and we won't let on we've heard anything the time he's on the sea.

NORA. [*helping CATHLEEN to close the bundle*] We'll put them here in the corner. [*they put them into a hole in the chimney corner*] CATHLEEN goes back to the spinning wheel] Will she see it was crying I was?

CATHLEEN. Keep your back to the door the way the light'll not be on you. [*NORA sits down at the chimney corner, with her back to the door*. MAURYA comes in very slowly, without looking at the girls, and goes over to her stool at the other side of the fire. The cloth with the bread is still in her hand. The girls look at each other, and NORA points to the bundle of bread]

CATHLEEN. [*after spinning for a moment*] You didn't give him his bit of bread? [*MAURYA begins to keen softly, without turning round*]

CATHLEEN. Did you see him riding down? [*MAURYA goes on keening*]

CATHLEEN. [*a little impatiently*] God forgive you; isn't it a better thing to raise your voice and tell what you seen, than to be making lamentation for a thing that's done? Did you see Bartley, I'm saying to you?

MAURYA. [*with a weak voice*] My heart's broken from this day.

CATHLEEN. [*as before*] Did you see Bartley?

MAURYA. I seen the fearfulest thing.

CATHLEEN. [*leaves her wheel and looks out*] God forgive you; he's riding the mare now over the green head, and the gray pony behind him.

MAURYA. [*starts, so that her shawl falls back from her head and shows her white tossed hair*. With a frightened voice] The gray pony behind him.

CATHLEEN. [*coming to the fire*] What is it ails you, at all?

MAURYA. [*speaking very slowly*] I've seen the fearfulest thing any person has seen, since the day Bride Dara seen the dead man with a child in his arms.

CATHLEEN AND NORA. Uah! [*they crouch down in front of the old woman at the fire*]

NORA. Tell us what it is you seen.

MAURYA. I went down to the spring well, and I stood there saying a prayer to myself. Then Bartley came along, and he riding on the red mare with the gray pony behind him. [*she puts up her hands, as if to hide something from her eyes*] The Son of God spare us, Nora!

CATHLEEN. What is it you seen?

MAURYA. I seen Michael himself.

CATHLEEN. [*speaking softly*] You did not, mother; it wasn't Michael you seen, for his body is after being found in the far north, and he's got a clean burial by the grace of God.

MAURYA. [*a little defiantly*] I'm after seeing

² to lament by wailing. ³ sea witches.

him this day, and he riding and galloping. Bartley came first on the red mare; and I tried to say, "God speed you!" but something choked the words in my throat. He went by quickly, and "the blessing of God on you," says he, and I could say nothing. I looked up then, and I crying, at the gray pony, and there was Michael upon it—with fine clothes on him, and new shoes on his feet.

CATHLEEN. [*begins to keen*] It's destroyed 15 we are from this day. It's destroyed, surely

NORA. Didn't the young priest say the Almighty God wouldn't leave her destitute with no son living?

MAURYA. [*in a low voice, but clearly*] It's 15 little the like of him knows of the sea. Bartley will be lost now, and let you call in Eamon and make me a good coffin out of the white boards, for I won't live after them. I've had a husband, and a husband's father, and six sons in this house—six fine men, though it was a hard birth I had with every one of them and they coming into the world—and some of them were found and some of them were not found, but they're gone now with the lot of them . . . There were Stephen, and Shawn, were lost in the great wind, and found after in the Bay of Gregory of the Golden Mouth, and carried up the two of them on the one plank, and in by that door. [*she pauses for a moment; the girls start as if they heard some thing through the door that is half open behind them*]

NORA. [*in a whisper*] Did you hear that, Cathleen? Did you hear a noise in the north-east?

CATHLEEN. [*in a whisper*] There's some one after crying out by the seashore.

MAURYA. [*continues without hearing anything*] There was Sheamus and his father, and his own father again, were lost in a dark night, and not a stick or sign was seen of them when the sun went up. There was Patch after was drowned out of a curagh' that turned over. I was sitting here with Bartley, and he a baby 45 lying on my two knees, and I seen two women, and three women, and four women coming in, and they crossing themselves, and not saying a word. I looked out then, and there were men coming after them, and they holding a thing in

the halt of a red sail, and water dripping out of it—it was a day day, Nora—and leaving a track to the door. [*she pauses again with her hand stretched out toward the door. It opens 5 softly and old women begin to come in, crossing themselves on the threshold, and kneeling down in front of the stage with red petticoats over their heads*]

MAURYA. [*half in a dream, to CATHLEEN*] Is it Patch, or Michael, or what is it at all?

CATHLEEN. Michael is after being found in the far north, and when he is found there, how could he be here in this place?

MAURYA. There does be a power of young men floating round in the sea, and what way would they know if it was Michael they had, or another man like him, for when a man is nine days in the sea, and the wind blowing, it's hard set his own mother would be to say what man was it.

CATHLEEN. It's Michael, God spare him, for they're after sending us a bit of his clothes from the far north. [*she reaches out and hands MAURYA the clothes that belong to MICHAEL.*]

MAURYA stands up slowly, and takes them in her hands. NORA looks out]

NORA. They're carrying a thing among them and there's water dripping out of it and leaving a track by the big stones

CATHLEEN. [*in a whisper to the women who have come in*] Is it Bartley it is?

ONE OF THE WOMEN. It is surely, God rest his soul. [*two younger women come in and pull out the table. Then men carry in the body of BARTLEY, laid on a plank, with a bit of sail over it, and lay it on the table*]

CATHLEEN. [*to the women, as they are doing so*] What way was he drowned?

ONE OF THE WOMEN. The gray pony knocked him into the sea, and he was washed out where there is a great surf on the white rocks. [*MAURYA has gone over and knelt down at the head of the table. The women are keening softly and swaying themselves with a slow movement. CATHLEEN and NORA kneel at the other end of the table. The men kneel near the door*]

MAURYA. [*raising her head and speaking as if she did not see the people around her*] They're all gone now, and there isn't anything more the sea can do to me. . . . I'll have no call now to be up crying and praying when

* a small, frail boat.

the wind breaks from the south, and you can hear the surf is in the east, and the surf is in the west, making a great stir with the two noises, and they hitting one on the other. I'll have no call now to be going down and getting Holy Water in the dark nights after Samhain,⁵ and I won't care what way the sea is when the other women will be keening. [to NORA] Give me the Holy Water, Nora; there's a small sup still on the dresser. [NORA gives it to her. MAURYA drops MICHAEL's clothes across BARTLEY's feet, and sprinkles the Holy Water over him] It isn't that I haven't prayed for you, Bartley, to the Almighty God. It isn't that I haven't said prayers in the dark night till you wouldn't know what I'd be saying; but it's a great rest I'll have now, and it's time surely. It's a great rest I'll have now, and great sleeping in the long nights after Samhain, if it's only a bit of wet flour we do have to eat, and maybe a fish that would be stinking. [she kneels down again, crossing herself, and saying prayers under her breath]

CATHLEEN. [to an old man] Maybe yourself and Eamon would make a coffin when the sun rises. We have fine white boards herself bought, God help her, thinking Michael would be found, and I have a new cake you can eat while you'll be working.

THE OLD MAN. [looking at the boards] Are there nails with them?

CATHLEEN. There are not, Colum; we didn't think of the nails.

ANOTHER MAN. It's a great wonder she

wouldn't think of the nails, and all the coffins she's seen made already.

CATHLEEN. It's getting old she is, and broken. [MAURYA stands up again very slowly and spreads out the pieces of MICHAEL's clothes beside the body, sprinkling them with the last of the Holy Water]

NORA. [in a whisper to CATHLEEN] She's quiet now and easy; but the day Michael was drowned you could hear her crying out from this to the spring well. It's fonder she was of Michael, and would anyone have thought that?

CATHLEEN. [slowly and clearly] An old woman will be soon tired with anything she will do, and isn't it nine days herself is after crying and keening, and making great sorrow in the house?

MAURYA. [puts the empty cup mouth downwards on the table, and lays her hands together on BARTLEY's feet] They're all together this time, and the end is come. May the Almighty God have mercy on Bartley's soul, and on Michael's soul, and on the souls of Sheamus and Patch, and Stephen and Shawn [bending her head]; and may He have mercy on my soul, Nora, and on the soul of every one is left living in the world. [she pauses, and the keen rises a little more loudly from the women, then sinks away]

MAURYA. [continuing] Michael has a clean burial in the far north by the grace of the Almighty God. Bartley will have a fine coffin out of the white boards, and a deep grave surely. What more can we want than that? No man at all can be living forever, and we must be satisfied. [she kneels down again and the curtain falls slowly]

⁵ All Souls' Day (November 2).

THE HAIRY APE*

A COMEDY OF ANCIENT AND MODERN LIFE IN EIGHT SCENES

EUGENE O'NEILL

O'Neill (1888—) was born into the theater; his father was an actor, and the boy spent years on tour with him. Finding college not to his liking, O'Neill went to sea, was frequently "on the beach" (unengaged), had a spell at reporting, tried odd jobs all over the world, and eventually found himself back behind academic walls, this time at Harvard in the famous dramatic workshop of Professor Baker. Early experimental plays produced by the Provincetown Players and the notable full-length *Beyond the Horizon* started him on the way to the top position in the American theater (see I, 404). The golden period of *The Emperor Jones*, *The Hairy Ape* (q.v.), and *Anna Christie* was followed by a half-dozen interesting but uneven plays, and then came *Strange Interlude* and *Mourning Becomes Electra*. (It is significant that with one notable exception O'Neill deals exclusively with tragedy.) After the last war the playwright emerged from a long retirement, from which had come stories of a massive chain of plays, illness, mental trouble, and destruction of manuscripts. Two of the new plays have appeared without causing much stir; a third is to appear long after his death.

O'Neill has won Pulitzer and Nobel prizes along with other honors. He has made money in the theater, though he is far from being a millionaire. He has been translated and produced all over the globe. Almost single-handedly he made the American theater grow up. Few have doubted his power and courage, although he has been attacked for concentrating on muddled people, for never quite mastering

the poetic impulses which often produce equally muddled lines. Nevertheless, O'Neill stands today as the first American dramatist to clear away the lumber of tradition, without too much preaching he has probed deep into the heart of man and, like *Marlowe*, once more made human passion real on stage.

Characters

ROBERT SMITH, "YANK"
PADDY
LONG
MILDRED DOUGLAS
HER AUNT
SECOND ENGINEER
A GUARD
A SECRETARY OF AN ORGANIZATION
STOKERS, LADIES, GENTLEMEN, ETC.

SCENE I. The firemen's forecastle of an ocean liner—an hour after sailing from New York

SCENE II. Section of promenade deck, two days out—morning

SCENE III. The stokehole. A few minutes later

SCENE IV. Same as Scene I. Half an hour later

SCENE V. Fifth Avenue, New York. Three weeks later

SCENE VI. An island near the city. The next night

SCENE VII. In the city. About a month later

SCENE VIII. In the city. Twilight of the next day

SCENE I.

SCENE—*The firemen's forecastle of a transatlantic liner an hour after sailing from New*

* Copyright, 1931, by Eugene O'Neill.

THE DRAMA · EUGENE O'NEILL

York for the voyage across. Tiers of narrow, steel bunks, three deep, on all sides. An entrance in rear. Benches on the floor before the bunks. The room is crowded with men, shouting, cursing, laughing, singing—a confused, inchoate uproar swelling into a sort of unity, a meaning—the bewildered, furious, baffled defiance of a beast in a cage. Nearly all the men are drunk. Many bottles are passed from hand to hand. All are dressed in dungaree pants, heavy ugly shoes. Some wear singlets, but the majority are stripped to the waist.

The treatment of this scene, or of any other scene in the play, should by no means be naturalistic. The effect sought after is a cramped space in the bowels of a ship, imprisoned by white steel. The lines of bunks, the uprights supporting them, cross each other like the steel framework of a cage. The ceiling crushes down upon the men's heads. They cannot stand upright. This accentuates the natural stooping posture which shoveling coal and the resultant over-development of back and shoulder muscles have given them. The men themselves should resemble those pictures in which the appearance of Neanderthal Man is guessed at. All are hairy-chested, with long arms of tremendous power, and low, receding brows above their small, fierce, resentful eyes. All the civilized white races are represented, but except for the slight differentiation in color of hair, skin, eyes, all these men are alike.

The curtain rises on a tumult of sound. YANK is seated in the foreground. He seems broader, fiercer, more truculent, more powerful, more sure of himself than the rest. They respect his superior strength—the grudging respect of fear. Then, too, he represents to them a self-expression, the very last word in what they are, their most highly developed individual.

VOICES. Gif me trink dere, you!
 'Ave a wet!
 Salute!
 Gesundheit!
 Skoal!¹
 Drunk as a lord, God stiffen you!
 Here's how!
 Luck!
 Pass back that bottle, damn you!

¹ Here's how, your health (in three languages).

Pourin' it down his neck!
 Ho, Froggy! Where the devil have you been?

La Touraine.

I hit him smash in yaw, py Gott!
 Jenkins—the First—he's a rotten swine—

And the coppers nabbed him—and I run—

I like peer better. It don't pig head gif you.

A slut, I'm sayin'! She robbed me aslape—

To hell with 'em all!

You're a bloody liar!

Say dot again! [commotion. Two men about to fight are pulled apart]

No scrappin' now!

Tonight—

See who's the best man!

Bloody Dutchman!

Tonight on the for'ard square.

I'll bet on Dutchy.

He packa da wallop, I tella you!

Shut up, Wop!

No fightin', maties. We're all chums, ain't we?

[a voice starts bawling a song]

"Beer, beer, glorious beer!

Fill yourself right up to here."

YANK. [for the first time seeming to take notice of the uproar about him, turns around threateningly—in a tone of contemptuous authority] Choke off dat noise! Where d'yuh get dat beer stuff? Beer, hell! Beer's for goils—and Dutchmen. Me for somep'n wit a kick to it! Gimme a drink, one of youse guys. [several bottles are eagerly offered. He takes a tremendous gulp at one of them; then, keeping the bottle in his hand, glares belligerently at the owner, who hastens to acquiesce in this robbery by saying] All righto, Yank. Keep it and have another. [YANK contemptuously turns his back on the crowd again. For a second there is an embarrassed silence. Then—]

VOICES. We must be passing the Hook.

She's beginning to roll to it.

Six days in hell—and then Southampton.

Py Yesus, I vish somepody take my first vatch for me!

Gittin' seasick, Square-head?
 Drink up and forget it!
 What's in your bottle?
 Gin.
 Dot's nigger trunk.
 Absinthe? It's doped. You'll go off
 your chump, Froggy!
 Cochon!²
 Whisky, that's the ticket!
 Where's Paddy?
 Going asleep.
 Sing us that whisky song, Paddy.
[They all turn to an old, wizened Irishman who is dozing, very drunk, on the benches forward. His face is extremely monkey-like with all the sad, patient pathos of that animal in his small eyes]
 Singa da song, Caruso Pat!
 He's gettin' old. The drink is too
 much for him.
 He's too drunk.
 PADDY. *[blinking about him, starts to his feet resentfully, swaying, holding on to the edge of a bunk]* I'm never too drunk to sing. 'Tis only when I'm dead to the world I'd be wishful to sing at all. *[with a sort of sad contempt]* "Whisky Johnny," ye want? A chanty, ye want? Now that's a queer wish from the ugly like of you, God help you. But no mather. *[he starts to sing in a thin, nasal, doleful tone]*
 Oh, whisky is the life of man!
 Whisky! O Johnny! *[they all join in on this]*
 Oh, whisky is the life of man!
 Whisky for my Johnny *[again chorus]*
 Oh, whisky drove my old man mad!
 Whisky! O Johnny!
 Oh, whisky drove my old man mad!
 Whisky for my Johnny!
 YANK. *[again turning around scornfully]* Aw hell! Nix on dat old sailing ship stuff! All dat bull's dead, see? And you're dead, too, yuh damned old Harp, on'y yuh don't know it. Take it easy, see. Give us a rest. Nix on de loud noise. *[with a cynical grin]* Can't youse see I'm tryin' to t'ink?
 ALL. *[repeating the word after him, as one, with the same cynical amused mockery]* Think! *[the chorused word has a brazen metallic quality as if their throats were phonograph horns. It is followed by a general uproar of hard, barking laughter]*
 VOICES. Don't be crackin' your head wid ut, Yank.
 You gat headache, py vingo!
 One thing about it--it rhymes with drink!
 Ha, ha, ha!
 Drink, don't think!
 Drink, don't think!
 Drink, don't think! *[a whole chorus of voices has taken up this refrain, stamping on the floor, pounding on the benches with fists]*
 YANK. *[taking a gulp from his bottle--good-naturedly]* Aw right. Can de noise. I got yuh de foist time. *[the uproar subsides. A very drunken sentimental tenor begins to sing]*
 Far away in Canada,
 Far across the sea,
 There's a lass who fondly waits
 Making a home for me—
 YANK. *[fiercely contemptuous]* Shut up, yuh lousy boob! Where d'yuh get dat tripe? Home? Home, hell! I'll make a home for yuh! I'll knock yuh dead. Home! T'hell wit home! Where d'yuh get dat tripe? Dis is home, see? What d'yuh want wit home? *[proudly]* I runned away from mine when I was a kid.
 On'y too glad to beat it, dat was me. Home was lickings for me, dat's all. But yuh can bet your shoat no one ain't never licked me since! Wanter try it, any of youse? Huh! I guess not. *[in a more placated but still contemptuous tone]* Coils waitin' for yuh, huh? Aw, hell! Dat's all tripe. Dey don't wait for no one. Dey'd double-cross yuh for a nickel. Dey're all tarts, get me? Treat 'em rough, dat's me. To hell wit 'em. Tarts, dat's what, de whole bunch of 'em.
 LONG. *[very drunk, jumps on a bench excitedly, gesticulating with a bottle in his hand]* Listen 'ere, Comrades! Yank 'ere is right. 'E says this 'ere stinkin' ship is our 'ome. And 'e says as 'ome is 'ell. And 'e's right. This is 'ell. We lives in 'ell, Comrades—and right enough we'll die in it. *[raging]* And who's ter blame, I arks yer. We ain't. We wasn't born this rotten way. All men is born free and ekal. That's in the bleedin' Bible, maties. But what d'they care for the Bible—them lazy, bloated swine what travels first cabin? Them's the ones. They

² Pig.

dragged us down 'til we're on'y wage slaves in the bowels of a bloody ship, sweatin', burnin' up, eatin' coal dust! Hit's them's ter blame—the damned Capitalist clarrs! [*there had been a gradual murmur of contemptuous resentment rising among the men until now he is interrupted by a storm of catcalls, hisses, boos, hard laughter*]

VOICES. Turn it off!

Shut up!

Sit down!

Closa da face!

Tamn fool! [*etc.*]

YANK. [*standing up and glaring at LONG*] Sit down before I knock yuh down! [*LONG makes haste to efface himself. YANK goes on contemptuously*] De Bible, huh? De Cap'tlist class, huh? Aw, nix on dat Salvation Army-Socialist bull. Git a soapbox! Hire a hall! Come and be saved, huh? Jerk us to Jesus, huh? Aw g'wan! I've listened to lots of guys like you, see? Yuh're all wrong, Wanter know what I t'ink? Yuh ain't no good for no one. Yuh're de bunk. Yuh ain't got no noive, get me? Yuh're yellow, dat's what. Yellow, dat's you. Say! What's dem slobs in de foist cabin got to do wit us? We're better men dan dey are, ain't we? Sure! One of us guys could clean up de whole mob wit one mit. Put one of 'em down here for one watch in de stokehole, what'd happen? Dey'd carry him off on a stretcher. Dem boids don't amount to nothin'. Dey're just baggage. Who makes dis old tub run? Ain't it us guys? Well den, we belong, don't we? We belong and dey don't. Dat's all. [*a loud chorus of approval. YANK goes on*] As for dis bein' hell—aw, nuts! Yuh lost your noive, dat's what. Dis is a man's job, get me? It belongs. It runs dis tub. No stiffs need apply. But yuh're a stiff, see? Yuh're yellow, dat's you.

VOICES. [*with a great hard pride in them*] 40

Righto!

A man's job!

Talk is cheap, Long.

He never could hold up his end.

Devil take him!

Yank's right. We make it go.

Py Gott, Yank say right ting!

We don't need no one cryin' over us.

Makin' speeches.

Throw him out!

Yellow!

Chuck him overboard!

I'll break his jaw for him!

[*They crowd around LONG threateningly.*]

YANK. [*half good-natured again—contemptuously*] 5 Aw, take it easy. Leave him alone. He ain't worth a punch. Drink up. Here's how, whoever owns dis. [*he takes a long swallow from his bottle. All drink with him. In a flash all is hilarious amiability again, back-slapping,* 10 *loud talk, etc.*]

PADDY. [*who has been sitting in a blinking, melancholy daze—suddenly cries out in a voice full of old sorrow*] We belong to this, you're saying? We make the ship to go, you're saying? Yerra then, that Almighty God have pity on us! [*his voice runs into the wail of a keen; he rocks back and forth on his bench. The men stare at him, startled and impressed in spite of themselves*] Oh, to be back in the fine days of my youth, ochone! Oh, there was fine beautiful ships them days—clippers wid tall masts touching the sky—fine strong men in them—men that was sons of the sea as if 'twas the mother that bore them. Oh, the clean skins 25 of them, and the clear eyes, the straight backs and full chests of them! Brave men they was, and bold men surely! We'd be sailing out, bound down round the Horn maybe. We'd be making sail in the dawn, with a fair breeze, singing a chanty song wid no care to it. And astern the land would be sinking low and dying out, but we'd give it no heed but a laugh, and never a look behind. For the day that was, was enough, for we was free men—and I'm 35 thinking 'tis only slaves do be giving heed to the day that's gone or the day to come—until they're old like me. [*with a sort of religious exaltation*] Oh, to be scudding south again wid the power of the Trade Wind driving her on steady through the nights and the days! Full sail on her! Nights and days! Nights when the foam of the wake would be flaming wid fire, when the sky'd be blazing and winking wid stars. Or the full of the moon maybe. Then 45 you'd see her driving through the gray night, her sails stretching aloft all silver and white, not a sound on the deck, the lot of us dreamin' dreams, till you'd believe 'twas no real ship at all you was on but a ghost ship like the 50 Flying Dutchman they say does be roaming the seas forevermore widout touching a port. And there was the days, too. A warm sun on

the clean decks. Sun warming the blood of you, and wind over the miles of shiny green ocean like strong drink to your lungs. Work—aye, hard work—but who'd mind that at all? Sure, you worked under the sky and 'twas work wid skill and daring to it. And wid the day done, in the dog watch, smoking me pipe at ease, the lookout would be raising land maybe, and we'd see the mountains of South Americy wid the red fire of the setting sun painting their white tops and the clouds floating by them! [*his tone of exaltation ceases. He goes on mournfully*] Yerra, what's the use of talking? 'Tis a dead man's whisper. [*to YANK resentfully*] 'Twas them days men belonged to ships, not now. 'Twas them days a ship was part of the sea, and a man was part of a ship, and the sea joined all together and made it one. [*scornfully*] Is it one wid this you'd be, Yank—black smoke from the funnels smudging the sea, smudging the decks—the bloody engines pounding and throbbing and shaking—wid divil a sight of sun or a breath of clean air—choking our lungs wid coal dust—breaking our backs and hearts in the hell of the stokehole—feeding the bloody furnace—feeding our lives along wid the coal, I'm thinking—caged in by steel from a sight of the sky like bloody apes in the Zoo! [*with a harsh laugh*] Ho-ho, divil mend you! Is it to belong to that you're wishing? Is it a flesh and blood wheel of the engines you'd be?

YANK. [*who has been listening with a contemptuous sneer, barks out the answer*] Sure ting! Dat's me. What about it?

PADDY. [*as if to himself—with great sorrow*] Me time is past due. That a great wave wid sun in the heart of it may sweep me over the side sometime I'd be dreaming of the days that's gone!

YANK. Aw, yuh crazy Mick! [*he springs to his feet and advances on Paddy threateningly—then stops, fighting some queer struggle within himself—lets his hands fall to his sides—contemptuously*] Aw, take it easy. Yuh're aw right, at dat. Yuh're bugs, dat's all—nutty as a cuckoo. All dat tripe yuh been pullin'—Aw, dat's all right. On'y it's dead, get me? Yuh don't belong no more, see. Yuh don't get de stuff. Yuh're too old. [*disgustedly*] But aw say, come up for air onct in a while, can't yuh? See what's happened since yuh croaked. [*he sud-*

denly bursts forth vehemently, growing more and more excited] Say! Sure! Sure I meant it! What de hell—Say, lemme talk! Hey! Hey, you old Harp! Hey, youse guys! Say, listen to me—wait a moment—I gotta talk, see. I belong and he don't. He's dead but I'm livin'. Listen to me! Sure I'm part of de engines! Why de hell not? Dey move, don't dey? Dey're speed, ain't dey? Dey smash trou, don't dey? Twenty-five knots a hour! Dat's goin' some! Dat's new stuff! Dat belongs! But him, he's too old. He gets dizzy. Say listen. All dat crazy tripe about nights and days, all dat crazy tripe about stars and moons; all dat crazy tripe about suns and winds, fresh air and de rest of it—Aw hell, dat's all a dope dream! Hittin' de pipe of de past, dat's what he's doin'. He's old and don't belong no more. But me, I'm young! I'm in de pink! I move wit it! It, get me! I mean de tung dat's de guts of all dis. It ploughs trou all de tripe he's been sayin'. It blows dat up! It knocks dat dead! It slams dat offen de face of de oith! It, get me! De engines and de coal and de smoke and all de rest of it! He can't breathe and swallow coal dust, but I kin, see? Dat's fresh air for me! Dat's food for me! I'm new, get me? Hell in de stokehole? Sure! It takes a man to work in hell. Hell, sure, dat's my fav'rite climate. I eat it up! I git fat on it! It's me makes it hot! It's me makes it roar! It's me makes it move! Sure, on'y for me everyting stops. It all goes dead, get me? De noise and smoke and all de engines movin' de woild, dey stop. Dere ain't nothin' no more! Dat's what I'm sayin'. Everyting else dat makes de woild move, somep'n makes it move. It can't move without somep'n else, see? Den yuh get down to me. I'm at de bottom, get me! Dere ain't nothin' foither. I'm de end! I'm de start! I start somep'n and de woild moves! It—dat's me!—de new dat's moiderin' de old! I'm de ting in coal dat makes it boin, I'm steam and oil for de engines; I'm de ting in noise dat makes yuh hear it; I'm smoke and express trains and steamers and factory whistles, I'm de ting in gold dat makes money! And I'm what makes iron into steel! Steel, dat stands for de whole ting! And I'm steel—steel—steel! I'm de muscles in steel, de punch behind it! [*as he says this he pounds with his fist against the steel bunks. All the men roused to a pitch of frenzied self-glorification by his speech, do like-*

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*wise. There is a deafening metallic roar, through which YANK's voice can be heard bel-
lowing*] Slaves, hell! We run de whole woiks. All de rich guys dat tink dey're somep'n, dey ain't nothin'! Dey don't belong. But us guys, we're in de move, we're at de bottom, de whole ting is us! [*PADDY from the start of YANK's speech has been taking one gulp after another from his bottle, at first frightenedly, as if he were afraid to listen, then desperately, as if to drown his senses, but finally has achieved complete indifference, even amused, drunkenness. YANK sees his lips moving. He quells the uproar with a shout*] Hey, youse guys, take it easy! Wait a moment! De nutty Harp is sayin' somep'n.

PADDY. [*is heard now—throws his head back with a mocking burst of laughter*] Ho-ho-ho-ho-ho—

YANK. [*drawing back his fist, with a snarl*] Aw! Look out who yuh're givin' the bark!

PADDY. [*begins to sing the "Miller of Dee" with enormous good nature*]

I care for nobody, no, not I,
And nobody cares for me.

YANK. [*good-natured himself in a flash, interrupts PADDY with a slap on the bare back like a report*] Dat's de stuff! Now yuh're gettin' wise to somep'n. Care for nobody, dat's de dope! To hell wit 'em all! And nix on nobody else carin'. I kin care for myself, get me! [*eight bells sound, muffled, vibrating through the steel walls as if some enormous brazen gong were imbedded in the heart of the ship. All the men jump up mechanically, file through the door silently close upon each other's heels in what is very like a prisoners' lockstep. YANK slaps PADDY on the back*] Our watch, yuh old Harp! [*mockingly*] Come on down in hell. Eat up de coal dust. Drink in de heat. It's it, see! Act like yuh liked it, yuh better—or croak yuhself.

PADDY. [*with jovial defiance*] To the devil wid it! I'll not report this watch. Let thim log me and be damned. I'm no slave the like of you. I'll be sittin' here at me ease, and drinkin', and thinkin', and dreamin' dreams.

YANK. [*contemptuously*] Tinkin' and dreamin', what'll that get yuh? What's tinkin' got to do wit it? We move, don't we? Speed, ain't it? Fog, dat's all you stand for. But we drive trou dat, don't we? We split dat up and

smash trou—twenty-five knots a hour! [*turns his back on PADDY scornfully*] Aw, yuh make me sick! Yuh don't belong! [*he strides out the door in rear. PADDY hums to himself, blinking drowsily*]

[Curtain]

SCENE II.

SCENE—Two days out. A section of the promenade deck. MILDRED DOUGLAS and her aunt are discovered reclining in deck chairs. The former is a girl of twenty, slender, delicate, with a pale, pretty face marred by a self-conscious expression of disdainful superiority. She looks fretful, nervous and discontented, bored by her own anemia. Her aunt is a pompous and proud—and fat—old lady. She is a type even to the point of a double chin and lorgnette. She is dressed pretentiously, as if afraid her face alone would never indicate her position in life. MILDRED is dressed all in white.

The impression to be conveyed by this scene is one of the beautiful, vivid life of the sea all about—sunshine on the deck in a great flood, the fresh sea wind blowing across it. In the midst of this, these two incongruous, artificial figures, inert and disharmonious, the elder like a gray lump of dough touched up with rouge, the younger looking as if the vitality of her stock had been sapped before she was conceived, so that she is the expression not of its life energy but merely of the artificialities that energy had won for itself in the spending.

MILDRED. [*looking up with affected dreaminess*] How the black smoke swirls back against the sky! Is it not beautiful?

AUNT. [*without looking up*] I dislike smoke of any kind.

MILDRED. My great-grandmother smoked a pipe—a clay pipe.

AUNT. [*ruffling*] Vulgar!

MILDRED. She was too distant a relative to be vulgar. Time mellows pipes.

AUNT. [*pretending boredom but irritated*] Did the sociology you took up at college teach you that—to play the ghoul on every possible occasion, excavating old bones? Why not let your great-grandmother rest in her grave?

MILDRED. [*dreamily*] With her pipe beside her—puffing in Paradise.

AUNT. [*with spite*] Yes, you are a natural born ghoul. You are even getting to look like one, my dear.

MILDRED. [*in a passionless tone*] I detest you, Aunt. [*looking at her critically*] Do you know what you remind me of? Of a cold pork pudding against a background of linoleum tablecloth in the kitchen of a—but the possibilities are wearisome. [*she closes her eyes*]

AUNT. [*with a bitter laugh*] Merci for your candor. But since I am and must be your chaperon—in appearance, at least—let us patch up some sort of armed truce. For my part you are quite free to indulge any pose of eccentricity that beguiles you—as long as you observe the amenities—

MILDRED. [*drawing*] The manities?

AUNT. [*going on as if she hadn't heard*] After exhausting the morbid thrills of social service work on New York's East Side—how they must have hated you, by the way, the poor that you made so much poorer in their own eyes!—you are now bent on making your slumming international. Well, I hope White-chapel will provide the needed nerve tonic. Do not ask me to chaperon you there, however. I told your father I would not. I loathe deformity. We will hire an army of detectives and you may investigate everything—they allow you to see.

MILDRED. [*protesting with a trace of genuine earnestness*] Please do not mock at my attempts to discover how the other half lives. Give me credit for some sort of groping sincerity in that at least. I would like to help them. I would like to be some use in the world. Is it my fault I don't know how? I would like to be sincere, to touch life somewhere. [*with weary bitterness*] But I'm afraid I have neither the vitality nor integrity. All that was burnt out in our stock before I was born. Grandfather's blast furnaces, flaming to the sky, melting steel, making millions—then father keeping those home fires burning, making more millions—and little me at the tail-end of it all. I'm a waste product in the Bessemer process—like the millions. Or rather, I inherit the acquired trait of the by-product, wealth, but none of the energy, none of the strength of the steel that made it. I am sired by gold and dammed by it, as they say at the race track—damned in more ways than one. [*she laughs mirthlessly*]

AUNT. [*unimpressed—superciliously*] You seem to be going in for sincerity today. It isn't becoming to you, really—except as an obvious pose. Be as artificial as you are, I advise. 5 There's a sort of sincerity in that, you know. And, after all, you must confess you like that better.

MILDRED. [*again affected and bored*] Yes. I suppose I do. Pardon me for my outburst. 10 When a leopard complains of its spots, it must sound rather grotesque. [*in a mocking tone*] Purr, little leopard. Purr, scratch, tear, kill, gorge yourself and be happy—only stay in the jungle where your spots are camouflage. In a 15 cage they make you conspicuous.

AUNT. I don't know what you are talking about.

MILDRED. It would be rude to talk about anything to you. Let's just talk. [*she looks at* 20 *her wrist watch*] Well, thank goodness, it's about time for them to come for me. That ought to give me a new thrill, Aunt.

AUNT. [*affectedly troubled*] You don't mean to say you're really going? The dirt—the heat 25 must be frightful—

MILDRED. Grandfather started as a puddler. I should have inherited an immunity to heat that would make a salamander shiver. It will be fun to put it to the test.

AUNT. But don't you have to have the captain's—or someone's—permission to visit the stokehole? 30

MILDRED. [*with a triumphant smile*] I have it—both his and the chief engineer's. Oh, they 35 didn't want to at first, in spite of my social service credentials. They didn't seem a bit anxious that I should investigate how the other half lives and works on a ship. So I had to tell them that my father, the president of Nazareth 40 Steel, chairman of the board of directors of this line, had told me it would be all right.

AUNT. He didn't.

MILDRED. How naïve age makes one! But I said he did, Aunt. I even said he had given 45 me a letter to them—which I had lost. And they were afraid to take the chance that I might be lying. [*excitedly*] So it's ho! for the stokehole. The second engineer is to escort me. [*looking at her watch again*] It's time. And 50 here he comes, I think. [*the SECOND ENGINEER enters. He is a husky, fine-looking man of thirty-five or so. He stops before the two and*

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tips his cap, visibly embarrassed and ill-at-ease]

SECOND ENGINEER. Miss Douglas?

MILDRED. Yes. *[throwing off her rugs and getting to her feet]* Are we all ready to start?

SECOND ENGINEER. In just a second, ma'am. I'm waiting for the Fourth. He's coming along.

MILDRED. *[with a scornful smile]* You don't care to shoulder this responsibility alone, is that it?

SECOND ENGINEER. *[forcing a smile]* Two are better than one. *[disturbed by her eyes, glances out to sea—blurts out]* A fine day we're having.

MILDRED. Is it?

SECOND ENGINEER. A nice warm breeze—

MILDRED. It feels cold to me.

SECOND ENGINEER. But it's hot enough in the sun—

MILDRED. Not hot enough for me. I don't like Nature. I was never athletic.

SECOND ENGINEER. *[forcing a smile]* Well, you'll find it hot enough where you're going.

MILDRED. Do you mean hell?

SECOND ENGINEER. *[flabbergasted, decides to laugh]* Ho-ho! No, I mean the stokehole.

MILDRED. My grandfather was a puddler. He played with boiling steel.

SECOND ENGINEER. *[all at sea—uneasily]* Is that so? Hum, you'll excuse me, ma'am, but are you intending to wear that dress?

MILDRED. Why not?

SECOND ENGINEER. You'll likely rub against oil and dirt. It can't be helped.

MILDRED. It doesn't matter. I have lots of white dresses.

SECOND ENGINEER. I have an old coat you might throw over—

MILDRED. I have fifty dresses like this. I will throw this one into the sea when I come back. That ought to wash it clean, don't you think?

SECOND ENGINEER. *[doggedly]* There's ladders to climb down that are none too clean—and dark alleyways—

MILDRED. I will wear this very dress and none other.

SECOND ENGINEER. No offense meant. It's none of my business. I was only warning you—

MILDRED. Warning? That sounds thrilling.

SECOND ENGINEER. *[looking down the deck*

—with a sigh of relief] There's the Fourth now. He's waiting for us. If you'll come—

MILDRED. Go on. I'll follow you. *[he goes.*

MILDRED *turns a mocking smile on her aunt]* 5 An oaf—but a handsome, virile oaf.

AUNT. *[scornfully]* Poser!

MILDRED. Take care. He said there were dark alleyways—

AUNT. *[in the same tone]* Poser!

10 MILDRED. *[biting her lips angrily]* You are right. But would that my millions were not so anemically chaste!

AUNT. Yes, for a fresh pose I have no doubt you would drag the name of Douglas in the

15 gutter!

MILDRED. From which it sprang. Good-by, Aunt. Don't pray too hard that I may fall into the fiery furnace.

AUNT. Poser!

20 MILDRED. *[viciously]* Old hag! *[she slaps her aunt insultingly across the face and walks off, laughing gaily]*

AUNT. *[screams after her]* I said poser!

[Curtain]

SCENE III.

SCENE—The stokehole. In the rear, the dimly outlined bulks of the furnaces and boilers. High overhead one hanging electric bulb sheds just enough light through the murky air laden with coal dust to pile up masses of shadows everywhere. A line of men, stripped to the waist, is before the furnace doors. They bend over, looking neither to right nor left, handling their shovels as if they were part of their bodies, with a strange, awkward, swinging rhythm. They use the shovels to throw open the furnace doors. Then from these fiery round holes in the black a flood of terrific light and heat pours full upon the men who are outlined in silhouette in the crouching, inhuman attitudes of chained gorillas. The men shovel with a rhythmic motion, swinging as on a pivot from the coal which lies in heaps on the floor behind to hurl it into the flaming mouths before them. There is a tumult of noise—the brazen clang of the furnace doors as they are flung open or slammed shut, the grating, teeth-gritting grind of steel against steel, of crunching coal. This clash of sound stuns one's ears with its rending dissonance. But there is order in it, rhythm, a

mechanical regulated recurrence, a tempo. And rising above all, making the air hum with the quiver of liberated energy, the roar of leaping flames in the furnaces, the monotonous throbbing beat of the engines.

As the curtain rises, the furnace doors are shut. The men are taking a breathing spell. One or two are arranging the coal behind them, pulling it into more accessible heaps. The others can be dimly made out leaning on their shovels in relaxed attitudes of exhaustion.

PADDY. [*from somewhere in the line—plaintively*] Yerra, will this devil's own watch nix it end? Me back is broke. I'm destroyed entirely. 15

YANK. [*from the center of the line—with exuberant scorn*] Aw, yuh make me sick! Lie down and croak, why don't yuh? Always beefin', dat's you! Say, dis is a cinch! Dis was made for me! It's my meat, get me! [*a whistle is blown—a thin, shrill note from somewhere overhead in the darkness. YANK curses without resentment*] Dere's dat damn engineer crackin' de whip. He tinks we're loafin'.

PADDY. [*vindictively*] God stiffen him!

YANK. [*in an exultant tone of command*] Come on, youse guys! Git into de game! She's gittin' hungry! Pile some grub in her. Trow it into her belly! Come on now, all of youse! Open her up! [*at this last all the men, who have followed his movements of getting into position, throw open their furnace doors with a deafening clang. The fiery light floods over their shoulders as they bend round for the coal. Rivulets of sooty sweat have traced maps on their backs. The enlarged muscles form bunches of high light and shadow*] 30

YANK. [*chanting a count as he shovels without seeming effort*] One—two—tree—[*his voice rising exultantly in the joy of battle*] 40 Dat's de stuff! Let her have it! All togedder now! Sling it into her! Let her ride! Shoot de piece now! Call de toin on her! Drive her into it! Feel her move! Watch her smoke! Speed, dat's her middle name! Give her coal, youse guys! Coal, dat's her booze! Drink it up, baby! Let's see yuh sprint! Dig in and gain a lap! Dere she go-o-es. [*this last in the chanting formula of the gallery gods at the six-day bike race. He slams his furnace door shut. The others do likewise with as much unison as their wearied bodies will permit. The effect is of* 50

one fiery eye after another being blotted out with a series of accompanying bangs]

PADDY. [*groaning*] Me back is broke. I'm bate out—bate—[*there is a pause. Then the* 5 *inexorable whistle sounds again from the dim regions above the electric light. There is a grouch of cursing rage from all sides*]

YANK. [*shaking his fist upward—contemptuously*] Take it easy dere, you! Who d'yuh tinks runnin' dis game, me or you? When I git ready, we move. Not before! When I git ready, get me!

VOICES. [*approvingly*] That's the stuff!

Yank tal him, py golly!

Yank ain't afeerd.

Goot poy, Yank!

Give him hell!

Tell 'im 'e's a bloody swine!

Bloody slave-driver!

YANK [*contemptuously*] He ain't got no noive. He's yellow, get me? All de engineers is yellow. Dey got streaks a mile wide. Aw, to hell with him! Let's move, youse guys. We had a rest. Come on, she needs it! Give her pep! It ain't for him. Him and his whistle, dey don't belong. But we belong, see! We gotter feed de baby! Come on! [*he turns and flings his furnace door open. They all follow his lead. At this instant the SECOND and FOURTH ENGINEERS enter from the darkness on the left with MILDRED between them. She starts, turns paler, her pose is crumbling, she shivers with fright in spite of the blazing heat, but forces herself to leave the ENGINEERS and take a few steps near the men. She is right behind YANK. All this happens quickly while the men have their backs turned*] 25 30 35

YANK. Come on, youse guys! [*he is turning to get coal when the whistle sounds again in a peremptory, irritating note. This drives YANK into a sudden fury. While the other men have turned full around and stopped dumbfounded by the spectacle of MILDRED standing there in her white dress, YANK does not turn far enough to see her. Besides, his head is thrown back, he blinks upward through the murk trying to find the owner of the whistle, he brandishes his shovel murderously over his head in one hand, pounding on his chest, gorilla-like, with the other, shouting*] 40 45 50 Toin off dat whistle! Come down outa dere, yuh yellow, brass-buttoned, Belfast bum, yuh! Come down and I'll knock

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yer brains out! Yuh lousy, stinkin', yellow mut of a Catholic-moiderin' bastard! Come down and I'll moider yuh! Pullin' dat whistle on me, huh? I'll show yuh! I'll crash yer skull in! I'll drive yer teet' down yer throat! I'll slam yer nose trou de back of yer head! I'll cut yer guts out for a nickel, yuh lousy boob, yuh dirty, crummy, muck-eatin' son of a——[suddenly he becomes conscious of all the other men staring at something directly behind his back. He whirls defensively with a snarling, murderous growl, crouching to spring, his lips drawn back over his teeth, his small eyes gleaming ferociously. He sees MILDRED, like a white apparition in the full light from the open furnace doors. He glares into her eyes, turned to stone. As for her, during his speech she has listened, paralyzed with horror, terror, her whole personality crushed, beaten in, collapsed, by the terrific impact of this unknown, abysmal brutality, naked and shameless. As she looks at his gorilla face, as his eyes bore into hers, she utters a low, choking cry and shrinks away from him, putting both hands up before her eyes to shut out the sight of his face, to protect her own. This startles YANK to a reaction. His mouth falls open, his eyes grow bewildered]

MILDRED. [about to faint—to the ENGINEERS, who now have her one by each arm—whimperingly] Take me away! Oh, the filthy beast! [she faints. They carry her quickly back, disappearing in the darkness at the left, rear. An iron door clangs shut. Rage and bewildered fury rush back on YANK. He feels himself insulted in some unknown fashion in the very heart of his pride. He roars] God damn yuh! [and hurls his shovel after them at the door which has just closed. It hits the steel bulkhead with a clang and falls clattering on the steel floor. From overhead the whistle sounds again in a long, angry, insistent command.]

[Curtain]

SCENE IV.

SCENE—The firemen's forecastle. YANK's watch has just come off duty and had dinner. Their faces and bodies shine from a soap and water scrubbing but around their eyes, where a hasty dousing does not touch, the coal dust sticks like black make-up, giving them a queer, sinister expression. YANK has not washed either

face or body. He stands out in contrast to them, a blackened, brooding figure. He is seated forward on a bench in the exact attitude of Rodin's "The Thinker." The others, most of them smoking pipes, are staring at YANK half-apprehensively, as if fearing an outburst; half-amusedly, as if they saw a joke somewhere that tickled them.

10 VOICES. He ain't ate nothin'.
Py golly, a fallar gat to gat grub in him.
Divil a lie.
Yank feeda da fire, no feeda da face.
Ha-ha.
He ain't even washed hisself.
He's forgot.
Hey, Yank, you forgot to wash.
20 YANK. [sullenly] Forgot nothin'! To hell wit washin'.
VOICES. It'll stick to you.
It'll get under your skin.
Give yer the bleedin' itch, that's wot.
It makes spots on you—like a leopard.
Like a piebald nigger, you mean.
Better wash up, Yank.
You sleep better.
Wash up, Yank.
Wash up! Wash up!
YANK. [resentfully] Aw say, youse guys. Lemme alone. Can't youse see I'm tryin' to tink?
ALL. [repeating the word after him, as one, with cynical mockery] Think! [the word has a brazen, metallic quality as if their throats were phonograph horns. It is followed by a chorus of hard, barking laughter]
YANK. [springing to his feet and glaring at them belligerently] Yes, tink! Tink, dat's what I said! What about it? [they are silent, puzzled by his sudden resentment at what used to be one of his jokes. YANK sits down again in the same attitude of "The Thinker"]
45 VOICES. Leave him alone.
He's got a grouch on.
Why wouldn't he?
50 PADDY. [with a wink at the others] Sure I know what's the matter. 'Tis aisy to see. He's fallen in love, I'm telling you.

ALL. [*repeating the word after him, as one, with cynical mockery*] Love! [*the word has a brazen, metallic quality as if their throats were phonograph horns. It is followed by a chorus of hard, barking laughter*]

YANK. [*with a contemptuous snort*] Love, hell! Hate, dat's what I've fallen in hate, get me?

PADDY. [*philosophically*] 'Twould take a wise man to tell one from the other. [*with a bitter, ironical scorn, increasing as he goes on*] But I'm telling you it's love that's in it. Sure what else but love for us poor bastes in the stokehole would be bringing a fine lady, dressed like a white quane, down a mile of ladders and steps to be havin' a look at us? [*a growl of anger goes up from all sides*]

LONG. [*jumping on a bench—hysterically*] Hinsultin' us! Hinsultin' us, the bloody cow! And them bloody engineers! What right 'as they got to be exhibitin' us 's if we was bleedin' monkeys in a menagerie? Did we sign for hinsults to our dignity as 'onest workers? Is that in the ship's articles? You kin bloody well bet it ain't! But I knows why they done it. I arsked a deck steward 'oo she was and 'e told me, 'Er old man's a bleedin' millionaire, a bloody Capitalist! 'E's got enuf bloody gold to smk this bleedin' ship! 'E makes arl the bloody steel in the world! 'E owns this bloody boat! And you and me, Comades, we're 'is slaves! And the skipper and mates and engineers, they're 'is slaves! And she's 'is bloody daughter and we're all 'er slaves, too! And she gives 'er orders as 'ow she wants to see the bloody animals below decks and down they takes 'er! [*there is a roar of rage from all sides*]

YANK. [*blinking at him bewilderedly*] Say! Wait a moment! Is all dat straight goods?

LONG. Straight as string! The bleedin' steward as waits on 'em, 'e told me about 'er. And what're we goin' ter do, I arks yer? 'Ave we got ter swaller 'er hinsults like dogs? It ain't in the ship's articles. I tell yer we got a case. We kin go ter law——

YANK. [*with abysmal contempt*] Hell! Law!

ALL. [*repeating the word after him, as one, with cynical mockery*] Law! [*the word has a brazen metallic quality as if their throats were phonograph horns. It is followed by a chorus of hard, barking laughter*]

LONG. [*feeling the ground slipping from un-*

der his feet—desperately] As voters and citizens we kin force the bloody governments——

YANK. [*with abysmal contempt*] Hell! Governments!

5 ALL. [*repeating the word after him, as one, with cynical mockery*] Governments! [*the word has a brazen metallic quality as if their throats were phonograph horns. It is followed by a chorus of hard, barking laughter*]

10 LONG. [*hysterically*] We're free and equal in the sight of God——

YANK. [*with abysmal contempt*] Hell! God!

ALL. [*repeating the word after him, as one, with cynical mockery*] God! [*the word has a*
15 *brazen metallic quality as if their throats were phonograph horns. It is followed by a chorus of hard, barking laughter*]

YANK. [*witheringly*] Aw, join de Salvation Army!

20 ALL. Sit down! Shut up! Damn fool! Sea-lawyer! [*LONG slinks back out of sight*]

PADDY. [*continuing the trend of his thoughts as if he had never been interrupted—bitterly*] And there she was standing behind us, and the
25 Second pointing at us like a man you'd hear in a circus would be saying: In this cage is a queerer kind of baboon than ever you'd find in darkest Africa. We roast them in their own sweat—and be damned if you won't hear some
30 of them saying they like it! [*he glances scornfully at YANK*]

YANK. [*with a bewildered uncertain growl*] Aw!

PADDY. And there was Yank roarin' curses
35 and turning round wid his shovel to brain her—and she looked at him, and him at her——

YANK. [*slowly*] She was all white. I thought she was a ghost. Sure.

PADDY. [*with heavy, biting sarcasm*] 'Twas
40 love at first sight, devil a doubt of it! If you'd seen the endearin' look on her pale mug when she shriveled away with her hands over her eyes to shut out the sight of him! Sure, 'twas as if she'd seen a great hairy ape escaped from
45 the Zoo!

YANK. [*stung—with a growl of rage*] Aw!

PADDY. And the loving way Yank heaved his shovel at the skull of her, only she was out the door! [*a grin breaking over his face*] 'Twas
50 touching, I'm telling you! It put the touch of home, swate home in the stokehole. [*there is a roar of laughter from all*]

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YANK. [*glaring at PADDY menacingly*] Aw, choke dat off, see!

PADDY. [*not heeding him—to the others*] And her grabbin' at the Second's arm for protection. [*with a grotesque imitation of a woman's voice*] Kiss me, Engineer dear, for it's dark down here and me old man's in Wall Street making money. Hug me tight, darlin', for I'm afeerd in the dark and me mother's on deck makin' eyes at the skipper! [*another roar of laughter*]

YANK. [*threateningly*] Say! What yuh tryin' to do, kid me, yuh old Harp?

PADDY. Divil a bit! Ain't I wishin' myself you'd brained her?

YANK. [*fiercely*] I'll brain her! I'll brain her yet, wait 'n' see! [*coming over to PADDY—slowly*] Say, is dat what she called me—a hairy ape?

PADDY. She looked it at you if she didn't say the word itself.

YANK. [*grinning horribly*] Hairy ape, huh? Sure! Dat's de way she looked at me, aw right. Hairy ape! So dat's me, huh? [*bursting into rage—as if she were still in front of him*] Yuh skinny tart! Yuh white-faced bum, yuh! I'll show yuh who's a ape! [*turning to the others, bewilderment seizing him again*] Say, youse guys. I was bawlin' him out for pullin' de whistle on us. You heard me. And den I seen youse lookin' at somep'n and I tought he'd sneaked down to come up in back of me, and I hopped round to knock him dead wit de shovel. And dere she was wit de light on her! Christ, yuh coulda pushed me over wit a finger! I was scared, get me? Sure! I tought she was a ghost, see? She was all in white like dey wrap around stiffs. You seen her. Kin yuh blame me? She didn't belong, dat's what. And den when I come to and seen it was a real skoit and seen de way she was lookin' at me—like Paddy said—Christ, I was sore, get me? I don't stand for dat stuff from nobody. And I flung de shovel—on'y she'd beat it. [*furiously*] I wished it'd banged her! I wished it'd knocked her block off!

LONG. And be 'anged for murder or 'lectrocuted? She ain't bleedin' well worth it.

YANK. I don't give a damn what! I'd be square wit her, wouldn't I? Tink I wanten let her put somep'n over on me? Tink I'm goin' to let her git away wit dat stuff? Yuh don't

know me! No one ain't never put nothin' over on me and got away wit it, see!—not dat kind of stuff—no guy and no skoit neither! I'll fix her! Maybe she'll come down again—

VOICE. No chance, Yank. You scared her out of a year's growth.

YANK. I scared her? Why de hell should I scare her? Who de hell is she? Ain't she de same as me? Hairy ape, huh? [*with his old confident bravado*] I'll show her I'm better'n her, if she on'y knew it. I belong and she don't, see! I move and she's dead! Twenty-five knots a hour, dat's me! Dat carries her but I make dat. She's on'y baggage. Sure! [*again bewilderedly*] But, Christ, she was funny lookin'!

Did yuh pipe her hands? White and skinny. Yuh could see de bones through 'em. And her mush, dat was dead white, too. And her eyes, dey was like dey'd seen a ghost. Me, dat was! Sure! Hairy ape! Ghost, huh? Look at dat arm! [*he extends his right arm, swelling out the great muscles*] I coulda took her wit dat, wit just my little finger even, and broke her in two. [*again bewilderedly*] Say, who is dat skoit, huh? What is she? What's she come from? Who made her? Who give her de noive to look at me like dat? Dis ting's got my goat right. I don't get her. She's new to me. What does a skoit like her mean, huh? She don't belong, get me! I can't see her. [*with growing anger*] But one ting I'm wise to, aw right, aw right! Youse all kin bet your shoits I'll git even wit her. I'll show her if she tinks she— She grinds de organ and I'm on de string, huh? I'll fix her! Let her come down again and I'll fling her in de furnace! She'll move den! She won't shiver at nothin', den! Speed, dat'll be her! She'll belong den! [*he grins horribly*]

PADDY. She'll never come. She's had her belly-full, I'm telling you. She'll be in bed now, I'm thinking, wid ten doctors and nurses feedin' her salts to clean the fear out of her.

YANK. [*enraged*] Yuh tink I made her sick, too, do yuh? Just lookin' at me, huh? Hairy ape, huh? [*in a frenzy of rage*] I'll fix her! I'll tell her where to git off! She'll git down on her knees and take it back or I'll bust de face 'offen her! [*shaking one fist upward and beating on his chest with the other*] I'll find yuh! I'm comin', d'yuh hear? I'll fix yuh, God damn yuh! [*he makes a rush for the door*]

VOICES. Stop him!

He'll get shot!
 He'll murder her!
 Trip him up!
 Hold him!
 He's gone crazy!
 Gott, he's strong!
 Hold him down!
 Look out for a kick!
 Pin his arms!

[*They have all piled on him and, after a fierce struggle, by sheer weight of numbers have borne him to the floor just inside the door*]

PADDY. [*who has remained detached*] Kape him down till he's cooled off. [*scornfully*] Yerra, Yank, you're a great fool. Is it payin' attention at all you are to the like of that skinny sow widout one drop of rale blood in her?

YANK. [*frenziedly, from the bottom of the heap*] She done me doit! She done me doit, didn't she? I'll git square wit her! I'll get her some way! Git offen me, youse guys! Lemme up! I'll show her who's a ape!

[*Curtain*]

SCENE V.

SCENE—*Three weeks later. A corner of Fifth Avenue in the Fifties on a fine Sunday morning. A general atmosphere of clean, well-tidied, wide street; a flood of mellow, tempered sunshine; gentle, genteel breezes. In the rear, the show windows of two shops, a jewelry establishment on the corner, a furrier's next to it. Here the adornments of extreme wealth are tantalizingly displayed. The jeweler's window is gaudy with glittering diamonds, emeralds, rubies, pearls, etc., fashioned in ornate tiaras, crowns, necklaces, collars, etc. From each piece hangs an enormous tag from which a dollar sign and numerals in intermittent electric lights wink out the incredible prices. The same in the furrier's. Rich furs of all varieties hang there bathed in a downpour of artificial light. The general effect is of a background of magnificence cheapened and made grotesque by commercialism, a background in tawdry disharmony with the clear light and sunshine on the street itself.*

Up the side street YANK and LONG come swaggering. LONG is dressed in shore clothes, wears a black Windsor tie, cloth cap. YANK is in his dirty dungarees. A fireman's cap with black

peak is cocked defiantly on the side of his head. He has not shaved for days and around his fierce, resentful eyes—as around those of LONG to a lesser degree—the black smudge of coal dust still sticks like make-up. They hesitate and stand together at the corner, swaggering, looking about them with a forced, defiant contempt.

LONG. [*indicating it all with an oratorical gesture*] Well, 'ere we are. Fit' Avenue. This 'ere's their bleedin' private lane, as ver might say. [*bitterly*] We're trespassers 'ere. Proletarians keep off the grass!

YANK. [*dully*] I don't see no grass, yuh boob. [*staring at the sidewalk*] Clean, ain't it? Yuh could eat a fried egg offen it. The white wings got some job sweepin' dis up. [*looking up and down the avenue—surlily*] Where's all de white-collar stiffs yuh said was here—and de skoits—her kind?

LONG. In church, blarst 'em! Atskin' Jesus to give 'em more money.

YANK. Choich, huh? I useter go to choich onet—sure—when I was a kid. Me old man and woman, dey made me. Dey never went demselves, dough. Always got too big a head on Sunday mornin', dat was dem. [*with a grin*] Dey was scrappers for fair, bot' of dem. On Satiday nights when dey bot' got a skinful dey could put up a bout oughter been staged at de Garden. When dey got trough dere wasn't a chair or table wit a leg under it. Or else dey bot' jumped on me for somep'n. Dat was where I loined to take punishment. [*with a grin and a swagger*] I'm a chip offen de old block, get me?

LONG. Did yer old man follow the sea?

YANK. Naw. Worked along shore. I runned away when me old lady croaked wit de tremens. I helped at truckin' and in de market. Den I shipped in de stokehole. Sure. Dat belongs. De rest was nothin'. [*looking around him*] I ain't never seen dis before. De Brooklyn waterfront, dat was where I was dragged up. [*taking a deep breath*] Dis ain't so bad at dat, huh?

LONG. Not bad? Well, we pays for it wiv our bloody sweat, if yer wants to know!

YANK. [*with sudden angry disgust*] Aw, hell! I don't see no one, see—like her. All dis gives me a pain. It don't belong. Say, ain't dere

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a back room around dis dump? Let's go shoot a ball. All dis is too clean and quiet and dinged-up, get me? It gives me a pain.

LONG. Wait and yer'll bloody well see—

YANK. I don't wait for no one. I keep on de move. Say, what yuh drag me up here for, anyway? Tyin' to kid me, yuh simp, yuh?

LONG. Yer wants to get back at 'er, don't yer? That's what yer been sayin' every bloomin' hour since she insulted yer.

YANK. [*vehemently*] Sure ting I do! Didn't I try to get even wit her in Southampton? Didn't I sneak on de deck and wait for her by de gangplank? I was gon' to spit in her pale mug, see! Sure, right in her pop eyes! Dat woulda made me even, see? But no chanet. Dere was a whole army of plameclothes bulls around. Dey spotted me and gumme de bum's rush. I never seen her. But I'll git square wit her yet, you watch! [*furiously*] De lousy tart! She tinks she kin get away wit moider—but not wit me! I'll fix her! I'll tink of a way!

LONG. [*as disgusted as he dares to be*] Ain't that why I brought yer up 'ere—to show yer? Yer been lookin' at this 'ere 'ole affair wrong, 25 Yer been actin' an' talkin' 's if it was all a bleedin' personal matter between yer and that bloody cow. I wants to convince yer she was on'y a representative of 'er class. I wants to awaken yer bloody class consciousness. Then yer'll see it's 'er class ye've got to fight, not 'er alone. There's a 'ole mob of 'em like 'er, Gawd blind 'em!

YANK. [*spitting on his hands—belligerently*] De more de merrier when I gits started. Bim 35 on de gang!

LONG. Yer'll see 'em in at a mo', when that church lets out. [*he turns and sees the window display in the two stores for the first time*] Blimev! Look at that, will yer? [*they both* 40 *walk back and stand looking in the jeweler's.*

LONG *flies into a fury*] Just look at this 'ere bloomin' mess! Just look at it! Look at the bleedin' prices on 'em—more'n our 'ole bloody stokehole makes in ten voyages sweatin' in 'ell! 45 And they—'er and 'er bloody class—buys 'em for toys to dangle on 'em! One of these 'ere would buy scoff for a starvin' family for a year!

YANK. Aw, cut de sob stuff! T' hell wit de starvin' family! Yuh'll be passin' de hat to me next. [*with naive admiration*] Say, dem tings

is pretty, huh? Bet yuh dey'd hock for a piece of change aw right. [*then turning away, bored*] But, aw hell, what good are dey? Let her have 'em. Dey don't belong no more'n she 5 does. [*with a gesture of sweeping the jeweler's into oblivion*] All dat don't count, get me?

LONG. [*who has moved to the furrier's—indignantly*] And I s'pose this 'ere don't count neither—skins of poor, 'armless animals slaugh- 10 tered so as 'er and 'ers can keep their bleedin' noses warm!

YANK. [*who has been staring at something inside—with queer excitement*] Take a slant at dat! Give it de once-over! Monkey fur—two 15 t'ousand bucks! [*bewilderedly*] Is dat straight goods—monkey fur? What de hell—?

LONG. [*bitterly*] It's straight enuf. [*with grim humor*] They wouldn't bloody well pay that for a 'airy ape's skin—no, nor for the 'ole 20 livin' ape with all 'is 'ead, and body, and soul thrown in!

YANK. [*clenching his fists, his face growing pale with rage as if the skin in the window were a personal insult*] Trowin' it up in my 25 face! Christ! I'll fix her!

LONG. [*excitedly*] Church is out. 'Ere they come, the bleedin' swine. [*after a glance at YANK'S lowering face—uncasily*] Easy goes, Comrade. Keep yer bloomin' temper. Remem- 30 ber force defeats itself. It ain't our weapon. We must impress our demands through peaceful means—the votes of the on-marching proletarians of the bloody world!

YANK. [*with abysmal contempt*] Votes, hell! 35 Votes is a joke, see. Votes for women! Let dem do it!

LONG. [*still more uncasily*] Calm, now. Treat 'em wiv the proper contempt. Observe the bleedin' parasites but 'old yer 'orses.

YANK. [*angrily*] Git away from me! Yuh're yellow, dat's what. Force, dat's me! De punch, dat's me every time, see! [*the crowd from church enter from the right, sauntering slowly and affectedly, their heads held stiffly up, looking neither to right nor left, talking in toneless, simpering voices. The women are rouged, cal- 40 cimined, dyed, overdressed to the nth degree. The men are in Prince Alberts, high hats, spats, canes, etc. A procession of gaudy marionettes, yet with something of the relentless horror of Frankenstein monsters in their detached, me- 50chanical unawareness*]

VOICES. Dear Doctor Canaphas! He is so sincere!

What was the sermon? I dozed off
About the radicals, my dear—and
the false doctrines that are being
preached

We must organize a hundred per
cent American bazaar

And let everyone contribute one
one-hundredth per cent of their
income tax.

What an original idea!

We can devote the proceeds to re-
habilitating the veil of the tem-
ple.

But that has been done so many
times.

YANK. [*glaring from one to the other of them
—with an insulting snort of scorn*] Huh! Huh!
[*without seeming to see him, they make a side-
detours to avoid the spot where he stands in
the middle of the sidewalk*]

LONG. [*frightenedly*] Keep yer bloomin'
mouth shut, I tells yer.

YANK. [*viciously*] G'wan! Tell it to Sweeney!
[*he swaggers away and deliberately lurches
into a top-hatted gentleman, then glares at him
pugnaciously*] Say, who d'yuh tink yuh're
bumpin'? Tink yuh own de oath?

GENTLEMAN. [*coldly and affectedly*] I beg
your pardon. [*he has not looked at YANK and
passes on without a glance, leaving him be-
wildered*]

LONG. [*rushing up and grabbing YANK'S arm*]
'Ere! Come away! This wasn't what I meant.
Yei'll 'ave the bloody coppers down on us

YANK. [*savagely—giving him a push that
sends him sprawling*] G'wan!

LONG. [*picks himself up—hysterically*] I'll
pop off then. This ain't what I meant. And
whatever 'appens, yer can't blame me. [*he
slinks off left*]

YANK. Thell wit youse! [*he approaches a
lady—with a vicious grin and a smirking wink*]
Hello, Kiddo. How's every little ting? Got any-
ting on for tonight? I know an old boiler down
to de docks we kin crawl into. [*the lady stalks
by without a look, without a change of pace.*
YANK turns to others—insultingly] Holy
smokes, what a mug! Go hide yuhself before de
horses shy at yuh. Gee, pipe de heine on dat
one! Say, youse, yuh look like de stoin of a

ferry-boat. Pant and powder! All dolled up to
kill! Yuh look like stills laid out for de bone-
yard! Aw, g'wan, de lot of youse! Yuh give me
de eveache. Yuh don't belong 'et me! Look
at me, why don't youse dare? I belong, dat's
me! [*pointing to a skyscraper across the street
which is in process of construction—with bra-
cado*] See dat building goin' up dere? See de
steel work? Steel, dat's me! Youse enys live on
it and tink yuh're sompin'. But I'm in it, see!
I'm de horstin' engine dat makes it go up! I'm
it—de inside and bottom of it! Sure! I'm steel
and steam and smoke and de rest of it! It moves
—speed—twenty five stories up—and me at de
top and bottom—mexin'! Yous sumps don't
move. Yuh're on'y dolls I winds up to see'm
spin! Yuh're de garbage, get me—de leavins—
de ashes we dump over de side! Now, whata
yuh gotto say? [*but as they seem neither to see
nor hear him, he flies into a fury*] Bum! Pigs!
Tarts! Bitches! [*he turns in a rage on the men,
bumping viciously into them but not jarring
them the least bit. Rather it is he who recoils
after each collision. He keeps growling*] Git off
de oath! G'wan, yuh bum! Look where yuh're
gom'—can't yuh? Git outa here! Fight, why
don't yuh? Put up yer mits! Don't be a dog!
Fight or I'll knock yuh dead! [*but, without
seeming to see him, they all answer with me-
chanical affected politeness*] I beg your pardon.
[*then at a cry from one of the women, they all
scurry to the furrier's window*]

THE WOMEN. [*ecstatically, with a gasp of de-
light*] Monkey fun! [*the whole crowd of men
and women chorus after her in the same tone of
affected delight*] Monkey fun!

YANK. [*with a jerk of his head back on his
shoulders, as if he had received a punch full in
the face—raging*] I see yuh, all in white! I see
yuh, yuh white-faced tart, yuh! Hairy ape, huh?
I'll hairy ape yuh! [*he bends down and grips
at the street curbing as if to pluck it out and
hurl it. Foiled in this, snarling with passion, he
leaps to the lamp-post on the corner and tries
to pull it up for a club. Just at that moment a
bus is heard rumbling up. A fat, high-batted,
spatted gentleman runs out from the side street.*
He calls out plaintively. "Bus! Bus! Stop there!"
and runs full tilt into the bending, straining

YANK, who is bowled off his balance]

YANK. [*seeing a fight—with a roar of joy as
he springs to his feet*] At last! Bus, huh? I'll

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bust yuh! [he lets drive a terrific swing, his fist landing full on the fat gentleman's face. But the gentleman stands unmoved as if nothing had happened]

GENTLEMAN. I beg your pardon. [then irritably] You have made me lose my bus. [he claps his hands and begins to scream] Officer! Officer! [many police whistles shrill out on the instant and a whole platoon of policemen rush in on YANK from all sides. He tries to fight but is clubbed to the pavement and fallen upon. The crowd at the window have not moved or noticed this disturbance. The clanging gong of the patrol wagon approaches with a clamoring din.]

[Curtain]

SCENE VI.

SCENE—Night of the following day. A row of cells in the prison on Blackwells Island. The cells extend back diagonally from right front to left rear. They do not stop, but disappear in the dark background as if they ran on, numberless, into infinity. One electric bulb from the low ceiling of the narrow corridor sheds its light through the heavy steel bars of the cell at the extreme front and reveals part of the interior. YANK can be seen within, crouched on the edge of his cot in the attitude of Rodin's "The Thinker." His face is spotted with black and blue bruises. A blood-stained bandage is wrapped around his head.

YANK. [suddenly starting as if awakening from a dream, reaches out and shakes the bars—aloud to himself, wonderingly] Steel. Dis is de Zoo, huh? [a burst of hard, barking laughter comes from the unseen occupants of the cells, runs back down the tier, and abruptly ceases]

VOICES. [mockingly] The Zoo? That's a new name for this coop—a damn good name!

Steel, eh? You said a mouthful. This is the old iron house.

Who is that boob talkin'?

He's the bloke they bring in out of his head. The bulls had beat him up fierce.

YANK. [dully] I musta been dreamin'. I tought I was in a cage at de Zoo—but de apes don't talk, do dey?

VOICES. [with mocking laughter] You're in a cage aw right.

A coop!

A pen!

A sty!

A kennel! [hard laughter—a pause]

Say, guy! Who are you? No, never mind lying. What are you?

Yes, tell us your sad story. What's your game?

What did they jug yuh for?

YANK. [dully] I was a fireman—stokin' on de liners. [then with sudden rage, rattling his cell bars] I'm a hairy ape, get me? And I'll bust youse all in de jaw if yuh don't lay off kiddin' me.

VOICES. Huh! You're a hard boiled duck, ain't you!

When you spit, it bounces! [laughter]

Aw, can it. He's a regular guy. Ain't you?

What did he say he was—a ape?

YANK. [defiantly] Sure ting! Ain't dat what youse all are—apes? [a silence. Then a furious rattling of bars from down the corridor]

A VOICE. [thick with rage] I'll show yuh who's a ape, yuh bum!

VOICES. Sssh! Nix!

Can de noisel

Pianol

You'll have the guard down on us!

YANK. [scornfully] De guard? Yuh mean de keeper, don't yuh? [angry exclamations from all the cells]

VOICE. [placatingly] Aw, don't pay no attention to him. He's off his nut from the beatin'-up he got. Say, you guy! We're waitin' to hear what they landed you for—or ain't yuh tellin'?

YANK. Sure, I'll tell youse. Sure! Why de hell not? On'y—youse won't get me. Nobody gets me but me, see? I started to tell de Judge and all he says was: "Toity days to tink it over." Tink it over! Christ, dat's all I been doin' for weeks! [after a pause] I was tryin' to git even wit someone, see?—someone dat done me doit.

VOICES. [cynically] De old stuff, I bet.

Your goil, huh?

Give yuh the double-cross, huh?

That's them every time!

Did yuh beat up de odder guy?

YANK. [disgustedly] Aw, yuh're all wrong!

Sure dere was a skoit in it—but not what youse mean, not dat old tripe. Dis was a new kind of skoit. She was dolled up all in white—in de stokehole. I tought she was a ghost. Sure.

[*a pause*]

VOICES. [*whispering*] Gee, he's still nutty.

Let him rave. It's fun listenin'.

YANK. [*unheeding—groping in his thoughts*] Her hands—dey was skinny and white like dey wasn't real but painted on somep'n. Dere was a million miles from me to her—twenty-five knots a hour. She was like some dead ting de cat brung in. Sure, dat's what. She didn't belong. She belonged in de window of a toy store, or on de top of a garbage can, see! Sure! [*he breaks out angrily*] But would yuh believe it, she had de noive to do me do it. She lamped me like she was seein' somep'n broke loose from de menagerie. Christ, yuh'd oughter seen her eyes! [*he rattles the bars of his cell furiously*] But I'll get back at her yet, you watch! And if I can't find her I'll take it out on de gang she runs wit. I'm wise to where dey hangs out now. I'll show her who belongs! I'll show her who's in de move and who ain't. You watch my smoke!

VOICES. [*serious and joking*] Dat's de talkin'! Take her for all she's got!

What was this dame, anyway?

Who was she, eh?

YANK. I dunno. First cabn stiff. Her old man's a millionaire, dey says—name of Douglas.

VOICES. Douglas? That's the president of the Steel Trust, I bet.

Sure. I seen his mug in de papers. He's filthy with dough

VOICE. Hey, feller, take a tip from me. If you want to get back at that dame, you better join the Wobblies. You'll get some action then.

YANK. Wobblies? What de hell's dat?

VOICE. Ain't you ever heard of the I.W.W.?

YANK. Naw. What is it?

VOICE. A gang of blokes—a tough gang. I been readin' about 'em today in the paper. The guard give me the *Sunday Times*. There's a long spiel about 'em. It's from a speech made in the Senate by a guy named Senator Queen. [*he is in the cell next to YANK'S. There is a rustling of paper*] Wait'll I see if I got light enough and I'll read you. Listen. [*he reads*] "There is a menace existing in this country to-

day which threatens the vitals of our fair Republic—as foul a menace against the very lifeblood of the American Eagle as was the foul conspiracy of Catiline against the eagles of ancient Rome!"

VOICE. [*disgustedly*] Aw, hell! Tell him to salt de tail of dat eagle!

VOICE. [*reading*] "I refer to that devil's brew of rascals, jailbirds, murderers, and cutthroats who libel all honest working men by calling themselves the Industrial Workers of the World, but in the light of their notorious plots, I call them the Industrious Wreckers of the World!"

YANK. [*with vengeful satisfaction*] Wreckers, dat's de right dope! Dat belongs! Me for dem!

VOICE. Ssshh! [*reading*] "This fiendish organization is a foul ulcer on the fair body of our Democracy——"

VOICE. Democracy, hell! Give him the boid, fellers—the raspberry! [*they do*]

VOICE. Ssshh! [*reading*] "Like Cato I say to this Senate, the I.W.W. must be destroyed! For they represent an ever-present dagger pointed at the heart of the greatest nation the world has ever known, where all men are born free and equal, with equal opportunities to all, where the Founding Fathers have guaranteed to each one happiness, where Truth, Honor, Liberty, Justice, and the Brotherhood of Man are a religion absorbed with one's mother's milk, taught at our father's knee, sealed, signed, and stamped in the glorious Constitution of these United States!" [*a perfect storm of hisses, cat-calls, boos, and hard laughter*]

VOICES. [*scornfully*] Hurrah for de Fort' of July!

Pass de hat!

Liberty!

Justice!

Honor!

Opportunity!

Brotherhood!

ALL. [*with abysmal scorn*] Aw, hell!

VOICE. Give the Queen Senator guy the bark! All togedder now—one—two—three—— [*a terrific chorus of barking and yapping*]

GUARD. [*from a distance*] Quiet there, youse—or I'll git the hose. [*the noise subsides*]

YANK. [*with growling rage*] I'd like to catch dat senator guy alone for a second. I'd loin him some trute!

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VOICE. Sssh! Here's where he gits down to cases on the Wobblies. [reads] "They plot with fire in one hand and dynamite in the other. They stop not before murder to gain their ends, nor at the outraging of defenseless womanhood. They would tear down society, put the lowest scum in the seats of the mighty, turn Almighty God's revealed plan for the world topsy-turvy, and make of our sweet and lovely civilization a shambles, a desolation where man, God's masterpiece, would soon degenerate back to the ape!"

VOICE. [to YANK] Hey, you guy. There's your ape stuff again.

YANK. [with a growl of fury] I got him. So dey blow up tings, do they? Dey turn tings round, do dey? Hey, lend me dat paper, will yuh?

VOICE. Sure. Give it to him. On'y keep it to yourself, see? We don't wanten listen to no more of that slop.

VOICE. Here you are. Hide it under your mattress.

YANK. [reaching out] Tanks. I can't read much but I kin manage. [he sits, the paper in the hand at his side, in the attitude of Rodin's "The Thinker." A pause. Several snores from down the corridor. Suddenly YANK jumps to his feet with a furious groan as if some appalling thought had crashed on him—bewilderedly] Sure—her old man—president of de Steel Trust—makes half de steel in de world—steel—where I thought I belonged—drivin' trou—movin'—in dat—to make her—and cage me in for her to spit on! Christ! [he shakes the bars of his cell door till the whole tier trembles. Irritated, protesting exclamations from those awakened or trying to get to sleep] He made dis—dis cage! Steel! It don't belong, dat's what! Cages, cells, locks, bolts, bars—dat's what it means!—holdin' me down with him at de top! But I'll drive trou! Fire, dat melts it! I'll be fire—under de heap—fire dat never goes out—hot as hell—breakin' out in de night— [while he has been saying this last he has shaken his cell door to a clanging accompaniment. As he comes to the "breakin' out" he seizes one bar with both hands and, putting his two feet up against the others so that his position is parallel to the floor like a monkey's, he gives a great wrench backwards. The bar bends like a licorice stick under his tremendous

strength. Just at this moment the PRISON GUARD rushes in, dragging a hose behind him]

GUARD. [angrily] I'll loin youse bums to wake me up! [sees YANK] Hello, it's you, huh? Got the D.T.s., hey? Well, I'll cure 'em. I'll drown your snakes for yuh! [noticing the bar] Hell, look at dat bar bended! On'y a bug is strong enough for dat!

YANK. [glaring at him] Or a hairy ape, yuh big yellow bum! Look out! Here I come! [he grabs another bar]

GUARD. [scared now—yelling off left] Toin de hose on, Ben!—full pressure! And call de others—and a straitjacket [the curtain is falling. As it hides YANK from view, there is a splattering smash as the stream of water hits the steel of YANK's cell.]

[Curtain]

SCENE VII.

SCENE—Nearly a month later. An I.W.W. local near the waterfront, showing the interior of a front room on the ground floor, and the street outside. Moonlight on the narrow street, buildings massed in black shadow. The interior of the room, which is general assembly room, office, and reading room, resembles some dingy settlement boys' club. A desk and high stool are in one corner. A table with paper, stacks of pamphlets, chairs about it, is at center. The whole is decidedly cheap, banal, commonplace, and unmysterious as a room could well be. The SECRETARY is perched on the stool making entries in a large ledger. An eye shade casts his face into shadows. Eight or ten MEN, LONG-SHOREMEN, IRON WORKERS, and the like, are grouped about the table. Two are playing checkers. One is writing a letter. Most of them are smoking pipes. A big signboard is on the wall at the rear, "Industrial Workers of the World—Local No. 57." YANK comes down the street outside. He is dressed as in Scene V. He moves cautiously, mysteriously. He comes to a point opposite the door; tiptoes softly up to it, listens, is impressed by the silence within, knocks carefully, as if he were guessing at the password to some secret rite. Listens. No answer. Knocks again a bit louder. No answer. Knocks impatiently, much louder.

SECRETARY. [turning around on his stool] What the devil is that—someone knocking?

[*shouts*] Come in, why don't you? [*all the men in the room look up. YANK opens the door slowly, gingerly, as if afraid of an ambush. He looks around for secret doors, mystery, is taken aback by the commonplaceness of the room and the men in it, thinks he may have gotten in the wrong place, then sees the signboard on the wall and is reassured*]

YANK. [*blurts out*] Hello

MEN. [*reservedly*] Hello

YANK. [*more easily*] I tought I'd bumped into de wrong dump.

SECRETARY. [*scrutinizing him carefully*] Maybe you have. Are you a member?

YANK. Naw, not yet. Dat's what I come for—to join.

SECRETARY. That's easy. What's your job—longshore?

YANK. Naw. Fireman—stoker on de liners.

SECRETARY. [*with satisfaction*] Welcome to our city. Glad to know you people are waking up at last. We haven't got many members in your line.

YANK. Naw. Dey're all dead to de world.

SECRETARY. Well, you can help to wake 'em. What's your name? I'll make out your card.

YANK. [*confused*] Name? Lemme tink.

SECRETARY. [*sharply*] Don't you know your own name?

YANK. Sure; but I been just Yank for so long—Bob, dat's it—Bob Smith.

SECRETARY. [*writing*] Robert Smith. [*fills out the rest of card*] Here you are. Cost you half a dollar.

YANK. Is dat all—four bits? Dat's easy [*gives the SECRETARY the money*]

SECRETARY. [*throwing it in drawer*] Thanks. Well, make yourself at home. No introductions needed. There's literature on the table. Take some of those pamphlets with you to distribute aboard ship. They may bring results. Sow the seeds, only go about it right. Don't get caught and fired. We got plenty out of work. What we need is men who can hold their jobs—and work for us at the same time.

YANK. Sure. [*but he still stands, embarrassed and uneasy*]

SECRETARY. [*looking at him—curiously*] What did you knock for? Think we had a coon in uniform to open doors?

YANK. Naw. I tought it was locked—and dat yuh'd wanter give me the once-over trou a

peephole or somep'n to see if I was right.

SECRETARY [*alert and suspicious but with an easy laugh*] Think we were running a crap game? That door is never locked. What put that in your nut?

YANK [*with a knowing grin, convinced that this is all camouflage, a part of the secrecy*] Dis bung is full of bulls, ain't it?

SECRETARY [*sharply*] What have the cops got to do with us? We're breaking no laws.

YANK [*with a knowing wink*] Sure. Youse wouldn't for woilds. Sure, I'm wise to dat.

SECRETARY. You seem to be wise to a lot of stuff none of us knows about.

YANK [*with another wink*] Aw, dat's aw right, see. [*then made a bit resentful by the suspicious glances from all sides*] Aw, can it! Youse needn't put me trou de tord degree. Can't youse see I belong? Sure! I'm reg'lar. I'll stick, get me? I'll shoot de works for youse. Dat's why I wanted to join in.

SECRETARY. [*brezily, feeling him out*] That's the right spirit. Only are you sure you understand what you've joined? It's all plain and aboveboard, still, some guys get a wrong slant on us. [*sharply*] What's your notion of the purpose of the I.W.W.?

YANK. Aw, I know all about it.

SECRETARY. [*sarcastically*] Well, give us some of your valuable information.

YANK. [*cunningly*] I know enough not to speak outa my toin. [*then resentfully again*] Aw, say! I'm reg'lar. I'm wise to de game. I know yuh got to watch your step wit a stranger. For all youse know, I might be a plain-clothes dick, or somep'n, dat's what yuh're tinkin', huh? Aw, forget it! I belong, see? Ask any guy down to de docks if I don't.

SECRETARY. Who said you didn't?

YANK. After I'm 'nitiated, I'll show yuh.

SECRETARY. [*astounded*] 'Nitiated? There's no initiation.

YANK. [*disappointed*] Ain't there no pass-word—no grip nor nothin'?

SECRETARY. What'd you think this is—the Elks—or the Black Hand?

YANK. De Elks, hell! De Black Hand, dey're a lot of yellow backstickin' Ginees.³ Naw. Dis is a man's gang, ain't it?

SECRETARY. You said it! That's why we stand

³ Italians.

on our two feet in the open. We got no secrets.

YANK. *[surprised but admiringly]* Yuh mean to say yuh always run wide open—like dis?

SECRETARY. Exactly.

YANK. Den yuh sure got your noive wit youse!

SECRETARY. *[sharply]* Just what was it made you want to join us? Come out with that straight.

YANK. Yuh call me? Well, I got noive, too! Here's my hand. Yuh want'er blow tings up, dont' yuh? Well, dat's me! I belong!

SECRETARY. *[with pretended carelessness]* You mean change the unequal conditions of society by legitimate direct action—or with dynamite?

YANK. Dynamite! Blow it offen de oith—steel—all de cages—all de factories, steamers, buildings, jails—de Steel Trust and all dat makes it go.

SECRETARY. So—that's your idea, eh? And did you have any special job in that line you wanted to propose to us? *[he makes a sign to the men, who get up cautiously one by one and group behind YANK]*

YANK. *[boldly]* Sure, I'll come out wit it. I'll show youse I'm one of de gang. Dere's dat millionaire guy, Douglas—

SECRETARY. President of the Steel Trust, you mean? Do you want to assassinate him?

YANK. Naw, dat don't get yuh nothin'. I mean blow up de factory, de woiks, where he makes de steel. Dat's what I'm after—to blow up de steel, knock all de steel in de woild up to de moon. Dat'll fix tings! *[eagerly, with a touch of bravado]* I'll do it by me lonesome! I'll show yuh! Tell me where his woiks is, how to git there, all de dope. Gimme de stuff, de old butter—and watch me do de rest! Watch de smoke and see it move! I don't give a damn if dey nab me—long as it's done! I'll soive life for it—and give 'em de laugh! *[half to himself]* And I'll write her a letter and tell her de hairy ape done it. Dat'll square tings.

SECRETARY. *[stepping away from YANK]* Very interesting. *[he gives a signal. The men, huskies all, throw themselves on YANK and before he knows it they have his legs and arms pinioned. But he is too flabbergasted to make a struggle, anyway. They feel him over for weapons]*

MAN. No gat, no knife. Shall we give him

what's what and put the boots to him?

SECRETARY. No. He isn't worth the trouble we'd get into. He's too stupid. *[he comes closer and laughs mockingly in YANK's face]* Ho-ho!

5 By God, this is the biggest joke they've put up on us yet. Hey, you Joke! Who sent you—Burns or Pinkerton?⁴ No, by God, you're such a bonthead I'll bet you're in the Secret Service! Well, you dirty spy, you rotten agent provocator, you can go back and tell whatever skunk is paying you blood-money for betraying your brothers that he's wasting his coin. You couldn't catch a cold. And tell him that all he'll ever get on us, or ever has got, is just his own sneaking plots that he's framed up to put us in jail. We are what our manifesto says we are, neither more nor less—and we'll give him a copy of that any time he calls. And as for you
10 —*[he glares scornfully at YANK, who is sunk in an oblivious stupor]* Oh, hell, what's the use of talking? You're a brainless ape.

YANK. *[aroused by the word to fierce but futile struggles]* What's dat, yuh Sheeny bum, yuh!

25 SECRETARY. Throw him out, boys. *[in spite of his struggles, this is done with gusto and éclat. Propelled by several parting kicks, YANK lands sprawling in the middle of the narrow cobbled street. With a growl he starts to get up and storm the closed door, but stops bewildered by the confusion of his brain, pathetically impotent. He sits there, brooding, in as near to the attitude of Rodin's "Thinker" as he can get in his position]*

35 YANK. *[bitterly]* So dem hoids don't tink I belong, neider. Aw, to hell with 'em! Dey're in de wrong pew—de same old bull—soapboxes and Salvation Army—no guts! Cut out an hour offen de job a day and make me happy! Gimme 40 a dollar more a day and make me happy! Tree square a day, and cauliflow'ers in de front yard—ekal rights—a woman and kids—a lousy vote—and I'm all fixed for Jesus, huh? Aw, hell! What does dat get yuh? Dis ting's in your inside, but it ain't your belly. Feedin' your face—sinkers and coffee—dat don't touch it. It's way down—at de bottom. Yuh can't grab it, and yuh can't stop it. It moves, and everyting moves. It stops and de whole woild stops. Dat's me now—I don't tick, see?—I'm a busted In-

⁴ detective agencies.

gersoll,² dat's what. Steel was me, and I owned de woild. Now I ain't steel, and de woild owns me. Aw, hell! I can't see—it's all dark, get me? It's all wrong! [*he turns a bitter mocking face up like an ape gibbering at the moon*] Say, youse up dere, Man in de Moon, yuh look so wise, gimme de answer, huh? Slip me de inside dope, de information right from de stable—where do I get off at, huh?

A POLICEMAN. [*who has come up the street in time to hear this last—with grim humor*] You'll get off at the station, you boob, if you don't get up out of that and keep movin'.

YANK. [*looking up at him—with a hard, bitter laugh*] Sure! Lock me up! Put me in a cage! Dat's de on'y answer yuh know. G'wan, lock me up!

POLICEMAN. What you been doin'?

YANK. Enuf to gimme hfe for! I was born, see? Sure, dat's de charge. Write it in de blotter. I was born, get me?

POLICEMAN. [*jocosely*] God pity your old woman! [*then matter-of-fact*] But I've no time for kidding. You're soused. I'd run you in but it's too long a walk to the station. Come on now, get up, or I'll fan your ears with this club. Beat it now! [*he hauls YANK to his feet*]

YANK. [*in a vague mocking tone*] Say, where do I go from here?

POLICEMAN. [*giving him a push—with a grin, indifferently*] Go to hell.

[*Curtain*]

SCENE VIII.

SCENE—Twilight of the next day. The monkey house at the Zoo. One spot of clear gray light falls on the front of one cage so that the interior can be seen. The other cages are vague, shrouded in shadow from which chatterings pitched in a conversational tone can be heard. On the one cage a sign from which the word "gorilla" stands out. The gigantic ANIMAL himself is seen squatting on his haunches on a bench in much the same attitude as Rodin's "Thinker."

YANK enters from the left. Immediately a chorus of angry chattering and screeching breaks out. The GORILLA turns his eyes but makes no sound or move.

² a low-priced watch.

YANK. [*with a hard, bitter laugh*] Welcome to your city, huh? Hail, hail, de gang's all here! [*at the sound of his voice the chattering dies away into an attentive silence*] YANK walks up to the GORILLA's cage and, leaning over the railing, stares in at its occupant, who stares back at him, silent and motionless. There is a pause of dead stillness. Then YANK begins to talk in a friendly confidential tone, half-mockingly, but with a deep undercurrent of sympathy] Say, yuh're some hard lookin' guy, ain't yuh? I seen lots of tough nuts dat de gang called gorillas, but yuh're de foist real one I ever seen. Some chest yuh got, and shoulders, and dem arms and mits! I bet yuh got a punch in eider fist dat'd knock 'em all silly! [*this with genuine admiration. The GORILLA, as if he understood, stands upright, swelling out his chest and pounding on it with his fist*] YANK grins sympathetically.] Sure, I get yuh. Yuh challenge de whole woild, huh? Yuh got what I was sayin' even if yuh muffed de woilds. [*then bitterness creeping in*] And why wouldn't yuh get me? Ain't we both members of de same club—de Hairy Apes? [*they stare at each other—a pause—then YANK goes on slowly and bitterly*] So yuh're what she seen when she looked at me, de white-faced tart! I was you to her, get me? On'y outa de cage—broke out—free to moider her, see? Sure! Dat's what she tought. She wasn't wise dat I was in a cage, too—worser'n yours—sure—a damn sight—'cause you got some chanct to bust loose—but me— [*he grows confused*] Aw, hell! It's wrong, ain't it? [*a pause*] I s'pose yuh wanter know what I'm doin' here, huh? I been warmin' a bench down to de Battery—ever since last night. Sure. I seen de sun come up. Dat was pretty, too—all red and pink and green. I was lookin' at de skyscrapers—steel—and all de ships comin' in, sailin' out, all over de oith—and dey was steel, too. De sun was warm, dey wasn't no clouds, and dere was a breeze blowin'. Sure, it was great stuff. I got it aw right—what Paddy said about dat bein' de right dope—on'y I couldn't get in it, see? I couldn't belong in dat. It was over my head. And I kept tinkin'—and den I beat it up here to see what youse was like. And I waited till dey was all gone to git yuh alone. Say, how d'yuh feel sittin' in dat pen all de time, havin' to stand for 'em comin' and starin' at yuh—de white-faced, skinny tarts and de

boobs what marry 'em—makin' fun of yuh, laughin' at yuh, gittin' scared of yuh—damn 'em! [*he pounds on the rail with his fist. The CORILLA rattles the bars of his cage and snarls. All the other monkeys set up an angry chattering in the darkness. YANK goes on excitedly*] Sure! Dat's de way it hits me, too. On'y yuh're lucky, see? Yuh don't belong wit 'em and yuh know it. But me, I belong wit 'em—but I don't, see? Dey don't belong wit me, dat's what. Get me? Tinkin' is hard—[*he passes one hand across his forehead with a painful gesture. The CORILLA growls impatiently. YANK goes on gropingly*] It's dis way, what I'm drivin' at. Youse can sit and dope dream in de past, green woods, de jungle, and de rest of it. Den yuh belong and dey don't. Den yuh kin laugh at 'em, see? Yuh're de champ of de woild. But me—I ain't got no past to tink in, nor nothin' dat's comin', on'y what's now—and dat don't belong. Sure, you're de best off! Yuh can't tink, can yuh? Yuh can't talk neider. But I kin make a bluff at talkin' and tinkin'—a'most git away wit it—a'most!—and dat's where de joker comes in. [*he laughs*] I ain't on oath and I ain't in heaven, get me? I'm in de middle tryin' to separate 'em, takin' all de woist punches from bot' of 'em. Maybe dat's what dey call hell, huh? But you, yuh're at de bottom. You belong! Sure! Yuh're de on'y one in de woild dat does, yuh lucky stiff! [*the CORILLA growls proudly*] And dat's why dey gotter put yuh in a cage, see? [*the CORILLA roars angrily*] Sure! Yuh get me. It beats it when you try to tink it or talk it—it's way down—deep—behind—you 'n' me we feel it. Sure! Bot' members of dis club! [*he laughs—then in a savage tone*] What de hell! T' hell wit it! A little action, dat's our meat! Dat belongs! Knock 'em down and keep bustin' 'em till dey croaks yuh wit a gat—wit steel! Sure! Are yuh game? Dey've looked at youse, ain't dey—in a cage? Wanter git even? Wanter wind up like a sport 'stead of croakin' slow in dere? [*the CORILLA roars an emphatic affirmative. YANK goes on with a sort of furious exaltation*] Sure! Yuh're reg'lar. Yuh'll stick to de finish! Me 'n' you, huh?—bot' members of this club! We'll put up one last star bout dat'll knock 'em

offen deir seats! Dey'll have to make de cages stronger after we're trou! [*the CORILLA is straining at his bars, growling, hopping from one foot to the other. YANK takes a jimmy from under his coat and forces the lock on the cage door. He throws this open*] Pardon from de governor! Step out and shake hands! I'll take yuh for a walk down Fif' Avenoo. We'll knock 'em offen de oath and croak wit de band playin'. Come on, Brother. [*the CORILLA scrambles gingerly out of his cage. Goes to YANK and stands looking at him. YANK keeps his mocking tone—holds out his hand*] Shake—de secret grip of our order. [*something, the tone of mockery, perhaps, suddenly enrages the ANIMAL. With a spring he wraps his huge arms around YANK in a murderous hug. There is a crackling snap of crushed ribs—a gasping cry, still mocking, from YANK*] Hey, I didn't say kiss me! [*the CORILLA lets the crushed body slip to the floor; stands over it uncertainly, considering; then picks it up, throws it in the cage, shuts the door, and shuffles off menacingly into the darkness at left. A great uproar of frightened chattering and whimpering comes from the other cages. Then YANK moves, groaning, opening his eyes, and there is silence. He mutters painfully*] Say—dey oughter match him—wit Zybszko.⁶ He got me, aw right. I'm trou. Even him didn't tink I belonged. [*then, with sudden passionate despair*] Christ, where do I get off at? Where do I fit in? [*checking himself as suddenly*] Aw, what de hell! No squawkin', see! No quittin', get me! Croak wit your boots on! [*he grabs hold of the bars of the cage and hauls himself painfully to his feet—looks around him bewilderedly—forces a mocking laugh*] In de cage, huh? [*in the strident tones of a circus barker*] Ladies and gents, step forward and take a slant at de one and only—[*his voice weakening*]—one and original—Hairy Ape from de wilds of—[*he slips in a heap on the floor and dies. The monkeys set up a chattering, whimpering wail. And, perhaps, the Hairy Ape at last belongs.*]

[*Curtain*]

⁶ a contemporary champion wrestler.

WINTER*

MAXWELL ANDERSON

Anderson (1888-) attended North Dakota and Stanford universities, earned an M.A. degree, and taught English for a while. After a period of editorial writing for San Francisco and New York papers, he tried the drama, and with his second effort, *What Price Glory?* (with Laurence Stallings), won a reputation which has been growing ever since. He is a prolific author. *Saturday's Children* was a commercial success, and his historical studies (see I, 405) have won the approval of critics and public alike. Anderson is a careful and thoughtful writer who has definite ideas about the theater, especially on the nature of tragedy. The *Winterset* story (he had done an earlier sketch of Sacco) is a fitting example of its author's ideas and style. Anderson's revival of verse (which must be accepted as a device to make manifest the inherent dignity in normally inarticulate people) is an interesting departure. Like O'Neill, Anderson wrestles with grand themes and, unlike him, often succeeds in showing man capable of great moments, even comic moments, in a confused existence. He has been condemned for writing too much too fast, but his best works insure his position at present as the second most significant name in the contemporary American theater.

Characters

TROCK	HERMAN
SHADOW	LUCIA
GARTH	PINY
MIRIAMNE	A SAILOR

* This play is reprinted by arrangement with Anderson House, publishers.

ESDIAS	STREET URCHIN
THE HOBO	POLICEMAN
1ST GIRL	RADICAL
2ND GIRL	SERGEANT
JUDGE GAUNT	Non speaking
MIO	URCHINS
CARR	TWO MEN IN BLUE SERGE

ACT I

SCENE I.

SCENE—The scene is the bank of a river under a bridgehead. A gigantic span starts from the rear of the stage and appears to lift over the heads of the audience and out to the left. At the right rear is a wall of solid supporting masonry. To the left an apartment building abuts against the bridge and forms the left wall of the stage with a dark basement window and a door in the brick wall. To the right, and in the foreground, an outcropping of original rock makes a barricade behind which one may enter through a cleft. To the rear, against the masonry, two sheds have been built by waifs and strays for shelter. The river bank, in the foreground, is black rock worn smooth by years of trampling. There is room for exit and entrance to the left around the apartment house, also around the rock to the right. A single street lamp is seen at the left—and a glimmer of apartment lights in the background beyond. It is an early, dark December morning.

TWO YOUNG MEN IN SERGE lean against the masonry, matching bills. TROCK and SHADOW come in from the left.

TROCK. Go back and watch the car. [The TWO YOUNG MEN go out. TROCK walks to the corner and looks toward the city]

You roost of punks and gulls! Sleep, sleep it off,
whatever you had last night, get down in warm,
one big ham-fat against another—sleep,
cling, sleep and rot! Rot out your pasty guts
with diddling, you had no brain to begin. If
you had
there'd be no need for us to sleep on iron
who had too much brains for you.

SHADOW. Now look, Trock, look,
what would the warden say to talk like that?

TROCK. May they die as I die!
By God, what life they've left me
they shall keep me well! I'll have that out of
them—

these pismires that walk like men!

SHADOW. Because, look, chief,
it's all against science and penology
for you to get out and begin to cuss that way
before your prison vittles are out of you. Hell,
you're supposed to leave the pen full of high
thought,

kind of noble-like, loving toward all mankind,
ready to kiss their feet—or whatever parts
they stick out toward you. Look at me!

TROCK. I see you.

And even you may not live as long as you
think.

You think too many things are funny. Well,
laugh.

But it's not so funny.

SHADOW. Come on, Trock, you know me.
Anything you say goes, but give me leave
to kid a little.

TROCK. Then laugh at somebody else!

It's a lot safer! They've soaked me once too
often

in that vat of poisoned hell they keep up-state
to soak men in, and I'm rotten inside, I'm all
one liquid puke inside where I had lungs
once, like yourself! And now they want to get
me

and stir me in again—and that'd kill me—
and that's fine for them. But before that hap-
pens to me

a lot of these healthy boys'll know what it's like
when you try to breathe and have no place to
put air—

they'll learn it from me!

SHADOW. They've got nothing on you, chief.

TROCK. I don't know yet. That's what I'm
here to find out.

If they've got what they might have

it's not a year this time—

no, nor ten. It's screwed down under a lid.—
I can die quick enough, without help.

SHADOW. You're the skinny kind
that lives forever.

TROCK. He gave me a half a year,
the doc at the gate.

SHADOW. Jesus.

TROCK. Six months I get,
and the rest's dirt, six feet. [LUCIA, the street-
piano man, comes in right from behind the
rock and goes to the shed where he keeps his
piano. PINY, the apple-woman, follows and
stands in the entrance. LUCIA speaks to ES-
TRELLA, who still stands facing SHADOW]

LUCIA. Morning. [TROCK and SHADOW go out
round the apartment house without speaking]

PINY. Now what would you call them?

LUCIA. Maybe someting da river washed up.

PINY. Nothing ever washed him—that black
one.

LUCIA. Maybe not, maybe so. More like his
pa and ma raise-a heem in da cella. [He wheels
out the piano]

PINY. He certainly gave me a turn. [She lays
a hand on the rock]

LUCIA. You don' live-a right, o' gal. Take
heem easy. Look on da bright-a side. Never
say-a die. Me, every day in every way I getta
be da regular heller. [He starts out]

[Curtain]

SCENE II.

SCENE—A cellar apartment under the apart-
ment building, floored with cement and roofed
with huge boa constrictor pipes that run slant-
wise from left to right, dwarfing the room. An
outside door opens to the left and a door at the
right rear leads to the interior of the place. A
low squat window to the left. A table at the
rear and a few chairs and books make up the
furniture. GARTH, son of ESDRAS, sits alone,
holding a violin upside down to inspect a crack
at its base. He lays the bow on the floor and
runs his fingers over the joint. MIRIAMNE en-
ters from the rear, a girl of fifteen. GARTH
looks up, then down again.

MIRIAMNE. Garth—

GARTH. The glue lets go. It's the steam,
I guess.

It splits the hair on your head.

MIRIAMNE. It can't be mended?

GARTH. I can't mend it.

No doubt there are fellows somewhere
who'd mend it for a dollar—and glad to do it. 5
That is if I had a dollar.—Got a dollar?
No, I thought not.

MIRIAMNE. Garth, you've sat at home here
three days now. You haven't gone out at all.
Something frightens you.

GARTH. Yes?

MIRIAMNE. And father's frightened.
He reads without knowing where. When a
shadow falls
across the page he waits for a blow to follow 15
after the shadow. Then in a little while
he puts his book down softly and goes out
to see who passed.

GARTH. A bill collector, maybe.

We haven't paid the rent

MIRIAMNE. No.

GARTH. You're a bright girl, sis.—
You see too much. You run along and cook.
Why don't you go to school?

MIRIAMNE. I don't like school.

They whisper behind my back.

GARTH. Yes? about what?

MIRIAMNE. What did the lawyer mean that
wrote to you?

GARTH. [*rising*] What lawyer?

MIRIAMNE. I found a letter
on the floor of your room. He said, "Don't get
me wrong,

but stay in out of the rain the next few days,
just for instance."

GARTH. I thought I burned that letter.

MIRIAMNE. Afterward you did. And then
what was printed
about the Estrella gang—you hid it from me,
you and father. What is it—about this 40
murder—?

GARTH. Will you shut up, you fool!

MIRIAMNE. But if you know
why don't you tell them, Garth?
If it's true—what they say—
you knew all the time Romagna wasn't guilty,
and could have said so—

GARTH. Everybody knew
Romagna wasn't guilty! But they weren't
listening
to evidence in his favor. They didn't want it.
They don't want it now.

MIRIAMNE. But was that why
they never called on you?—

GARTH. So far as I know
they never'd heard of me—and I can assure
you

I knew nothing about it—

MIRIAMNE. But something's wrong—
and it worries father—

GARTH. What could be wrong?

10 MIRIAMNE. I don't know.

[*A pause*]

GARTH. And I don't know. You're a good
kid, Miriamne,

but you see too many movies. I wasn't mixed
up

in any murder, and I don't mean to be.
If I had a dollar to get my fiddle fixed
and another to hire a hall, by God I'd fiddle
some of the prodigies back into Sunday School

20 where they belong, but I won't get either, and
so

I sit here and bite my nails—but if you hoped
I had some criminal romantic past
you'll have to look again!

25 MIRIAMNE. Oh, Garth, forgive me—
But I want you to be so far above such things
nothing could frighten you. When you seem
to shrink

and be afraid, and you're the brother I love,

30 I want to run there and cry, if there's any
question

they care to ask, you'll be quick and glad to
answer,

for there's nothing to conceal

35 GARTH. And that's all true—

MIRIAMNE. But then I remember—

how you dim the lights—

and we go early to bed—and speak in
whispers—

40 and I could think there's a death somewhere
behind us—

an evil death—

GARTH. [*hearing a step*] Now for God's sake,
be quiet!

45 ESDRAS, *an old rabbi with a kindly face,*
enters from the outside. He is hurried and
troubled

ESDRAS. I wish to speak alone with someone
50 here

if I may have this room. Miriamne—

MIRIAMNE. [*turning to go*] Yes, father. [*The*

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outer door is suddenly thrown open. TROCK appears]
TROCK. [after a pause] You'll excuse me for not knocking. [SHADOW follows TROCK in] Sometimes it's best to come in quiet. Sometimes it's a good way to go out. Garth's home, I see. He might not have been here if I made a point of knocking at doors.
GARTH. How are you, Trock?
TROCK. I guess you can see how I am. [To MIRIAMNE] Stay here. Stay where you are. We'd like to make your acquaintance. —If you want the facts I'm no better than usual, thanks. Not enough 15 sun, my physician tells me. Too much close confinement. A lack of exercise and an overplus of beans in the diet. You've done well, no 20 doubt?
GARTH. I don't know what makes you think so.
TROCK. Who's the family?
GARTH. My father and my sister.
TROCK. Happy to meet you. Step inside a minute. The boy and I have something to talk about.
ESDRAS. No, no—he's said nothing—nothing, sir, nothing!
TROCK. When I say go out, you go—
ESDRAS. [pointing to the door] Miriamne—
GARTH. Go on out, both of you!
ESDRAS. Oh, sir—I'm old—old and unhappy—
GARTH. Go on! [MIRIAMNE and ESDRAS go inside]
TROCK. And if you listen I'll riddle that door! [SHADOW shuts the door behind them and stands against it] 40 I just got out, you see, and I pay my first call on you.
GARTH. Maybe you think I'm not in the same jam you are.
TROCK. That's what I do think. Who started looking this up?
GARTH. I wish I knew, and I wish he was in hell! Some damned professor with nothing else to do. If you saw his stuff 50 you know as much as I do.
TROCK. It wasn't you turning state's evidence?
GARTH. Hell, Trock, use your brain! The case was closed. They burned Romagna for it 5 and that finished it. Why should I look for trouble and maybe get burned myself?
TROCK. Boy, I don't know, but I just thought I'd find out.
10 GARTH. I'm going straight, Trock. I can play this thing, and I'm trying to make a living. I haven't talked and nobody's talked to me. Christ—it's the last thing I'd want!
TROCK. Your old man knows.
GARTH. That's where I got the money that last time when you needed it. He had a little saved up, but I had to tell him to get it. He's as safe 20 as Shadow there.
TROCK. [looking at SHADOW] There could be people safer than that son-of-a-bitch.
SHADOW. Who?
25 TROCK. You'd be safer dead along with some other gorillas.
SHADOW. It's beginning to look as if you'd feel safer with everybody dead, the whole god-damn world.
30 TROCK. I would. These Jesus-bitten professors! Looking up their half-ass cases! We've got enough without that.
GARTH. There's no evidence to reopen the thing.
35 TROCK. And suppose they called on you and asked you to testify?
GARTH. Why then I'd tell 'em that all I know is what I read in the papers. And I'd stick to that.
40 TROCK. How much does your sister know?
GARTH. I'm honest with you, Trock. She read my name in the professor's pamphlet, and she was scared the way anybody would be. She got nothing 45 from me, and anyway she'd go to the chair herself before she'd send me there.
TROCK. Like hell.
GARTH. Besides, who wants to go to trial again 50 except the radicals?—You and I won't spill and unless we did there's nothing to take to court

as far as I know. Let the radicals go on howling about getting a dirty deal. They always howl and nobody gives a damn. This professor's red—

everybody knows it.

TROCK. You're forgetting the judge.

Where's the damn judge?

GARTH. What judge?

TROCK. Read the morning papers.

It says Judge Gaunt's gone off his nut. He's got that damn trial on his mind, and been going round

proving to everybody he was right all the time and the radicals were guilty—stopping people in the street to prove it—and now he's nuts entirely

and nobody knows where he is.

GARTH. Why don't they know?

TROCK. Because he's on the loose somewhere!

They've got the police of three cities looking for him.

GARTH. Judge Gaunt?

TROCK. Yes, Judge Gaunt.

SHADOW. Why should that worry you?

He's crazy, ain't he? And even if he wasn't he's arguing on your side. You're jittery, chief. God, all the judges are looney. You've got the jitters,

and you'll damn well give yourself away some time

peeing yourself in public. [TROCK half turns toward SHADOW in anger] Don't jump the gun now,

I've got pockets in my clothes, too. [His hand is in his coat pocket]

TROCK. All right. Take it easy. [He takes his hand from his pocket, and SHADOW does the same. To GARTH]

Maybe you're lying to me and maybe you're not.

Stay at home a few days.

GARTH. Sure thing. Why not?

TROCK. And when I say stay home I mean stay home.

If I have to go looking for you you'll stay a long time

wherever I find you.

[To SHADOW] Come on. We'll get out of here.

[To GARTH] Be seeing you. [SHADOW and TROCK go out. After a pause GARTH walks over to his chair and picks up the violin. Then he puts it down and goes to the inside door, which

he opens]

GARTH. He's gone.

MIRIAMNE enters, ESDRAS behind her

5 MIRIAMNE. [going up to GARTH] Let's not stay here. [She puts her hands on his arms]

I thought he'd come for something—horrible. Is he coming back?

GARTH. I don't know.

MIRIAMNE. Who is he, Garth?

GARTH. He'd kill me if I told you who he is, that is, if he knew.

MIRIAMNE. Then don't say it—

15 GARTH. Yes, and I'll say it! I was with a gang one time

that robbed a pay roll. I saw a murder done, and Trock Estrella did it. If that got out I'd go to the chair and so would he—that's why

20 he was here today—

MIRIAMNE. But that's not true—

ESDRAS. He says it to frighten you, child.

25 GARTH. Oh, no I don't! I say it because I've held it in too long! I'm damned if I sit here forever and look at the door, waiting for Trock with his sub-machine gun, waiting

30 for police with a warrant!—I say I'm damned, and I am,

no matter what I do! These piddling scales on a violin—first position, third, fifth, arpeggios in E—and what I'm thinking

35 is Romagna dead for the murder—dead while I sat here

dying inside—dead for the thing Trock did while I looked on—and I could have saved him, yes—

40 but I sat here and let him die instead of me because I wanted to live! Well, it's no life, and it doesn't matter who I tell, because I mean to get it over!

MIRIAMNE. Garth, it's not true!

45 GARTH. I'd take some scum down with me if I died—

that'd be one good deed—

ESDRAS. Son, son, you're mad—someone will hear—

50 GARTH. Then let them hear! I've lived with ghosts too long, and lied too long. God damn you if you keep me

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from the truth!— [*He turns away*]

Oh, God damn the world!

I don't want to die! [*He throws himself down*]

ESDRAS. I should have known.

I thought you hard and sullen,

Garth, my son. And you were a child, and hurt with a wound that might be healed.

—All men have crimes,

and most of them are hidden, and many are heavy

as yours must be to you. [*GARTH sobs*] They walk the streets

to buy and sell, but a spreading crimson stain tinges the inner vestments, touches flesh,

and burns the quick. You're not alone

GARTH. I'm alone

in this.

ESDRAS. Yes, if you hold with the world that only

those who die suddenly should be revenged.

But those whose hearts are cancered, drop by drop

in small ways, little by little, till they've borne all they can bear, and die—these deaths will go unpunished now as always. When we're young we have faith in what is seen, but when we're old

we know that what is seen is traced in air and built on water. There's no guilt under heaven,

just as there's no heaven, till men believe it—no earth, till men have seen it, and have a word to say this is the earth.

GARTH. Well, I say there's an earth,

and I say I'm guilty on it, guilty as hell.

ESDRAS. Yet till it's known you bear no guilt at all—

unless you wish. The days go by like film,

like a long written scroll, a figured veil

unrolling out of darkness into fire

and utterly consumed. And on this veil,

running in sounds and symbols of men's minds reflected back, life flickers and is shadow

going toward flame. Only what men can see exists in that shadow. Why must you rise and

cry out:

That was I, there in the ravelled tapestry,

there, in that pistol flash, when the man was killed.

I was there, and was one, and am bloodstained!

Let the wind

and fire take that hour to ashes out of time

and out of mind! This thing that men call justice,

this blind snake that strikes men down in the dark,

5 mindless with fury, keep your hand back from it,

pass by in silence—let it be forgotten, forgotten!—

Oh, my son, my son—have pity!

10 MIRIAMNE. But if it was true

and someone died—then it was more than shadow—

and it doesn't blow away—

GARTH. Well, it was true.

15 ESDRAS. Say it if you must. If you have heart to die,

say it, and let them take what's left—there was little

to keep, even before—

20 GARTH. Oh, I'm a coward—

I always was. I'll be quiet and live. I'll live even if I have to crawl. I know. [*He gets up and goes into the inner room*]

MIRIAMNE. Is it better

25 to tell a lie and live?

ESDRAS. Yes, child. It's better.

MIRIAMNE. But if I had to do it—

I think I'd die.

ESDRAS. Yes, child. Because you're young.

30 MIRIAMNE. Is that the only reason?

ESDRAS. The only reason.

[*Curtain*]

SCENE III.

SCENE—*Under the bridge, evening of the same day. When the curtain rises MIRIAMNE is sitting alone on the ledge at the rear of the apartment house. A spray of light falls on her from a street lamp above. She shivers a little in her thin coat, but sits still as if heedless of the weather. Through the rocks on the other side a TRAMP comes down to the river bank, hunting a place to sleep. He goes softly to the apple-woman's hut and looks in, then turns away, evidently not daring to preempt it. He looks at MIRIAMNE doubtfully. The door of the street-piano man is shut. The vagabond passes it and picks carefully among some rags and shavings to the right. MIRIAMNE looks up and sees him but makes no sign. She looks down*

again, and the man curls himself up in a make-shift bed in the corner, pulling a piece of sack-
ing over his shoulders. TWO GIRLS come in
round the apartment house.

1ST GIRL. Honest, I never heard of anything
so romantic. Because you never liked him.

2ND GIRL. I certainly never did.

1ST GIRL. You've got to tell me how it hap-
pened. You've got to.

2ND GIRL. I couldn't. As long as I live I
couldn't. Honest, it was terrible. It was terrible.

1ST GIRL. What was so terrible?

2ND GIRL. The way it happened.

1ST GIRL. Oh, please—not to a soul, never!

2ND GIRL. Well, you know how I hated him
because he had such a big mouth. So he
reached over and grabbed me, and I began all
falling to pieces inside, the way you do—and I
said, "Oh no you don't mister," and started
screaming and kicked a hole through the wind-
shield and lost a shoe, and he let go and was
cursing and growling because he borrowed the
car and didn't have money to pay for the wind-
shield, and he started to cry, and I got so
sorry for him I let him, and now he wants to
marry me.

1ST GIRL. Honest, I never heard of anything
so romantic! [*She sees the sleeping TRAMP*]
My God, what you won't see! [*They give the*
TRAMP a wide berth, and go out right. The
TRAMP sits up looking about him. JUDGE GAUNT,
an elderly, quiet man, well dressed but in
clothes that have seen some weather, comes in
uncertainly from the left. He holds a small clip-
ping in his hand and goes up to the HOB]

GAUNT. [*tentatively*] Your pardon, sir. Your
pardon, but perhaps you can tell me the name
of this street.

HOB. Huh?

GAUNT. The name of this street?

HOB. This ain't no street.

GAUNT. There, where the street lamps are.

HOB. That's the alley.

GAUNT. Thank you. It has a name, no doubt?

HOB. That's the alley.

GAUNT. I see. I won't trouble you. You won-
der why I ask, I daresay.—I'm a stranger.—
Why do you look at me? [*He steps back*] I—
I'm not the man you think. You've mistaken
me, sir.

HOB. Huh?

JUDGE. Perhaps misled by a resemblance.
But you're mistaken—I had an errand in this
city. It's only by accident that I'm here—

HOB. [*muttering*] You go to hell.

5 JUDGE. [*going nearer to him, bending over*
him] Yet why should I deceive you? Before
God, I held the proofs in my hands. I hold them
still. I tell you the defense was cunning beyond
belief, and unscrupulous in its use of propa-
10 ganda—they gagged at nothing—not even—
[*He rises*] No, no—I'm sorry—this will hardly
interest you. I'm sorry. I have an errand. [*He*
looks toward the street. ISDRAS enters from the
basement and goes to MIRIAMNE. The JUDGE
15 *steps back into the shadows*]

ISDRAS. Come in, my daughter. You'll be
cold here.

MIRIAMNE. After a while.

ISDRAS. You'll be cold. There's a storm
20 coming.

MIRIAMNE. I didn't want him to see me cry-
ing. That was all.

ISDRAS. I know.

MIRIAMNE. I'll come soon. [*ISDRAS turns re-*
25 *luctantly and goes out the way he came.*
MIRIAMNE rises to go in, pausing to dry her
eyes. MIO and CARR, road boys of seventeen
or so, come round the apartment house. The
JUDGE has disappeared]

30 CARR. Thought you said you were never
coming east again.

MIO. Yeah, but—I heard something changed
my mind.

CARR. Same old business?

35 MIO. Yes, just as soon not talk about it.

CARR. Where did you go from Portland?

MIO. Fishing—I went fishing. God's truth.

CARR. Right after I left?

MIO. Fell in with a fisherman's family on
40 the coast and went after the beautiful mackerel
fish that swim in the beautiful sea. Family of
Greeks—Aristides Marinos was his lovely name.
He sang while he fished. Made the pea-green
Pacific ring with his bastard Greek chanties.
45 Then I went to Hollywood High School for a
while.

CARR. I'll bet that's a seat of learning.

MIO. It's the hind end of all wisdom. They
kicked me out after a time.

CARR. For cause?

MIO. Because I had no permanent address,
you see. That means nobody's paying school

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taxes for you, so out you go. [To MIRIAMNE]
What's the matter, Kid?

MIRIAMNE. Nothing. [*She looks up at him, and they pause for a moment*] Nothing.

MIO. I'm sorry.

MIRIAMNE. It's all right. [*She withdraws her eyes from his and goes out past him. He turns and looks after her*]

CARR. Control your chivalry.

MIO. A pretty kid.

CARR. A baby.

MIO. Wait for me.

CARR. Be a long wait? [MIO steps swiftly out after MIRIAMNE, then returns] Yeah?

MIO. She's gone.

CARR. Think of that.

MIO. No, but I mean—vanished. Presto—into nothing—prodigioso.

CARR. Damn good thing, if you ask me. The homely ones are bad enough, but the lookers 20 are fatal.

MIO. You exaggerate, Carr.

CARR. I doubt it.

MIO. Well, let her go. This river bank's loaded with typhus rats, too. Might as well 25 die one death as another.

CARR. They say chronic alcoholism is nice but expensive. You can always starve to death.

MIO. Not always. I tried it. After the second day I walked thirty miles to Niagara Falls and made a tour of the plant to get the sample of shredded wheat biscuit on the way out.

CARR. Last time I saw you you couldn't think of anything you wanted to do except curse God and pass out. Still feeling low?

MIO. Not much different. [*He turns away, then comes back*] Talk about the lost generation, I'm the only one fits that title. When the State executes your father, and your mother dies of grief, and you know damn well he was innocent, and the authorities of your home town politely inform you they'd consider it a favor if you lived somewhere else—that cuts you off from the world—with a meat-axe.

CARR. They asked you to move?

MIO. It came to that.

CARR. God, that was white of them.

MIO. It probably gave them a headache just to see me after all that agitation. They knew as well as I did my father never staged a holdup. Anyway, I've got a new interest in life now.

CARR. Yes—I saw her.

MIO. I don't mean the skirt.—No, I got wind of something, out west, some college professor investigating the trial and turning up 5 new evidence. Couldn't find anything he'd written out there, so I beat it east and arrived on this blessed island just in time to find the bums holing up in the public library for the winter. I know now what the unemployed have been doing since the depression started. They've been catching up on their reading in the main reference room. Man, what a stench! Maybe I stank, too, but a hobo has the stench of ten because his shoes are poor.¹

15 CARR. Tennyson.

MIO. Right. Jeez, I'm glad we met up again! Never knew anybody else that could track me through the driven snow of Victorian literature.

CARR. Now you're cribbing from some half-forgotten criticism of Ben Jonson's Roman plagiarisms.

MIO. Where did you get your education, sap?

CARR. Not in the public library, sap. My father kept a news-stand.

MIO. Well, you're right again. [*There is a faint rumble of thunder*] What's that? Winter thunder?

CARR. Or Mister God, beating on His little tocsin. Maybe announcing the advent of a new social order.

MIO. Or maybe it's going to rain coffee and doughnuts

CARR. Or maybe it's going to rain.

35 MIO. Seems more likely. [*Lowering his voice*] Anyhow, I found Professor Hobhouse's discussion of the Romagna case. I think he has something. It occurred to me I might follow it up by doing a little sleuthing on my own account.

CARR. Yes?

MIO. I have done a little. And it leads me to somewhere in that tenement house that backs up against the bridge. That's how I happen to 45 be here.

CARR. They'll never let you get anywhere with it, Mio. I told you that before.

MIO. I know you did.

CARR. The State can't afford to admit it was

¹ a parody of Tennyson's "Sir Galahad":
"My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure."

wrong, you see. Not when there's been that much of a row kicked up over it. So for all practical purposes the State was right and your father robbed the payroll.

MIO. There's still such a thing as evidence.

CARR. It's something you can buy. In fact, at the moment I don't think of anything you can't buy, including life, honor, virtue, glory, public office, conjugal affection and all kinds of justice, from the traffic court to the immortal nine. Go out and make yourself a pot of money and you can buy all the justice you want. Convictions obtained, convictions averted. Lowest rates in years

MIO. I know all that

CARR. Sure

MIO. This thing didn't happen to you. They've left you your name and whatever place you can take. For my heritage

they've left me one thing only, and that's to be my father's voice crying up out of the earth and quicklime where they stuck him. Electro-cution

doesn't kill, you know. They eviscerate them with a turn of the knife in the dissecting room. The blood spurts out. The man was alive. Then into

the lime pit, leave no trace. Make it short shift and chemical dissolution. That's what they thought

of the man that was my father. Then my mother—

I tell you these county burials are swift and cheap and run for profit! Out of the house and into the ground, you wife of a dead dog.

Wait, here's some Romagna spawn left. Something crawls here—

something they called a son. Why couldn't he die

along with his mother? Well, ease him out of town,

ease him out, boys, and see you're not too gentle.

He might come back. And, by their own living Jesus,

I will go back, and hang the carrion around their necks that made it!

Maybe I can sleep then.

Or even live.

CARR. You have to try it?

MIO. Yes.

Yes. It won't let me alone. I've tried to live and forget it—but I was birthmarked with hot iron

into the entrails. I've got to find out who did it and make them see it till it scalds their eyes and make them admit it till their tongues are blistered with saying how black they lied!

HERMAN, a gawky shoe salesman, enters from the left

HERMAN. Hello. Did you see a couple of girls go this way?

CARR. Couple of girls? Did we see a couple of girls?

MIO. No.

CARR. No. No girls. [HERMAN hesitates, then goes out right. LUCIA comes in from the left, trundling his piano. PINKY follows him, weeping]

PINKY. They've got no right to do it—

LUCIA. All right, hell what, no matter, I got to put him away, I got to put him away, that's what the hell! [TWO STREET URCHINS follow him in]

PINKY. They want everybody on the relief rolls and nobody making a living?

LUCIA. The cops, they do what the big boss say. The big boss, that's the mayor, he says he heard it once too often, the sextette—

PINKY. They want graft, that's all. It's a new way to get graft—

LUCIA. Oh, no, no, no! He's a good man, the mayor. He's just don't care for music, that's all.

PINKY. Why shouldn't you make a living on the street? The National Biscuit Company ropes off Eighth Avenue—and does the mayor do anything? No, the police hit you over the head if you try to go through!

LUCIA. You got the big dough, you get the pull, fine. No big dough, no pull, what the hell, get off the city property! Tomorrow I start cooking chestnuts . . . [He strokes the piano fondly. The two girls and HERMAN come back from the right] She's a good little machine, this baby. Cost plenty—and two new records I only played twice. See this one. [He starts turning the crank, talking while he plays] Two weeks

since they play this one in a picture house. [A SAILOR wanders in from the left. One of the STREET URCHINS begins suddenly to dance a

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wild rumba, the others watch] Good boy—see, it's a lulu—it itches in the feet! [HERMAN, standing with his girl, tosses the boy a penny. He bows and goes on dancing; the other URGHIN joins him. The SAILOR tosses a coin]

SAILOR. Go it, Cuba! Go it! [LUCIA turns the crank, beaming]

2ND GIRL. Oh, Herman! [She throws her arms round HERMAN and they dance]

1ST URGHIN. Hey, pipe the professionals!

1ST GIRL. Do your glide, Shirley! Do your glide!

LUCIA. Maybe we can't play in front, maybe we can play behind! [The hobo gets up from his nest and comes over to watch. A YOUNG RADICAL wanders in] Maybe you don't know, folks! Tonight we play good-bye to the piano! Good-bye forever! No more piano on the streets! No more music! No more money for the music-man! Last time, folks! Good-bye to the piano—good-bye forever! [MIRIAMNE comes out the rear door of the apartment and stands watching. THE SAILOR goes over to the 1ST GIRL and they dance together] Maybe you don't know, folks! Tomorrow will be sad as hell, tonight we dance! Tomorrow no more Verdi, no more rumba, no more good time! Tonight we play good-bye to the piano, good-bye forever! [The RADICAL edges up to MIRIAMNE, and asks her to dance. She shakes her head and he goes to PINY, who dances with him. The hobo begins to do a few lonely curvets on the side above] Hoy! Hoy! Pick 'em up and take 'em around! Use the head, use the feet! Last time forever! [He begins to sing to the air]

MIO. Wait for me, will you?

CARR. Now's your chance. [MIO goes over to MIRIAMNE and holds out a hand, smiling. She stands for a moment uncertain, then dances with him. ESDRAS comes out to watch. JUDGE GAUNT comes in from the left. There is a rumble of thunder]

LUCIA. Hoy! Hoy! Maybe it rains tonight, maybe it snows tomorrow! Tonight we dance good-bye. [He sings the air lustily. A POLICEMAN comes in from the left and looks on. TWO OR THREE PEDESTRIANS follow him]

POLICEMAN. Hey you! [LUCIA goes on singing] Hey, you!

LUCIA. [still playing] What you want?

POLICEMAN. Sign off!

LUCIA. What you mean? I get off the street!

POLICEMAN. Sign off!

LUCIA. [still playing] What you mean? [The POLICEMAN walks over to him. LUCIA stops playing and the DANCERS pause]

5 POLICEMAN. Cut it.

LUCIA. Is this a street?

POLICEMAN. I say cut it out. [The HOBO goes back to his nest and sits in it, watching]

LUCIA. It's the last time. We dance good-bye to the piano.

POLICEMAN. You'll dance good-bye to something else if I catch you cranking that thing again.

LUCIA. All right.

15 PINY. I'll bet you don't say that to the National Biscuit Company!

POLICEMAN. Lady, you've been selling apples on my beat for some time now, and I said nothing about it—

20 PINY. Selling apples is allowed—

POLICEMAN. You watch yourself—[He takes a short walk around the place and comes upon the HOBO] What are you doing here? [The HOBO opens his mouth, points to it, and shakes his head] Oh, you are, are you? [He comes back to LUCIA] So you trundle your so-called musical instrument to wherever you keep it, and don't let me hear it again. [The RADICAL leaps on the base of the rock at night. The 1ST GIRL turns away from the SAILOR toward the 2ND GIRL and HERMAN]

SAILOR. Hey, captain, what's the matter with the music?

POLICEMAN. Not a thing, admiral.

35 SAILOR. Well, we had a little party going here—

POLICEMAN. I'll say you did.

2ND GIRL. Please, officer, we want to dance.

POLICEMAN. Go ahead. Dance.

40 2ND GIRL. But we want music!

POLICEMAN. [turning to go] Sorry. Can't help you.

RADICAL. And there you see it, the perfect example of capitalistic oppression! In a land where music should be free as air and the arts should be encouraged, a uniformed minion of the rich, a guardian myrmidon of the Park Avenue pleasure hunters, steps in and puts a limit on the innocent enjoyments of the poor! We don't go to theatres! Why not? We can't afford it! We don't go to night clubs, where women dance naked and the music drips from saxo-

phones and leaks out of Rudy Vallee—we can't afford that either!—But we might at least dance on the river bank to the strains of a barrel organ—! [GARTH comes out of the apartment and listens]

POLICEMAN. It's against the law!

RADICAL. What law? I challenge you to tell me what law of God or man—what ordinance—is violated by this spontaneous diversion? None! I say none! An official whim of the masters who should be our servants!—

POLICEMAN. Get down! Get down and shut up!

RADICAL. By what law, by what ordinance do you order me to be quiet?

POLICEMAN. Speaking without a flag. You know it.

RADICAL. [pulling out a small American flag] There's my flag! There's the flag of this United States which used to guarantee the rights of man—the rights of man now violated by every third statute of the commonwealth—

POLICEMAN. Don't try to pull tricks on me! I've seen you before! You're not making any speech, and you're climbing down—

JUDGE GAUNT [who has come quietly forward]. One moment, officer. There is some difference of opinion even on the bench as to the elasticity of police power when applied in minor emergencies to preserve civil order. But the weight of authority would certainly favor the defendant in any equitable court, and he would be upheld in his demand to be heard.

POLICEMAN. Who are you?

JUDGE GAUNT. Sir, I am not accustomed to answer that question.

POLICEMAN. I don't know you.

GAUNT. I am a judge of some standing, not in your city but in another with similar statutes. You are aware, of course, that the bill of rights is not to be set aside lightly by the officers of any municipality—

POLICEMAN. [looking over GAUNT's somewhat bedraggled costume] Maybe they understand you better in the town you come from, but I don't get your drift.—[To the RADICAL] I don't want any trouble, but if you ask for it you'll get plenty. Get down!

RADICAL. I'm not asking for trouble, but I'm staying right here. [The POLICEMAN moves towards him]

GAUNT. [taking the POLICEMAN's arm, but

shaken off roughly] I ask this for yourself, truly, not for the dignity of the law nor the maintenance of precedent. Be gentle with them when their threats are childish—be tolerant while you can—for your least harsh word will return on you in the night—return in a storm of cries!—[He takes the POLICEMAN's arm again] Whatever they may have said or done, let them disperse in peace! It is better that they go softly, lest when they are dead you see their eyes pleading, and their outstretched hands touch you, fingering cold on your heart!—I have been harsher than you. I have sent men down that long corridor into blinding light and blind darkness! [He suddenly draws himself erect and speaks defiantly] And it was well that I did so! I have been an upright judge! They are all liars! Liars!

POLICEMAN. [shaking GAUNT off so that he falls] Why, you fool, you're crazy!

GAUNT. Yes, and there are liars on the force! They came to me with their shifty lies! [He catches at the POLICEMAN, who pushes him away with his foot]

POLICEMAN. You think I've got nothing better to do than listen to a crazy fool?

1ST GIRL. Shame, shame!

POLICEMAN. What have I got to be ashamed of? And what's going on here, anyway? Where in hell did you all come from?

RADICAL. Tread on him! That's right! Tread down the poor and the innocent! [There is a protesting murmur in the crowd]

SAILOR. [moving in a little] Say, big boy, you don't have to step on the guy.

POLICEMAN. [facing them, stepping back] What's the matter with you! I haven't stepped on anybody!

MIO. [at the right, across from the POLICEMAN]

Listen now, fellows, give the badge a chance. He's doing his job, what he gets paid to do, the same as any of you. They're all picked men, these metropolitan police, hand picked for loyalty and a fine up-standing pair of shoulders on their legs—it's not so easy to represent the law. Think what he does for all of us, stamping out crime!

Do you want to be robbed and murdered in your beds?

SAILOR. What's eating you?

RADICAL. He must be a capitalist.

THE DRAMA · MAXWELL ANDERSON

MIO. They pluck them fresh, from Ireland, and a paucity of headpiece is a prime prerequisite. You from Ireland, buddy?

POLICEMAN. [*stirly*] Where are you from?

MIO. Buddy, I tell you flat

I wish I was from Ireland, and could boast some Tammany connections. There's only one drawback

about working on the force. It infects the brain, it eats the cerebrum. There've been cases known,

fine specimens of manhood, too, where autopsies,

conducted in approved scientific fashion, revealed conditions quite incredible

in policemen's upper layers. In some, a trace, in others, when they've swung a stick too long, there was nothing there!—but nothing! Oh, my friends,

this fine athletic figure of a man that stands so grim before us, what will they find

when they saw his skull for the last inspection?

I fear me a little puffball dust will blow away rejoining earth, our mother—and this same dust,

this smoke, this ash on the wind, will represent all he had left to think with!

THE HOBO. Hooray! [*The POLICEMAN turns on his heel and looks hard at the HOBO, who slinks away*]

POLICEMAN. Oh, yeah?

MIO. My theme

gives ears to the deaf and voice to the dumb! But now

forgive me if I say you were most unkind in troubling the officer. He's a simple man of simple tastes, and easily confused when faced with complex issues. He may reflect on returning home, that is, so far as he is capable of reflection, and conclude that he was kidded out of his uniform pants, and in his fury when this dawns on him may smack his wife down!

POLICEMAN. That'll be about enough from you, too, professor!

MIO. May I say that I think you have managed this whole situation rather badly, from the beginning?—

POLICEMAN. You may not!

THOCK slips in from the background. The TWO YOUNG MEN IN SERGE come with him

5 MIO. Oh, but your pardon, sir! It's apparent to the least competent among us that you should have gone about your task more subtly—the glove of velvet, the hand of iron, and all that sort of thing—

10 POLICEMAN. Shut that hole in your face!

MIO. Sir, for that remark I shall be satisfied with nothing less than an unconditional apology! I have an old score to settle with policemen, brother, because they're fools and fat-heads, and you're one of the most fatuous fat-heads that ever walked his feet flat collecting graft! Tell that to your sergeant back in the booby-hatch.

POLICEMAN. Oh, you want an apology, do you? You'll get an apology out of the other side of your mouth! [*He steps toward MIO. CARR suddenly stands in his path*] Get out of my way! [*He pauses and looks round him; the crowd looks less and less friendly. He lays a hand on his gun and backs to a position where there is nobody behind him*] Get out of here, all of you! Get out! What are you trying to do—start a riot?

MIO. There now, that's better! That's in the best police tradition. Incite a riot yourself and then accuse the crowd.

POLICEMAN. It won't be pleasant if I decide to let somebody have it! Get out! [*The onlookers begin to melt away. The SAILOR goes out left with the GIRLS and HERMAN. CARR and MIO go out right, CARR whistling "The Star Spangled Banner." The HOBO follows them. The RADICAL walks past with his head in the air. FINY and LUCIA leave the piano where it stands and slip away to the left. At the end the POLICEMAN is left standing in the center, the JUDGE near him. ESDRAS stands in the doorway. MIRIAMNE is left sitting half in shadow and unseen by ESDRAS*]

JUDGE GAUNT. [*to the POLICEMAN*] Yes, but should a man die, should it be necessary that one man die for the good of many, make not yourself the instrument of death, lest you sleep to wake sobbing! Nay, it avails nothing that you are the law—this delicate ganglion that is the brain, it will not bear these things—! [*The POLICEMAN gives the JUDGE the once-over, shrugs, decides to leave him there and starts*

out left. GARTH goes to his father—a fine sleet begins to fall through the street lights. TROCK is still visible]

GARTH. Get him in here, quick.

ESDRAS. Who, son?

GARTH. The Judge, damn him!

ESDRAS. Is it Judge Gaunt?

GARTH. Who did you think it was? He's crazy as a bedbug and telling the world. Get him inside! *[He looks round]*

ESDRAS. *[going up to GAUNT]* Will you come in, sir?

GAUNT. You will understand, sir. We old men know how softly we must proceed with these things.

ESDRAS. Yes, surely, sir

GAUNT. It was always my practice—always. They will tell you that of me where I am known. Yet even I am not free of regret—even I. Would you believe it?

ESDRAS. I believe we are none of us free of regret.

GAUNT. None of us? I would it were true. I would I thought it were true

ESDRAS. Shall we go in, sir? This is sleet that's falling.

GAUNT. Yes. Let us go in. *[ESDRAS, GAUNT and GARTH enter the basement and shut the door. TROCK goes out with his men. After a pause MIO comes back from the right, alone. He stands at a little distance from MIRIAMNE]*

MIO. Looks like rain. *[She is silent]*
You live around here? *[She nods gravely]*
I guess

you thought I meant it—about waiting here to meet me. *[She nods again]*

I'd forgotten about it till I got that winter across the face. You'd better go inside.

I'm not your kind. I'm nobody's kind but my own.

I'm waiting for this to blow over. *[She rises]* I lied. I meant it—

I meant it when I said it—but there's too much black

whirling inside me—for any girl to know.

So go on in. You're somebody's angel child and they're waiting for you.

MIRIAMNE. Yes. I'll go. *[She turns]*

MIO. And tell them
when you get inside where it's warm,
And you love each other,
and mother comes to kiss her darling, tell them

to hang on to it while they can, believe while they can

it's a warm safe world, and Jesus finds his lambs and carries them in his bosom. —I've seen some lambs

5 that Jesus missed. If they ever want the truth tell them that nothing's guaranteed in this climate

except it gets cold in winter, not on this earth except you die sometime. *[He turns away]*

MIRIAMNE. I have no mother

And my people are Jews.

MIO. Then you know something. I bet it

MIRIAMNE. Yes.

15 MIO. Do you have enough to eat?

MIRIAMNE. Not always.

MIO. What do you believe in?

MIRIAMNE. Nothing.

MIO. Why?

20 MIRIAMNE. How can one?

MIO. It's easy if you're a fool. You see the words

in books. Honor, it says there, chivalry, free dom,

25 heroism, enduring love—and these

are words on paper. It's something to have them there.

You'll get them nowhere else.

MIRIAMNE. What hurts you?

30 MIO. Just that.

You'll get them nowhere else

MIRIAMNE. Why should you want them?

MIO. I'm alone, that's why. You see those lights,

35 along the river, cutting across the rain—?

those are the hearths of Brooklyn, and up this way

the love-nests of Manhattan—they turn their points

40 like knives against me—outcast of the world,

snake in the streets.—I don't want a hand-out. I sleep and eat.

MIRIAMNE. Do you want me to go with you?

MIO. Where?

45 MIRIAMNE. Where you go.

[A pause. He goes nearer to her]

MIO. Why, you god-damned little fool—what made you say that?

MIRIAMNE. I don't know.

50 MIO. If you have a home stay in it. I ask for nothing. I've schooled myself

THE DRAMA · MAXWELL ANDERSON

to ask for nothing, and take what I can get,
and get along. If I fell for you, that's my look-
out,

and I'll starve it down.

MIRIAMNE. Wherever you go, I'd go.

MIO. What do you know about loving?

How could you know?

Have you ever had a man?

MIRIAMNE. [*after a slight pause*] No. But I
know.

Tell me your name.

MIO. Mio. What's yours?

MIRIAMNE. Miriamne.

MIO. There's no such name.

MIRIAMNE. But there's no such name as Mio! 15
M.I.O. It's no name.

MIO. It's for Bartolomeo.

MIRIAMNE. My mother's name was Miriam,
so they called me Miriamne.

MIO. Meaning little Miriam?

MIRIAMNE. Yes.

MIO. So now little Miriamne will go in
and take up quietly where she dropped them
all

her small housewifely cares.—When I first saw 25
you,

not a half-hour ago, I heard myself saying,
this is the face that launches ships for me—
and if I owned a dream—yes, half a dream—
we'd share it. But I have no dream. This earth
came tumbling down from chaos, fire and rock,
and bred up worms, blind worms that sting
each other

here in the dark. These blind worms of the
earth

took out my father—and killed him, and set a
sign

on me—the heir of the serpent—and he was a
man

such as men might be if the gods were men— 40
but they killed him—

as they'll kill all others like him

till the sun cools down to the stabler molecules,
yes, till men spin their tent-worm webs to the
stars

and what they think is done, even in the think-
ing,

and they are the gods, and immortal, and con-
stellations

turn for them all like mill wheels—still as they 50
are

they will be, worms and blind. Enduring love,

oh gods and worms, what mockery!—And yet
I have blood enough in my veins. It goes like
music,

singing, because you're here. My body turns
5 as if you were the sun, and warm. This men
called love

in happier times, before the Freudians taught
us

to blame it on the glands. Only go in
10 before you breathe too much of my atmosphere
and catch death from me.

MIRIAMNE. I will take my hands
and weave them to a little house, and there
you shall keep a dream—

MIO. God knows I could use a dream
and even a house.

MIRIAMNE. You're laughing at me, Mio!

MIO. The worms are laughing.

I tell you there's death about me

20 and you're a child! And I'm alone and half mad
with hate and longing. I shall let you love me
and love you in return, and then, why then
God knows what happens!

MIRIAMNE. Something most unpleasant?

MIO. Love in a box car—love among the
25 children.

I've seen too much of it. Are we to live

in this same house you make with your two
hands

30 mystically, out of air?

MIRIAMNE. No roof, no mortgage!

Well, I shall marry a baker out in Flatbush,
it gives hot bread in the morning! Oh, Mio,
Mio,

35 in all the unwanted places and waste lands
that roll up into the darkness out of sun
and into sun out of dark, there should be one
empty

for you and me.

MIO. No.

MIRIAMNE. Then go now and leave me.

I'm only a girl you saw in the tenements,
and there's been nothing said.

MIO. Miriamne. [*She takes a step toward*
45 *him*]

MIRIAMNE. Yes. [*He kisses her lips lightly*]

MIO. Why, girl, the transfiguration on the
mount

was nothing to your face. It lights from
within—

a white chalice holding fire, a flower in flame,
this is your face.

MIRIAMNE. And you shall drink the flame
and never lessen it. And round your head
the aureole shall burn that burns there now,
forever. This I can give you. And so forever
the Freudians are wrong.

MIO. They're well-forgotten
at any rate.

MIRIAMNE. Why did you speak to me
when you first saw me?

MIO. I knew then.

MIRIAMNE. And I came back
because I must see you again. And we danced
together

and my heart hurt me. Never, never, never,

though they should bind me down and tear out
my eyes,

would I ever hurt you now. Take me with you,
Mio,

let them look for us, whoever there is to look,
but we'll be away. [*MIO turns away toward the*
tenement]

MIO. When I was four years old
we climbed through an iron gate, my mother
and I,

to see my father in prison. He stood in the
death-cell

and put his hand through the bars and said,
My Mio,

I have only this to leave you, that I love you,
and will love you after I die. Love me then,

Mio,
when this hard thing comes on you, that you
must live

a man despised for your father. That night the
guards,

walking in flood-lights brighter than high noon,
led him between them with his trousers slit
and a shaven head for the cathodes. This sleet
and rain

that I feel cold here on my face and hands
will find him under thirteen years of clay
in prison ground. Lie still and rest, my father,
for I have not forgotten. When I forget

may I lie blind as you. No other love,
time passing, nor the spaced light-years of
suns

shall blur your voice, or tempt me from the path
that clears your name—

till I have these rats in my grip

or sleep deep where you sleep. [*To MIRIAMNE*]

I have no house,
nor home, nor love of life, nor fear of death,

nor care for what I eat, or who I sleep with,
or what color of calcimine the Government
will wash itself this year or next to lure
the sheep and feed the wolves. Love some
where else,

and get your children in some other image
more acceptable to the State! This face of mine
is stamped for sewage! [*She steps back, sur-
mising*]

MIRIAMNE Mio——

MIO My road is cut

in rock, and leads to one end. If I hurt you, I'm
sorry.

One gets over hurts.

MIRIAMNE. What was his name—
your father's name?

MIO. Bartolomeo Romagna.

I'm not ashamed of it.

MIRIAMNE. Why are you here?

MIO. For the reason

I've never had a home. Because I'm a cry
out of a shallow grave, and all roads are mine
that might revenge him!

MIRIAMNE. But Mio—why here—why here?

MIO. I can't tell you that.

MIRIAMNE. No—but—there's someone
lives here—lives not far—and you mean to see
him—

you mean to ask him—— [*She pauses*]

MIO. Who told you that?

MIRIAMNE. His name

is Garth—Garth Esdras——

MIO. [*after a pause, coming nearer*]

Who are you, then? You seem

to know a good deal about me.—Were you sent
to say this?

MIRIAMNE. You said there was death about
you! Yes,

but nearer than you think! Let it be as it is—

let it all be as it is, never see this place

nor think of it—forget the streets you came

when you're away and safe! Go before you're
seen

or spoken to!

MIO. Will you tell me why?

MIRIAMNE. As I love you

I can't tell you—and I can never see you——

MIO. I walk where I please——

MIRIAMNE. Do you think it's easy for me

to send you away? [*She steps back as if to go*]

MIO. Where will I find you then

if I should want to see you?

THE DRAMA · MAXWELL ANDERSON

MIRIAMNE. Never—I tell you
I'd bring you death! Even now. Listen!

SHADOW and TROCK enter between the
bridge and the tenement house. MIRI-
AMNE pulls MIO back into the shadow
of the rock to avoid being seen

TROCK. Why, fine.

SHADOW. You watch it now—just for the
record, Trock—
you're going to thank me for staying away from
it

and keeping you out. I've seen men get that
way,

thinking they had to plug a couple of guys
and then a few more to cover it up, and then
maybe a dozen more. You can't own all
and territory adjacent, and you can't
slough all the witnesses, because every man
you put away has friends—

TROCK. I said all right.
I said fine.

SHADOW. They're going to find this judge,
and if they find him dead it's just too bad,
and I don't want to know anything about it—
and you don't either.

TROCK. You all through?

SHADOW. Why sure.

TROCK. All right.

We're through, too, you know.

SHADOW. Yeah? [*He becomes wary*]

TROCK. Yeah, we're through.

SHADOW. I've heard that said before, and
afterwards
somebody died.

[TROCK is silent] Is that what you mean?

TROCK. You can go.

I don't want to see you.

SHADOW. Sure, I'll go.

Maybe you won't mind if I just find out
what you've got on you. Before I turn my back.

I'd like to know. [*Silently and expertly he
touches TROCK's pockets, extracting a gun*]

Not that I'd distrust you.

but you know how it is. [*He pockets the gun*] 45
So long, Trock.

TROCK. So long.

SHADOW. I won't talk.

You can be sure of that.

TROCK. I know you won't. [*SHADOW turns 50
and goes out right, past the rock and along the
bank. As he goes the TWO YOUNG MEN IN BLUE*

SERGE enter from the left and walk slowly after
SHADOW. They look toward TROCK as they enter
and he motions with his thumb in the direction
taken by SHADOW. They follow SHADOW out
5 without haste. TROCK watches them disappear,
then slips out the way he came. MIO comes a
step forward, looking after the two men. Two
or three shots are heard, then silence. MIO
starts to run after SHADOW]

10 MIRIAMNE. Mio!

MIO. What do you know about this?

MIRIAMNE. The other way,

Mio—quick! [*CARR slips in from the right, in
haste*]

15 CARR. Look, somebody's just been shot.
He fell in the river. The guys that did the
shooting
ran up the bank.

MIO. Come on. [*MIO and CARR run out right.*

20 MIRIAMNE watches uncertainly, then slowly
turns and walks to the rear door of the tene-
ment. She stands there a moment, looking after
MIO, then goes in, closing the door. CARR and
MIO return]

25 CARR. There's a rip tide past the point.
You'd never find him.

MIO. No.

CARR. You know a man really ought to carry
insurance living around here.—God, it's easy,
30 putting a fellow away. I never saw it done be-
fore.

MIO. [*looking at the place where MIRIAMNE
stood*] They have it all worked out.

CARR. What are you doing now?

35 MIO. I have a little business to transact in
this neighborhood.

CARR. You'd better forget it.

MIO. No.

CARR. Need any help?

40 MIO. Well, if I did I'd ask you first. But I
don't see how it would do any good. So you
keep out of it and take care of yourself.

CARR. So long, then.

MIO. So long, Carr.

45 CARR. [*looking down-stream*] He was drift-
ing face up. Must be halfway to the island the
way the tide runs. [*He shivers*] God, it's cold
here. Well—[*He goes out to the left.* MIO
sits on the edge of the rock. LUCIA comes
stealthily back from between the bridge and the
tenement, goes to the street-piano and wheels it
away. PINY comes in. They take a look at MIO,

but say nothing. LUCIA goes into his shelter and PINY into hers. MIO rises, looks up at the tennement, and goes out to the left]

[Curtain]

ACT II

SCENE—*The basement as in Scene II of Act I. The same evening. ESDRAS sits at the table reading, MIRIAMNE is seated at the left, listening and intent. The door of the inner room is half open and GARTH's violin is heard. He is playing the theme from the third movement of Beethoven's Archduke Trio. ESDRAS looks up*

ESDRAS. I remember when I came to the end of all the Talmud said, and the commentaries, then I was fifty years old—and it was time to ask what I had learned. I asked this question and gave myself the answer. In all the Talmud there was nothing to find but the names of things,

set down that we might call them by those names

and walk without fear among things known. Since then

I have had twenty years to read on and on and end with Ecclesiastes. Names of names, evanid days, evanid nights and days and words that shift then meaning. Space is time,

that which was is now—the men of tomorrow live, and this is their yesterday. All things that were and are and will be, have then being then and now and to come. If this means little when you are young, remember it. It will return to mean more when you are old.

MIRIAMNE. I'm sorry—I was listening for something.

ESDRAS. It doesn't matter. It's a useless wisdom. It's all I have, but useless. It may be there is no time, but we grow old. Do you know his name?

MIRIAMNE. Whose name?

ESDRAS. Why, when we're young and listen for a step the step should have a name—[MIRIAMNE, not hearing, rises and goes to the window. GARTH enters from within, carrying his violin and carefully closing the door]

GARTH. [as ESDRAS looks at him] Asleep.

ESDRAS. He may sleep on through the whole night—then in the morning we can let them know

5 GARTH. We'd be wiser to say nothing—let him find his own way back.

ESDRAS. How did he come here?

GARTH. He's not too crazy for that. If he wakes again

10 we'll keep him quiet and shift him off tomorrow.

Somebody'd pick him up.

ESDRAS. How have I come

to this sunken end of a street at a life's end—?

15 GARTH. It was cheaper here—not to be transcendental—

So—we say nothing—?

ESDRAS. Nothing.

MIRIAMNE. Garth, there's no place

20 in this whole city—not one—

where you wouldn't be safer than here—tonight—or tomorrow.

GARTH. [bitterly] Well, that may be. What of it?

25 MIRIAMNE. If you slipped away and took a place somewhere where Trock couldn't find you—

GARTH. Yes—

using what for money? and why do you think 30 I've sat here so far—because I love my home so much? No, but if I stepped around the corner

it'd be my last corner and my last step.

MIRIAMNE. And yet—

35 if you're here—they'll find you here—

Trock will come again—

and there's worse to follow—

GARTH. Do you want to get me killed?

MIRIAMNE. No.

40 GARTH. There's no way out of it. We'll wait and take what they send us.

ESDRAS. Hush! You'll wake him.

GARTH. I've done it.

I hear him stirring now. [They wait quietly.

45 JUDGE GAUNT opens the door and enters]

GAUNT. [in the doorway] I beg your pardon—

no, no, be seated—keep your place—I've made your evening difficult enough, I fear;

50 and I must thank you doubly for your kindness, for I've been ill—I know it.

ESDRAS. You're better, sir?

GAUNT. Quite recovered, thank you. Able, I hope,
to manage nicely now. You'll be rewarded
for your hospitality—though at this moment
[*he smiles*]

I'm low in funds. [*He inspects his billfold*]
Sir, my embarrassment
is great indeed—and more than monetary,
for I must own my recollection's vague
of how I came here—how we came together— 10
and what we may have said. My name is Gaunt,
Judge Gaunt, a name long known in the criminal
courts,
and not unhonored there.

ESDRAS. My name is Esdras—
and this is Garth, my son. And Miriamne,
the daughter of my old age.

GAUNT. I'm glad to meet you.

Esdras. Garth Esdras. [*He passes a hand over
his eyes*]

It's not a usual name.
Of late it's been connected with a case—
a case I knew. But this is hardly the man.
Though it's not a usual name. [*They are silent*]
Sir, how I came here,
as I have said, I don't well know. Such things
are sometimes not quite accident.

ESDRAS. We found you
outside our door and brought you in.

GAUNT. The brain
can be overworked, and weary, even when the
man
would swear to his good health. Sir, on my
word
I don't know why I came here, nor how, nor 35
when,
nor what would explain it. Shall we say the machine
begins to wear? I felt no twinge of it.—
You will imagine how much more than gall-
ing
I feel it, to ask my way home—and where I
am—
but I do ask you that.

ESDRAS. This is New York City—
or part of it.

GAUNT. Not the best part, I presume? [*He
smiles grimly*] No, not the best.

ESDRAS. Not typical, no.

GAUNT. And you—[*To GARTH*]
you are Garth Esdras?

GARTH. That's my name.

GAUNT. Well, sir, [*To ESDRAS*]
I shall lie under the deepest obligation
if you will set an old man on his path,
for I lack the homing instinct, if the truth
5 were known. North, east and south mean nothing
to me
here in this room.

ESDRAS. I can put you in your way.

GARTH. Only you'd be wiser to wait a
while—
if I'm any judge.—

GAUNT. It happens I'm the judge—[*With
stiff humor*]
in more ways than one. You'll forgive me if I
say 15

I find this place and my predicament
somewhat distasteful. [*He looks round him*]

GARTH. I don't doubt you do;
but you're better off here.

GAUNT. Nor will you find it wise
to cross my word as lightly as you seem
inclined to do. You've seen me ill and shaken—
and you presume on that.

GARTH. Have it your way.
GAUNT. Doubtless what information is re-
quired
we'll find nearby.

ESDRAS. Yes, sir—the terminal,—
if you could walk so far.

GAUNT. I've done some walking—
to look at my shoes. [*He looks down, then puts
out a hand to steady himself*]

That—that was why I came—
never mind—it was there—and it's gone.

[*To GARTH*] Professor Hobhouse—
that's the name—he wrote some trash about
you
and printed it in a broadside.

—Since I'm here I can tell you

40 it's a pure fabrication—lacking facts
and legal import. Senseless and impudent,
written with bias—with malicious intent
to undermine the public confidence
in justice and the courts. I knew it then—

45 all he brings out about this testimony
you might have given. It's true I could have
called you,

but the case was clear—Romagna was known
guilty,

50 and there was nothing to add. If I've endured
some hours of torture over their attacks
upon my probity—and in this torture

have wandered from my place, wandered perhaps
in mind and body—and found my way to face
you—

why, yes, it is so—I know it—I beg of you
say nothing. It's not easy to give up
a fair name after a full half century
of service to a state. It may well rock
the surest reason. Therefore I ask of you
say nothing of this visit.

GARTH. I'll say nothing.

ESDRAS. Nor any of us.

GAUNT. Why, no—for you'd lose, too.
You'd have nothing to gain.

ESDRAS. Indeed we know it.

GAUNT. I'll remember you kindly. When I've
returned,
there may be some mystery made of where I
was—

we'll leave it a mystery?

GARTH. Anything you say.

GAUNT. Why, now I go with much more
peace of mind—if I can call you friends.

ESDRAS. We shall be grateful
for silence on your part, Your Honor.

GAUNT. Sir—
if there were any just end to be served
by speaking out, I'd speak! There is none. No—
bear that in mind!

ESDRAS. We will, Your Honor.

GAUNT. Then—
I'm in some haste. If you can be my guide,
we'll set out now.

ESDRAS. Yes, surely. [*There is a knock at the
door. The four look at each other with some ap-
prehension. MIRIAMNE rises*]

I'll answer it.

MIRIAMNE. Yes. [*She goes into the inner
room and closes the door. ESDRAS goes to the
outer door. The knock is repeated. He opens* 40
the door. MIO is there]

ESDRAS. Yes, sir.

MIO. May I come in?

ESDRAS. Will you state your business, sir?
It's late—and I'm not at liberty—

MIO. Why, I might say
that I was trying to earn my tuition fees
by peddling magazines. I could say that,
or collecting old newspapers—paying cash—
highest rates—no questions asked—[*He* 50
looks round sharply]

GARTH. We've nothing to sell.

What do you want?

MIO. Your pardon, gentlemen.

My business is not of an ordinary kind,
and I felt the need of this slight introduction
5 while I might get my bearings. Your name is
Esdras,

or they told me so outside.

GARTH. What do you want?

MIO. Is that the name?

10 GARTH. Yes.

MIO. I'll be quick and brief.

I'm the son of a man who died many years ago
for a pay roll robbery in New England. You
should be Garth Esdras, by what I've heard.

15 You have
some knowledge of the crime, if one can believe
what he reads in the public prints, and it might
be

20 that your testimony, if given, would clear my
father

of any share in the murder. You may not care
whether he was guilty or not. You may not
know.

But I do care—and care deeply, and I've come
25 to ask you face to face.

GARTH. To ask me what?

MIO. What do you know of it?

ESDRAS. This man Romagna,
did he have a son?

30 MIO. Yes, sir, this man Romagna,
as you choose to call him, had a son, and I
am that son, and proud.

ESDRAS. Forgive me.

MIO. Had you known him,
35 and heard him speak, you'd know why I'm
proud, and why
he was no malefactor.

ESDRAS. I quite believe you.

If my son can help he will. But at this mo-
ment,

as I told you—could you, I wonder, come to-
morrow,

at your own hour?

MIO. Yes.

45 ESDRAS. By coincidence
we too of late have had this thing in mind—
there have been comments printed, and much
discussion

which we could hardly avoid.

MIO. Could you tell me then
in a word?—What you know—
is it for him or against him?—

GAUNT. Quite recovered, thank you. Able, I hope,
to manage nicely now. You'll be rewarded
for your hospitality—though at this moment
[*he smiles*]

I'm low in funds. [*He inspects his billfold*]
Sir, my embarrassment
is great indeed—and more than monetary,
for I must own my recollection's vague
of how I came here—how we came together— 10
and what we may have said. My name is Gaunt,
Judge Gaunt, a name long known in the criminal courts,
and not unhonored there.

ESDRAS. My name is Esdras—
and this is Garth, my son. And Miriamne,
the daughter of my old age.

GAUNT. I'm glad to meet you.
Esdras. Garth Esdras. [*He passes a hand over his eyes*]
It's not a usual name.

Of late it's been connected with a case—
a case I knew. But this is hardly the man.
Though it's not a usual name. [*They are silent*]
Sir, how I came here,
as I have said, I don't well know. Such things
are sometimes not quite accident.

ESDRAS. We found you
outside our door and brought you in.

GAUNT. The brain
can be overworked, and weary, even when the
man
would swear to his good health. Sir, on my
word
I don't know why I came here, nor how, nor 35
when,
nor what would explain it. Shall we say the machine
begins to wear? I felt no twinge of it.—
You will imagine how much more than gall-
ing
I feel it, to ask my way home—and where I
am—
but I do ask you that.

ESDRAS. This is New York City—
or part of it.
GAUNT. Not the best part, I presume? [*He smiles grimly*] No, not the best.
ESDRAS. Not typical, no.
GAUNT. And you—[*To GARTH*]
you are Garth Esdras?
GARTH. That's my name.

GAUNT. Well, sir, [*To ESDRAS*]
I shall lie under the deepest obligation
if you will set an old man on his path,
for I lack the homing instinct, if the truth
5 were known. North, east and south mean nothing
to me
here in this room.

ESDRAS. I can put you in your way.

GARTH. Only you'd be wiser to wait a
while—
if I'm any judge.—

GAUNT. It happens I'm the judge—[*With stiff humor*]
in more ways than one. You'll forgive me if I
say 15

I find this place and my predicament
somewhat distasteful. [*He looks round him*]

GARTH. I don't doubt you do;
but you're better off here.

GAUNT. Nor will you find it wise
to cross my word as lightly as you seem
inclined to do. You've seen me ill and shaken—
and you presume on that.

GARTH. Have it your way.
GAUNT. Doubtless what information is re-
quired
we'll find nearby.

ESDRAS. Yes, sir—the terminal,—
if you could walk so far.

GAUNT. I've done some walking—
to look at my shoes. [*He looks down, then puts out a hand to steady himself*]

That—that was why I came—
never mind—it was there—and it's gone.

[*To GARTH*] Professor Hobhouse—
that's the name—he wrote some trash about
you
and printed it in a broadside.

—Since I'm here I can tell you

40 it's a pure fabrication—lacking facts
and legal import. Senseless and impudent,
written with bias—with malicious intent
to undermine the public confidence
in justice and the courts. I knew it then—

45 all he brings out about this testimony
you might have given. It's true I could have
called you,

but the case was clear—Romagna was known
guilty,

50 and there was nothing to add. If I've endured
some hours of torture over their attacks
upon my probity—and in this torture

came after, and in all that million words
I found not one unbiased argument
to fix the crime on him.

GAUNT. And you yourself,
were you unprejudiced?

MIO. Who are you?

ESDRAS. Sir,
this gentleman is here, as you are here,
to ask my son, as you have asked, what ground
there might be for this talk of new evidence
in your father's case. We gave him the same
answer
we've given you.

MIO. I'm sorry. I'd supposed
his cause forgotten except by myself. There's
still
a defense committee then?

GAUNT. There may be. I
am not connected with it.

ESDRAS. He is my guest,
and asks to remain unknown.

MIO. [*after a pause, looking at GAUNT*] The
judge at the trial
was younger, but he had your face. Can it be
that you're the man?—Yes—Yes.—The jury
charge—

I sat there as a child and heard your voice,
and watched that Brahminical mouth. I knew
even then
you meant no good to him. And now you're
here
to winnow out truth and justice—the fountain-
head

of the lies that slew him! Are you Judge Gaunt?

GAUNT. I am.

MIO. Then tell me what damnation to what
inferno
would fit the toad that sat in robes and lied
when he gave the charge, and knew he lied!
Judge that,

and then go to your place in that hell!

GAUNT. I know and have known
what bitterness can rise against a court
when it must say, putting aside all weakness,
that a man's to die. I can forgive you that,
for you are your father's son, and you think of
him

as a son thinks of his father. Certain laws
seem cruel in their operation; it's necessary
that we be cruel to uphold them. This cruelty
is kindness to those I serve.

MIO. I don't doubt that.

I know who it is you serve.

GAUNT. Would I have chosen
to rack myself with other men's despairs,
stop my ears, harden my heart, and listen only
5 to the voice of law and light, if I had hoped
some private gain for serving? In all my years
on the bench of a long-established common
wealth

not once has my decision been in question
10 save in this case. Not once before or since.
For hope of heaven or place on earth, or power
or gold, no man has had my voice, nor will
while I still keep the trust that's laid on me
to sentence and define.

MIO. Then why are you here?

GAUNT. My record's clean. I've kept it so
But suppose

with the best intent, among the myriad tongues
that come to testify, I had missed my way
20 and followed a perjured tale to a lethal end
till a man was forsworn to death? Could I rest
or sleep
while there was doubt of this,
even while there was question in a layman's
mind?

For always, night and day,
there lies on my brain like a weight, the ad-
monition:
see truly, let nothing sway you; among all
functions
there's but one godlike, to judge. Then see
to it

you judge as a god would judge, with clarity,
with truth, with what mercy is found consonant
35 with order and law. Without law men are
beasts,

and it's a judge's task to lift and hold them
above themselves. Let a judge be once mis-
taken

40 or step aside for a friend, and a gap is made
in the dykes that hold back anarchy and chaos,
and leave men bound but free.

MIO. Then the gap's been made,
and you made it.

45 GAUNT. I feared that too. May you be a
judge
sometime, and know in what fear,
through what nights long
in fear, I scanned and verified and compared
50 the transcripts of the trial.

MIO. Without prejudice,
no doubt. It was never in your mind to prove

THE DRAMA · MAXWELL ANDERSON

that you'd been right.

GAUNT. And conscious of that, too—
that that might be my purpose—watchful of
that,

and jealous as his own lawyer of the rights
that should hedge the defendant!

And still I found no error,

shook not one staple of the bolts that linked
the doer to the deed! Still following on from
step to step, I watched all modern com-
ment,

and saw it centered finally on one fact—

Garth Esdras was not called. This is Garth
Esdras,

and you have heard him. Would his deposition 15
have justified a new trial?

MIO. No. It would not.

GAUNT. And there I come, myself. If the
man were still

in his cell, and waiting, I'd have no faint excuse 20
for another hearing.

MIO. I've told you that I read
the trial from beginning to end. Every word
you spoke

was balanced carefully to keep the letter 25
of the law and still convict—convict, by Christ,
if it tore the seven veils! You stand here now
running cascades of casuistry, to prove
to yourself and me that no judge of rank and
breeding

could burn a man out of hate! But that's what
you did

under all your varnish!

GAUNT. I've sought for evidence,
and you have sought. Have you found it? Can 35
you cite

one fresh word in defence?

MIO. The trial itself

was shot full of legerdemain, prearranged to
lead

the jury astray—

GAUNT. Could you prove that?

MIO. Yes!

GAUNT. And if
the jury were led astray, remember it's
the jury, by our Anglo-Saxon custom,
that finds for guilt or innocence. The judge
is powerless in that matter.

MIO. Not you! Your charge
misled the jury more than the evidence,
accepted every biased meaning, distilled
the poison for them!

GAUNT. But if that were so

I'd be the first, I swear it, to step down
among all men, and hold out both my hands
for manacles—yes, publish it in the streets,

5 that all I've held most sacred was defiled
by my own act. A judge's brain becomes
a delicate instrument to weigh men's lives
for good and ill—too delicate to bear
much tampering. If he should push aside
the weights and throw the beam, and say, this
once

the man is guilty, and I will have it so
though his mouth cry out from the ground,
and all the world

revoke my word, he'd have a short way to go
to madness. I think you'd find him in the
squares,

stopping the passers-by with arguments,—
see, I was right, the man was guilty there—

this was brought in against him, this—and
this—

and I was left no choice! It's no light thing
when a long life's been dedicate to one end
to wrench the mind awry!

25 MIO. By your own thesis
you should be mad, and no doubt you are.

GAUNT. But my madness
is only this—that I would fain look back
on a life well spent—without one stain—one
30 breath

of stain to flaw the glass—not in men's minds
nor in my own. I take my God as witness

I meant to earn that clearness, and believe
that I have earned it. Yet my name is clouded
with the blackest, fiercest scandal of our age
that's touched a judge. What I can do to wipe
that smutch from my fame I will. I think you
know

40 how deeply I've been hated, for no cause
that I can find there. Can it not be—and I
ask this

quite honestly—that the great injustice lies
on your side and not mine? Time and time
again

45 men have come before me perfect in their
lives,

loved by all who knew them, loved at home,
gentle, not vicious, yet caught so ripe red-
handed

50 in some dark violence there was no denying
where the onus lay.

MIO. That was not so with my father!

GAUNT. And yet it seemed so to me. To other men who sat in judgment on him. Can you be sure—I ask this in humility—that you, who were touched closest by the tragedy, may not have lost perspective—may have brooded day and night on one theme—till your eyes are tranced

and show you one side only?

MIO. I see well enough.

GAUNT. And would that not be part of the malady—

to look quite steadily at the drift of things but see there what you wish—not what is there—

not what another man to whom the story was fresh would say is there?

MIO. You think I'm crazy.

Is that what you meant to say?

GAUNT. I've seen it happen with the best and wisest men. I but ask the question.

I can't speak for you. Is it not true wherever you walk, through the little town where you knew him well,

or flying from it, inland or by the sea, still walking at your side, and sleeping only when you too sleep, a shadow not your own follows, pleading and holding out its hands to be delivered from shame?

MIO. How you know that by God I don't know.

GAUNT. Because one spectre haunted you and me—

and haunts you still, but for me it's laid to rest now that my mind is satisfied. He died justly and not by error.

[A pause]

MIO. [stepping forward] Do you care to know you've come so near to death it's miracle that pulse still beats in your splotchy throat? Do you know there's murder in me?

GAUNT. There was murder in your sire, and it's to be expected! I say he died justly, and he deserved it!

MIO. Yes, you'd like too well to have me kill you! That would prove your case and clear your name, and dip my father's name

in stench forever! You'll not get that from me! Go home and die in bed, get it under cover, your lux-et-lex² putrefaction of the right thing, you man that walks like a god!

5 GAUNT. Have I made you angry by coming too near the truth?

MIO. This sets him up, this venomous slug, this sets him up in a gown, deciding who's to walk above the earth and who's to lie beneath! And giving reasons! The cobra giving reasons; I'm a god, by Buddha, holy and worshipful my tang, and can I sink it in! [He pauses, turns as if to go, then sits] This is no good. This won't help much. [The JUDGE and ESDRAS look at each other]

GAUNT. We should be going.

ESDRAS. Yes. [They prepare to go] I'll lend you my coat.

20 GAUNT. [looking at it with distaste]

No, keep it. A little rain shouldn't matter to me.

ESDRAS. It freezes as it falls, and you've a long way to go.

30 GAUNT. I'll manage, thank you. [GAUNT and ESDRAS go out, ESDRAS obsequious, closing the door]

GARTH. [looking at MIO's back] Well?

MIO. [not moving] Let me sit here a moment. [GARTH shrugs his shoulders and goes toward the inner door. MIRIAMNE opens it and comes out. GARTH looks at her, then at MIO, then lays his fingers on his lips. She nods. GARTH goes out. MIRIAMNE sits and watches]

35 MIO. After a little he turns and sees her]

MIO. How did you come here?

MIRIAMNE. I live here.

MIO. Here?

MIRIAMNE. My name is Esdras. Garth is my brother. The walls are thin. I heard what was said.

MIO. [stirring wearily] I'm going. This is no place for me.

MIRIAMNE. What place would be better?

45 MIO. None. Only it's better to go. Just to go. [She comes over to him, puts her arm around him and kisses his forehead]

MIRIAMNE. Mio.

MIO. What do you want?

50 Your kisses burn me—and your arms. Don't offer

² light and law.

what I'm never to have! I can have nothing.

They say
they'll cross the void sometime to the other
planets

and men will breathe in that air.
Well, I could breathe there,
but not here now. Not on this ball of mud.
I don't want it.

MIRIAMNE. They can take away so little
with all their words. For you're a king among 10
them.

I heard you, and loved your voice.

MIO. I thought I'd fallen
so low there was no further, and now a pit
opens beneath. It was bad enough that he 15
should have died innocent, but if he were
guilty—

then what's my life—what have I left to do—?
The son of a felon—and what they spat on me
was earned—and I'm drenched with the stuff. 20
Here on my hands
and cheeks, their spittle hanging! I liked my
hands

because they were like his. I tell you I've lived
by his innocence, lived to see it flash
and blind them all—

MIRIAMNE. Never believe them, Mio,
never. [*She looks toward the inner door*]

MIO. But it was truth I wanted, truth—
not the lies you'd tell yourself, or tell a woman, 30
or a woman tells you! The judge with his cobra
mouth
may have spat truth—and I may be mad! For
me—

your hands are too clean to touch me. I'm to 35
have
the scraps from hotel kitchens—and instead of
love

those mottled bodies that hitch themselves
through alleys
to sell for dimes or nickels. Go, keep yourself
chaste

for the baker bridegroom—baker and son of a
baker.

let him get his baker's dozen on you!

MIRIAMNE. No—
say once you love me—say it once; I'll never
ask to hear it twice, nor for any kindness,
and you shall take all I have!

GARTH *opens the inner door and comes out*

GARTH. I interrupt

a love scene, I believe. We can do without
your adolescent mawkishness.

[*To MIRIAMNE*] You're a child.
You'll both remember that.

5 MIRIAMNE. I've said nothing to harm you—
and will say nothing.

GARTH. You're my sister, though,
and I take a certain interest in you. Where
have you two met?

10 MIRIAMNE. We danced together.

GARTH. Then
the dance is over, I think.

MIRIAMNE. I've always loved you
and tried to help you, Garth. And you've been
kind. 15

Don't spoil it now.

GARTH. Spoil it how?

MIRIAMNE. Because I love him.

I didn't know it would happen. We danced to-
gether. 20

And the world's all changed. I see you through
a mist,

and our father, too. If you brought this to
nothing

25 I'd want to die.

GARTH. [*to MIO*] You'd better go.

MIO. Yes, I know. [*He rises. There is a
trembling knock at the door. MIRIAMNE goes
to it. The HOBBO is there shivering*]

30 HOBBO. Miss, could I sleep under the pipes
tonight, miss?

Could I, please?

MIRIAMNE. I think—not tonight.

HOBBO. There won't be any more nights—

35 if I don't get warm, miss.

MIRIAMNE. Come in. [*The HOBBO comes in,
looks round deprecatingly, then goes to a corner
beneath a huge heating pipe, which he crawls
under as if he'd been there before*]

40 HOBBO. Yes, miss, thank you.

GARTH. Must we put up with that?

MIRIAMNE. Father let him sleep there—
last winter.

GARTH. Yes, God, yes.

45 MIO. Well, good night.

MIRIAMNE. Where will you go?

MIO. Yes, where? As if it mattered.

GARTH. Oh, sleep here, too.

We'll have a row of you under the pipes.

50 MIO. No, thanks.

MIRIAMNE. Mio, I've saved a little money.
It's only

some pennies, but you must take it. [*She shakes some coins out of a box into her hand*]

MIO. No, thanks.

MIRIAMNE. And I love you. You've never said you love me.

MIO. Why wouldn't I love you when you're clean and sweet, and I've seen nothing sweet or clean this last ten years? I love you. I leave you that for what good it may do you. It's none to me

MIRIAMNE. Then kiss me.

MIO. [*looking at GARTH*] With that scowling over us? No.

When it rains, some spring on the planet Mercury, where the spring comes often,

I'll meet you there, let's say. We'll wait for that. It may be some time till then. [*The outside door opens and ESDRAS enters with JUDGE CAUNT, then, after a slight interval, TROCK follows TROCK surveys the interior and its occupants one by one, carefully*]

TROCK. I wouldn't want to cause you inconvenience, any of you, and especially the Judge. I think you know that. You've all got things to do—

trains to catch, and so on. But trains can wait. Hell, nearly anything can wait, you'll find, only I can't. I'm the only one that can't because I've got no time. Who's all this here? Who's that? [*He points to the HOBBO*]

ESDRAS. He's a poor half-wit, sir, that sometimes sleeps there.

TROCK. Come out. I say come out, whoever you are. [*The HOBBO stirs and looks up*] Yes, I mean you. Come out. [*The HOBBO emerges*]

What's your name?

HOBBO. They mostly call me Oke.

TROCK. What do you know?

HOBBO. No, sir.

TROCK. Where are you from?

HOBBO. I got a piece of bread. [*He brings it out, trembling*]

TROCK. Get back in there! [*The HOBBO crawls back into his corner*]

Maybe you want to know why I'm doing this. Well, I've been robbed, that's why—robbed five or six times; the police can't find a thing—so I'm out for myself—

if you want to know.

[*To MIO*] Who are you?

MIO. Oh, I'm a half-wit, came in here by mistake. The difference is I've got no piece of bread.

TROCK. What's your name?

MIO. My name?

Theophrastus Such.³ That's respectable. You'll find it all the way from here to the coast on the best police blotters

Only the truth is we're a little touched in the head,

Oke and me. You'd better ask somebody else

TROCK. Who is he?

ESDRAS. His name's Romagna. He's the son.

TROCK. Then what's he doing here? You said you were on the level.

GARTH. He just walked in. On account of the stuff in the papers. We didn't ask him.

TROCK. God, we are a gathering. Now if we had Shadow we'd be all here, huh? Only I guess we won't see Shadow. No, that's too much to ask.

MIO. Who's Shadow?

TROCK. Now you're putting questions. Shadow was just nobody, you see. He blew away. It might happen to anyone. [*He looks at GARTH*] Yes, anyone at all.

MIO. Why do you keep your hand in your pocket, friend?

TROCK. Because I'm cold, punk. Because I've been outside and it's cold as the tomb of Christ. [*To GARTH*] Listen, there's a car waiting up at the street to take the Judge home. We'll take him to the car.

GARTH. That's not necessary.

ESDRAS. No.

TROCK. I say it is, see? You wouldn't want to let the Judge walk, would you? The Judge is going to ride where he's going, with a couple of chauffeurs, and everything done in style. Don't you worry about the Judge. He'll be taken care of. For good.

GARTH. I want no hand in it.

TROCK. Anything happens to me happens to you too, musician.

GARTH. I know that.

TROCK. Keep your mouth out of it then. And you'd better keep the punk here tonight, just for luck. [*He turns toward the door. There is a*

³ See *Impressions of Theophrastus Such*, satirical essays by George Eliot (1879).

brilliant lightning flash through the windows, followed slowly by dying thunder. TROCK opens the door. The rain begins to pour in sheets Jesus, somebody tipped it over again! *[A cough racks him]* Wait till it's over. It takes ten days off me every time I step into it. *[He closes the door]* Sit down and wait. *[Lightning flashes again. The thunder is fainter. ESDRAS, GARTH and the JUDGE sit down]*

GAUNT. We were born too early. Even you who are young are not of the elect. In a hundred years man will put his finger on life itself, and then he will live as long as he likes. For you and me we shall die soon—one day, one year more or less,

when or where, it's no matter. It's what we call an indeterminate sentence. I'm hungry. *[GARTH looks at MIRIAMNE]*

MIRIAMNE. There was nothing left tonight.

HOB0. I've got a piece of bread. *[He breaks his bread in two and hands half to the JUDGE.]*

GAUNT. I thank you, sir. *[He eats]* This is not good bread. *[He rises]*

Sir, I am used to other company. Not better, perhaps, but their clothes were different. These are what it's the fashion to call the underprivileged.

TROCK. Oh, hell! *[He turns toward the door]*

MIO. *[to TROCK]* It would seem that you and the Judge know each other. *[TROCK faces him]*

TROCK. I've been around.

MIO. Maybe you've met before.

TROCK. Maybe we have.

MIO. Will you tell me where?

TROCK. How long do you want to live?

MIO. How long? Oh, I've got big ideas about that.

TROCK. I thought so. Well, so far I've got nothing against you but your name, see? You keep it that way. *[He opens the door. The rain still falls in torrents. He closes the door. As he turns from it, it opens again, and SHADOW, white, bloodstained and dripping, stands in the doorway. GARTH rises. TROCK turns]*

GAUNT. *[to the HOB0]* Yet if one were careful of his health, ate sparingly, drank not at all,

used himself wisely, it might be that even an old man could live to touch immortality. They may come on the secret sooner than we dare hope. You see? It does no harm to try.

5 TROCK. *[backing away from SHADOW]* By God, he's out of his grave!

SHADOW. *[leaning against the doorway, holding a gun in his hands]* Keep your hands where they belong, Trock.

10 You know me.

TROCK. Don't! Don't! I had nothing to do with it! *[He backs to the opposite wall]*

SHADOW. You said the doctor gave you six months to live—well, I don't give you that much. That's what you had, six months, and so you start bumping off your friends to make sure of your damn six months. I got it from you. I know where I got it.

Because I wouldn't give it to the Judge.

20 So he wouldn't talk.

TROCK. Honest to God—

SHADOW. What God?

The one that let you put three holes in me when I was your friend? Well, He let me get up again and walk till I could find you. That's as far as I get, but I got there, by God! And I can hear you

25 even if I can't see! *[He takes a staggering step forward]* A man needs blood to keep going. I got this far.—And now I can't see!

It runs out too fast—too fast—when you've got three slugs clean through you.

35 Show me where he is, you fools? He's here!

I got here! *[He drops the gun]*

Help me! Help me! Oh, God! Oh, God!

I'm going to die! Where does a man lie down?

I want to lie down! *[MIRIAMNE starts toward*

40 SHADOW. GARTH and ESDRAS help him into the next room, MIRIAMNE following. TROCK squats in his corner, breathing hard, looking at the door. MIO stands, watching TROCK. GARTH returns, wiping his hand with a handkerchief.

45 MIO picks up and pockets the gun. MIRIAMNE comes back and leans against the door jamb]

GAUNT. You will hear it said that an old man makes a good judge, being calm, clear-eyed, without passion. But this is not true. Only the young love truth and justice. The old are savage, wary, violent, swayed by maniac desires, cynical of friendship or love, open to bribery

and the temptations of lust, corrupt and dastardly to the heart. I know these old men. What have they left to believe, what have they left to lose? Whorers of daughters, leekers of girls' shoes, contrivers of nastiness in the night, purveyors of perversion, worshippers of possession! Death is the only radical. He comes late, but he comes at last to put away the old men and give the young their places. It was time. [*He leers*]

Here's one I heard yesterday:

Marmaduke behind the barn
got his sister in a fix;
he says damn instead of darn;
ain't he cute? He's only six!

THE HOB0. He, he, he!

GAUNT.

And the hoot owl hoots all night,
and the cuckoo cooks all day,
and what with a minimum grace of God
we pass the time away.

THE HOB0. He, he, he—I got ya! [*He makes a sign with his thumb*]

GAUNT. [*sings*]

And he led her all around
and laid her on the ground
and he ruffled up the feathers of her
cuckoo's nest!

HOB0. Ho, ho, ho!

GAUNT. I am not taken with the way you
laugh. You should cultivate restraint.

ESDRAS reenters

TROCK. Shut the door.

ESDRAS. He won't come back agan.

TROCK. I want the door shut! He was dead, I tell you! [*ESDRAS closes the door*] And Romagna was dead, too, once! Can't they keep a man under ground?

MIO. No. No more! They don't stay under ground any more, and they don't stay under water! Why did you have him killed?

TROCK. Stay away from me! I know you!

MIO. Who am I, then?

TROCK. I know you, damn you! Your name's Romagna!

MIO. Yes! And Romagna was dead, too, and Shadow was dead, but the time's come when you can't keep them down, these dead men! They won't stay down! They come in with their heads shot off and their entrails dragging! Hundreds of them! One by one—all you ever killed!

Watch the door! See!—It moves!

TROCK. [*looking, fascinated, at the door*]
Let me out of here! [*He tries to rise*]

MIO. [*the gun in his hand*] Oh, no! You'll sit there and wait for them! One by one they'll come through that door, pulling their heads out of the gunny-sacks where you tied them—glauing over you with their rotten hands! They'll see without eyes and crawl over you—Shadow and the paymaster and all the rest of them—putrescent bones without eyes! Now! Look! Look! For I'm first among them!

TROCK. I've done for better men than you! And I'll do for you!

GAUNT. [*tapping on the table*] Order, gentlemen, order! The witness will remember that a certain decorum is essential in the court-room!

MIO. By God, he'll answer me!

GAUNT. [*thundering*] Silence! Silence! Let me remind you of courtesy toward the witness! What case is this you try?

MIO. The case of the state against Bartolomeo Romagna for the murder of the paymaster!

GAUNT. Sir, that was disposed of long ago!

MIO. Never disposed of, never, not while I live!

GAUNT. Then we'll have done with it now! I deny the appeal! I have denied the appeal before and I do so again!

HOB0. He, he!—He think's he's in the moving pictures! [*A flash of lightning*]

GAUNT. Who set that flash! Bailiff, clear the court! This it not Flemington,⁴ gentlemen! We are not conducting this case to make a journalistic holiday! [*The thunder rumbles faintly. GARTH opens the outside door and faces a solid wall of rain*] Stop that man! He's one of the defendants! [*GARTH closes the door*]

MIO. Then put him on the stand!

GARTH. What do you think you're doing?

MIO. Have you any objection?

GAUNT. The objection is not sustained.

We will hear the new evidence.

Call your witness.

MIO. Garth Esdras!

GAUNT. He will take the stand!

GARTH. If you want me to say what I said before I'll say it!

⁴ town in New Jersey where the Lindbergh kidnapping case was tried; feature writers, cameramen, and publicity seekers turned the trial into a sideshow.

MIO. Call Trock Estrella then!
 GAUNT. Trock Estrella to the stand!
 TROCK. No, by God!
 MIO. Call Shadow, then! He'll talk! You thought he was dead, but he'll get up again and talk!
 TROCK. [*screaming*] What do you want of me?
 MIO. You killed the paymaster! You!
 TROCK. You lie! It was Shadow killed him!
 MIO. And now I know! Now I know!
 GAUNT. Again I remind you of courtesy toward the witness!
 MIO. I know them now!
 Let me remind you of courtesy toward the dead!
 He says that Shadow killed him! If Shadow were here
 he'd say it was Trock! There were three men involved
 in the new version of the crime for which my father died! Shadow and Trock Estrella as principals in the murder—Garth as witness!—
 Why are they here together?—and you—the Judge—
 why are you here? Why, because you were all afraid
 and you drew together out of that fear to arrange
 a story you could tell! And Trock killed Shadow and meant to kill the Judge out of that same fear—
 to keep them quiet! This is the thing I've hunted
 over the earth to find out, and I'd be blind indeed if I missed it now!
 [*To GAUNT.*] You heard what he said:
 It was Shadow killed him! Now let the night conspire
 with the sperm of hell! It's plain beyond denial even to this fox of justice—and all his words are curses on the wind! You lied! You lied! You knew this too!
 GAUNT. [*low*] Let me go. Let me go!
 MIO. Then why
 did you let my father die?
 GAUNT. Suppose it known,
 but there are things a judge must not believe though they should head and fester underneath and press in on his brain. Justice once rendered in a clear burst of anger, righteously,
 upon a very common laborer,
 confessed an anarchist, the verdict found and the precise machinery of law invoked to know him guilty—think what furor would rock the state if the court then flatly said:
 all this was lies—must be reversed? It's better, as any judge can tell you, in such cases, holding the common good to be worth more than small injustice, to let the record stand, let one man die. For justice, in the main, is governed by opinion. Communities will have what they will have, and it's quite as well,
 after all, to be rid of anarchists. Our rights as citizens can be maintained as rights only while we are held to be the peers of those who live about us. A vendor of fish is not protected as a man might be who kept a market. I own I've sometimes wished
 this was not so, but it is. The man you defend was unfortunate—and his misfortune bore almost as heavily on me.—I'm broken—broken across. You're much too young to know how bitter it is when a worn connection chafes and you can't remember—can't remember. [*He steps forward*] You will not repeat this? It will go no further?
 MIO. No.
 No further than the moon takes the tides—no further
 than the news went when he died—when you found him guilty
 and they flashed that round the earth. Wherever men
 still breathe and think, and know what's done to them
 by the powers above, they'll know. That's all I ask.
 That'll be enough. [*TROCK has risen and looks darkly at MIO*]
 GAUNT. Thank you. For I've said some things a judge should never say.
 TROCK. Go right on talking.
 Both of you. It won't get far, I guess.
 MIO. Oh, you'll see to that?
 TROCK. I'll see to it. Me and some others.
 Maybe I lost my grip there just for a minute.
 That's all right.
 MIO. Then see to it! Let it rain!

What can you do to me now when the night's
on fire
with this thing I know? Now I could almost
wish
there was a god somewhere—I could almost
think
there was a god—and he somehow brought me
here
and set you down before me here in the rain
where I could wing this out of you! For it's
said,
and I've heard it, and I'm free! He was as I
thought him,
true and noble and upright, even when he went
to a death contrived because he was as he was
and not your kind! Let it rain! Let the night
speak fire
and the city go out with the tide, for he was
a man
and I know you now, and I have my day! 20
[*There is a heavy knock at the outside
door. MIRIAMNE opens it, at a glance from
GARTH. The POLICEMAN is there in out-
skins*]
POLICEMAN. Evening. [*He steps in, followed* 25
by a SERGEANT, similarly dressed]
We're looking for someone
might be here. Seen an old man around
acting a little off?
[*To ESDRAS*] You know the one
I mean. You saw him out there. Jeez! You've got
a funny crowd here! [*He looks round. The HOBBO
shrinks into his corner*]
That's the one I saw.
What do you think?
SERGEANT. That's him. You mean to say
you didn't know him by his pictures? [*He goes*
to GAUNT] Come on, old man.
You're going home.
GAUNT. Yes, sir. I've lost my way.
I think I've lost my way.
SERGEANT. I'll say you have.
About three hundred miles. Now don't you
worry.
We'll get you back.
GAUNT. I'm a person of some rank
in my own city.
SERGEANT. We know that. One look at you
and we'd know that.
GAUNT. Yes, sir.
POLICEMAN. If it isn't Trock!
Trock Estrella. How are you, Trock?

TROCK. Pretty good,
Thanks.
POLICEMAN. Got out yesterday again, I
hear?
TROCK. That's right.
SERGEANT. Hi'ye, Trock?
TROCK. O.K.
SERGEANT. You know we got orders
to watch you pretty close. Be good now, baby,
or back you go. Don't try to pull anything,
not in my district.
TROCK. No, sir.
SERGEANT. No bumping off.
If you want my advice quit carrying a gun.
I've earning your living for once 15
TROCK. Yeah.
SERGEANT. That's an idea.
Because if we find any stiffs on the river bank
we'll know who to look for.
MIO. Then look in the other room!
I accuse that man of murder! Trock Estrella!
He's a murderer!
POLICEMAN. Hello, I remember you.
SERGEANT. Well, what murder?
MIO. It was Trock Estrella
that robbed the pay roll thirteen years ago
and did the killing my father died for! You
know
the Romagna case! Romagna was innocent,
30 and Trock Estrella guilty!
SERGEANT. [*disgusted*] Oh, what the hell!
That's old stuff—the Romagna case.
POLICEMAN. Hey, Sarge! [*The SERGEANT and
POLICEMAN come closer together*]
35 The boy's a professional kiddier. He took me
over
about half an hour ago. He kids the police
and then ducks out!
SERGEANT. Oh, yeah?
40 MIO. I'm not kidding now.
You'll find a dead man there in the next room
and Estrella killed him!
SERGEANT. Thirteen years ago?
And nobody smelled him yet?
45 MIO. [*pointing*] I accuse this man
of two murders! He killed the paymaster long
ago
and had Shadow killed tonight. Look, look for
yourself!
50 He's there all right!
POLICEMAN. Look boy. You stood out there
and put the boobey sign on the dumb police

THE DRAMA · MAXWELL ANDERSON

because they're fresh out of Ireland. Don't try it twice.

SERGEANT. [to GARTH] Any corpses here?

GARTH. Not that I know of.

SERGEANT. I thought so. [MIO looks at MIRIAMNE]

[To MIO] Think up a better one.

MIO. Have I got to drag him out here where you can see him?

[He goes toward the inner door] Can't you 10 scent a murder when it's under your nose? Look in!

MIRIAMNE. No, no—there's no one—there's no one there!

SERGEANT. [looking at MIRIAMNE] Take a 15 look inside.

POLICEMAN. Yes, sir. [He goes into the inside room. The SERGEANT goes up to the door. The POLICEMAN returns]

He's kidding, Sarge. If there's a cadaver 20 in here I don't see it.

MIO. You're blind then! [He goes into the room, the SERGEANT following him]

SERGEANT. What do you mean? [He comes out, MIO following him] 25

When you make a charge of murder it's better to have

the *corpus delicti*, son. You're the kind puts in fire alarms to see the engine!

MIO. By God, he was there. He went in there to die.

SERGEANT. I'll bet he did. And I'm Haile Selassie's⁵ aunt! What's your name?

MIO. Romagna. [To GARTH] What have you 35 done with him?

GARTH. I don't know what you mean.

SERGEANT. [to GARTH] What's he talking about?

GARTH. I wish I could tell you. I don't know.

SERGEANT. He must have seen something.

POLICEMAN. He's got the Romagna case on the brain. You watch yourself, 40 chump, or you'll get run in.

MIO. Then they're in it together! All of them! [To MIRIAMNE] Yes, and you!

GARTH. He's nuts, I say.

MIRIAMNE. [gently] You have dreamed 50

something—isn't it true?

You've dreamed—

But truly, there was no one—[MIO looks at her comprehendingly]

MIO. You want me to say it. [He pauses]

Yes, by God, I was dreaming.

SERGEANT. [to POLICEMAN] I guess you're right.

We'd better be going. Haven't you got a coat?

GAUNT. No, sir.

SERGEANT. I guess I'll have to lend you mine. [He puts his oilskins on GAUNT]

Come on, now. It's getting late. [GAUNT, the POLICEMAN and the SERGEANT go out]

TROCK. They're welcome to him.

His fuse is damp. Where is that walking fool with the three slugs in him?

ESDRAS. He fell in the hall beyond and we left him there.

TROCK. That's lucky for some of us. Is he out this time

or is he still butting around?

ESDRAS. He's dead.

TROCK. That's perfect. [To MIO] Don't try 25 using your firearms, *amigo* baby,

the Sarge is outside. [He turns to go]

Better ship that carrion

back in the river! The one that walks when he's dead;

30 maybe he'll walk the distance for you.

GARTH. Coming back?

TROCK. Well, if I come back,

you'll see me. If I don't, you won't. Let the punk

go as far as he likes. Turn him loose and let him go.

And may you all rot in hell. [He pulls his coat around him and goes to the left. MIRIAMNE climbs up to look out a window]

40 MIRIAMNE. He's climbing up to the street, along the bridgehead. [She turns]

Quick, Mio! It's safe now! Quick!

GARTH. Let him do as he likes.

MIRIAMNE. What do you mean? Garth! He 45 means to kill him!

You know that!

GARTH. I've no doubt Master Romagna can run his own campaign.

MIRIAMNE. But he'll be killed!

MIO. Why did you lie about Shadow? [There is a pause. GARTH shrugs, walks across the room, and sits]

⁵ ruler of Ethiopia prominent in conflict with Italy under Mussolini.

You were one of the gang!

GARTH. I can take a death if I have to! Go tell your story, only watch your step, for I warn you, Trock's out gunning and you may not walk very far. Oh, I could defend it

but it's hardly worth while.

If they get Trock they get me too. Go tell them. You owe me nothing.

ESDRAS. This Trock you saw, no one defends him. He's earned his death so often there's nobody to regret it. But his crime, his same crime that has dogged you, dogged us down from what little we had, to live here among the drains, where the waterbugs break out like a scrofula on what we eat—and if there's lower to go we'll go there when you've told your story. And more

that I haven't heart to speak——

MIO. [to GARTH] My father died in your place. And you could have saved him! You were one of the gang!

GARTH. Why, there you are. You certainly owe me nothing.

MIRIAMNE. [moaning] I want to die. I want to go away.

MIO. Yes, and you lied! And trapped me into it!

MIRIAMNE. But Mio, he's my brother. I couldn't give them my brother.

MIO. No. You couldn't. You were quite right. The gods were damned ironic tonight, and they've worked it out.

ESDRAS. What will be changed if it comes to trial again? More blood poured out

to a mythical justice, but your father lying still where he lies now.

MIO. The bright, ironical gods! What fun they have in heaven! When a man prays hard for any gift, they give it, and then one more to boot that makes it useless.

[To MIRIAMNE] You might have picked some other stranger to dance with!

MIRIAMNE. I know.

MIO. Or chosen

some other evening to sit outside in the rain. But no, it had to be this. All my life long

I've wanted only one thing, to say to the world and prove it: the man you killed was clean and true

and full of love as the twelve-year-old that stood

and taught in the temple. I can say that now and give my proofs—and now you stick a girl's face

between me and the rites I've sworn the dead shall have of me! You ask too much! Your brother

can take his chance! He was ready enough to let

an innocent man take certainty for him to pay for the years he's had. That parts us, then,

but we're parted anyway, by the same dark wind

that blew us together. I shall say what I have to say.

[He steps back] And I'm not welcome here.

MIRIAMNE. But don't go now! You've stayed too long! He'll be waiting!

MIO. Well, is this any safer?

Let the winds blow, the four winds of the world, and take us to the four winds.

[The three are silent before him. He turns and goes out.]

[Curtain]

ACT III

SCENE—*The river bank outside the tenement, a little before the close of the previous act. The rain still falls through the street lamps. The TWO NATTY YOUNG MEN IN SERGE AND GRAY are leaning against the masonry in a ray of light, concentrating on a game of chance. Each holds in his hand a packet of ten or fifteen crisp bills. They compare the numbers on the top notes and immediately a bill changes hands. This goes on with varying fortune until the tide begins to run toward the 1ST GUNMAN, who has accumulated nearly the whole supply. They play on in complete silence, evidently not wishing to make any noise. Occasionally they raise their heads slightly to look carefully about. Luck begins to favor the 2ND GUNMAN, and the notes come his way. Neither evinces the slight-*

est interest in how the game goes. They merely play on, bored, half-absorbed. There is a slight noise at the tenement door. They put the bills away and watch. TROCK comes out, pulls the door shut and comes over to them. He says a few words too low to be heard, and without changing expression the YOUNG MEN saunter toward the right. TROCK goes out to the left, and the 2ND PLAYER, watching that out of the corner of his eye, lingers in a glimmer of light to go on with the game. The 1ST, with an eye on the tenement door, begins to play without ado, and the bills again shift back and forth, then concentrate in the hands of the 1ST GUN-MAN. The 2ND shrugs his shoulders, searches his pockets, finds one bill, and playing with it begins to win heavily. They hear the door opening, and putting the notes away, slip out in front of the rock. MIO emerges, closes the door, looks round him and walks to left. Near the corner of the tenement he pauses, reaches out his hand to try the rain, looks up toward the street, and stands uncertainly a moment. He returns and leans against the tenement wall. MIRIAMNE comes out. MIO continues to look off into space as if unaware of her. She looks away.

MIO. This rather takes one off his high horse.—What I mean, tough weather for a hegira. You see, this is my sleeping suit, and if I get it wet,—*basta!*

MIRIAMNE. If you could only hide here.

MIO. Hide?

MIRIAMNE. Lucia would take you in. The street-piano man.

MIO. At the moment I'm afflicted with claustrophobia. I prefer to die in the open, seeking air.

MIRIAMNE. But you could stay there till daylight.

MIO. You're concerned about me.

MIRIAMNE. Shall I ask him?

MIO. No. On the other hand there's a certain reason in your concern. I looked up the street and our old friend Trock hunches patiently under the warehouse eaves.

MIRIAMNE. I was sure of that.

MIO. And here I am, a young man on a cold night, waiting the end of the rain. Being read my lesson by a boy, a blind boy—you know the one I mean. Knee-deep in the salt-marsh, Miriamne, bitten from within, fought.

MIRIAMNE. Wouldn't it be better if you came back in the house?

MIO. You forget my claustrophobia.

MIRIAMNE. Let me walk with you, then.

5 Please. If I stay beside you he wouldn't dare.

MIO. And then again he might.—We don't speak the same language, Miriamne.

MIRIAMNE. I betrayed you. Forgive me.

MIO. I wish I knew this region. There's prob-
10 ably a path along the bank.

MIRIAMNE. Yes. Shadow went that way.

MIO. That's true, too. So here I am, a young man on a wet night, and blind in my weather eye. Stay and talk to me.

MIRIAMNE. If it happens—it's my fault.

MIO. Not at all, sweet. You warned me to keep away. But I would have it. Now I have to find a way out. It's like a chess game. If you think long enough there's always a way out.—
20 For one or the other.—I wonder why white always wins and black always loses in the problems. White to move and mate in three moves. But what if white were to lose—ah, what then? Why, in that case, obviously black would be
25 white and white would be black.—As it often is.—As we often are.—Might makes white. Losers turn black. Do you think I'd have time to draw a gun?

MIRIAMNE. No.

MIO. I'm a fair shot. Also I'm fair game. [*The door of the tenement opens and GARTH comes out to look about quickly. Seeing only MIO and MIRIAMNE he goes in and comes out again almost immediately carrying one end of a door on which a body lies covered with a cloth. The*
35 *Hobo carries the other end. They go to the right with their burden*]

This is the burial of Shadow, then; feet first he dips, and leaves the haunts of
40 men.

Let us make mourn for Shadow, wetly lying, in elegiac stanzas and sweet crying.

Be gentle with him, little cold waves and fishes; nibble him not, respect his skin and tissues—

45 MIRIAMNE. Must you say such things?

MIO. My dear, some requiem is fitting over the dead, even

for Shadow. But the last rhyme was bad.

50 Whittle him not, respect his dying wishes.

That's better. And then to conclude:

His aromatic virtues, slowly rising
will circumnamb the isle, beyond disguis-
ing.

He clung to life beyond the wont of men.
Time and his silence drink us all. Amen.

How I hate these identicals. The French al-
low them, but the French have no principles
anyway. You know, Miriamne, there's really
nothing mysterious about human life. It's
purely mechanical, like an electric appliance. 10
Stop the engine that runs the generator and
the current's broken. When we think the brain
gives off a small electrical discharge—quite
measurable, and constant within limits. But 15
that's not what makes your hair stand up when
frightened.

MIRIAMNE. I think it's a mystery.

MIO. Human life? We'll have to wear veils
if we're to keep it a mystery much longer. Now 20
if Shadow and I were made up into sausages
we'd probably make very good sausages.

MIRIAMNE. Don't—

MIO. I'm sorry. I speak from a high place,
far off, long ago, looking down. The cortège re- 25
turns. [GARTH and the HOBO return, carrying
the door, the cloth lying loosely over it] I hope
you placed an obol in his mouth to pay the fer-
ryman? Even among the Greeks a little money
was prerequisite to Elysium. [GARTH and the 30
HOBO go inside, silent] No? It's grim to think of
Shadow lingering among lesser shades on the
hither side. For lack of a small gratuity. [ES-
DRAS comes out the open door and closes it be-
hind him]

ESDRAS. You must wait here, Mio, or go in-
side. I know
you don't trust me, and I haven't earned your
trust.

You're young enough to seek truth—
and there is no truth;
and I know that—
but I shall call the police and see that you
get safely off.

MIO. It's a little late for that.

ESDRAS. I shall try.

MIO. And your terms? For I daresay you
make terms?

ESDRAS. No.

MIO. Then let me remind you what will hap- 50
pen.
The police will ask some questions.

When they're answered
they'll ask more, and before they're done with
it

your son will be implicated.

5 ESDRAS. Must he be?

MIO. I shall not keep quiet.

[A pause]

ESDRAS. Still, I'll go.

MIO. I don't ask help, remember. I made no
truce.

He's not on my conscience, and I'm not on
yours.

ESDRAS. But you
could make it easier, so easily

15 He's my only son. Let him live.

MIO. His chance of survival's
better than mine, I'd say.

ESDRAS. I'll go.

MIO. I don't urge it.

20 ESDRAS. No. I put my son's life in your
hands.

When you're gone,

that may come to your mind.

MIO. Don't count on it.

ESDRAS. Oh,

I count on nothing. [He turns to go. MIRIAMNE
runs over to him and silently kisses his
hands]

Not mine, not mine, my daughter!

30 They're guilty hands. [He goes out left
GARTH'S violin is heard within]

MIO. There was a war in heaven

once, all the angels on one side, and all
the devils on the other, and since that time

35 disputes have raged among the learned, con-
cerning

whether the demons won, or the angels. Maybe
the angels won, after all.

MIRIAMNE. And again, perhaps

40 there are no demons or angels.

MIO. Oh, there are none.

But I could love your father.

MIRIAMNE. I love him. You see,

he's afraid because he's old. The less one has

45 to lose the more he's afraid.

MIO. Suppose one had

only a short stub end of life, or held

a flashlight with the batteries run down

till the bulb was dim, and knew that he could
live

while the glow lasted. Or suppose one knew
that while he stood in a little shelter of time

under a bridgehead, say, he could live, and then,
from then on, nothing. Then to lie and turn with the earth and sun, and regard them not in the least
when the bulb was extinguished or he stepped beyond
his circle into the cold? How would he live that last dim quarter-hour, before he went, minus all recollection, to grow in grass between cobblestones?

MIRIAMNE. Let me put my arms round you, Mio.
Then if anything comes, it's for me, too. [*She puts both arms round him*]

MIO. Only suppose this circle's charmed! To be safe until he steps from this lighted space into dark! Time pauses here
and high eternity grows in one quarter-hour in which to live.

MIRIAMNE. Let me see if anyone's there—there in the shadows. [*She looks toward the right*]

MIO. It might blast our eternity—blow it to bits. No, don't go. This is forever, here where we stand. And I ask you, Miriamne, how does one spend a forever?

MIRIAMNE. You're frightened?

MIO. Yes.
So much that time stands still.

MIRIAMNE. Why didn't I speak—tell them—when the officers were here? I failed you
in that one moment.

MIO. His life for mine? Oh, no. I wouldn't want it, and you couldn't give it. And if I should go on living we're cut apart by that brother of yours.

MIRIAMNE. Are we?

MIO. Well, think about it.
A body lies between us, buried in quicklime. Your allegiance is on the other side of that grave and riot to me.

MIRIAMNE. No, Mio! Mio, I love you!

MIO. I love you, too, but in case my life went on
beyond that barrier of dark—then Garth would run his risk of dying.

MIRIAMNE. He's punished, Mio.
His life's been torment to him. Let him go, for my sake, Mio.

MIO. I wish I could. I wish I'd never seen him—or you. I've steeped too long
in this thing. It's in my teeth and bones. I can't let go or forget. And I'll not add my lie to the lies that cumber his ground. We live our days
in a storm of lies that drifts the truth too deep for path or shovel; but I've set my foot on a truth
for once, and I'll trail it down!
[*A silence. MIRIAMNE looks out to the right*]
MIRIAMNE. There's someone there—I heard—

CARR comes in from the right

MIO. It's Carr.
CARR. That's right. No doubt about it.

MIO. Excuse me.
Glad to see you. This is Miriamne. Carr's a friend of mine.

CARR. You're better employed than when I saw you last.

MIO. Bow to the gentleman, Miriamne. That's meant for you.

MIRIAMNE. Thank you, I'm sure.
Should I leave you, Mio? You want to talk?

MIO. Oh, no,
we've done our talking.

MIRIAMNE. But—

CARR. I'm the one's out of place—I wandered back because I got worried about you,
that's the truth.—Oh—those two fellows with the hats
down this way, you know, the ones that ran after we heard the shooting—they're back again,
lingering or malingering down the bank, revisiting the crime, I guess. They may mean well.

MIO. I'll try to avoid them.

CARR. I didn't care
for the way they looked at me.—No luck, I suppose,
with that case history? The investigation you had on hand?

MIO. I can't say. By the way,
the stiff that fell in the water and we saw swirling
down the eddy, he came trudging up, later on,

long enough to tell his name. His name was
Shadow
but he's back in the water now. It's all in an
evening.

These things happen here.

CARR. Good God!

MIO. I know.

I wouldn't believe it if you told it.

CARR. But—
the man was alive?

MIO. Oh, not for long! He's dunked
for good this time. That's all that's happened.

CARR. Well,
if you don't need me—

MIRIAMNE. You had a message to send—
have you forgotten—?

MIO. I?—Yes, I had a message—
but I won't send it—not now.

MIRIAMNE. Then I will—!

MIO. No.

Let it go the way it is! It's all arranged
another way. You've been a good scout, Carr,
the best I ever knew on the road.

CARR. That sounds
like making your will.

MIO. Not yet, but when I do
I've thought of something to leave you. It's the
view

of Mt. Rainier from the Seattle jail,
snow over cloud. And the rusty chain in my
pocket from a pair of handcuffs my father
wore. That's all the worldly goods I'm
seized of.

CARR. Look, Mio—hell—
if you're in trouble—

MIO. I'm not. Not at all. I have
a genius that attends me where I go,
and guards me now. I'm fine.

CARR. Well, that's good news.
He'll have his work cut out.

MIO. Oh, he's a genius.

CARR. I'll see you then.

I'll be at the Grand Street place. I'm lucky to-
night,

and I can pay. I could even pay for two.

MIO. Thanks, I may take you up.

CARR. Good night.

MIO. Right, Carr.

CARR. [to MIRIAMNE] Good night.

MIRIAMNE. [after a pause] Good night. 50

[CARR goes out to the left]

Why did you do that? He's your genius, Mio,

and you let him go.

MIO. I couldn't help it.

MIRIAMNE. Call him

Run after him and call him!

5 MIO. I tried to say it
and it strangled in my throat. I might have
known

you'd win in the end.

MIRIAMNE. Is it for me?

10 MIO. For you?

It stuck in my throat, that's all I know.

MIRIAMNE. Oh, Mio,
I never asked for that! I only hoped
Garth could go clear.

15 MIO. Well, now he will.

MIRIAMNE. But you—

It was your chance!

MIO. I've lost
my taste for revenge if it falls on you. Oh, God,
20 deliver me from the body of this death

I've dragged behind me all these years! Miri-
anne!

Miriamne!

MIRIAMNE. Yes!

25 MIO. Miriamne, if you love me
teach me a treason to what I am, and have
been,
till I learn to live like a man! I think I'm wak-
ing

30 from a long trauma of hate and fear and death
that's hemmed me from my birth—and glimpse
a life

to be lived in hope—but it's young in me yet,
I can't

35 get free, or forgive! But teach me how to live
and forget to hate!

MIRIAMNE. He would have forgiven.

MIO. He?

MIRIAMNE. Your father. [A pause]

40 MIO. Yes. [Another pause]
You'll think it strange, but I've never
remembered that.

MIRIAMNE. How can I help you?

MIO. You have.

45 MIRIAMNE. If I were a little older—if I knew
the things to say! I can only put out my hands
and give you back the faith you bring to me
by being what you are. Because to me
you are all hope and beauty and brightness
drawn

across what's black and mean!

MIO. He'd have forgiven—

Then there's no more to say—I've groped long enough through this everglades of old revenges—here the road ends.—Miriamne, Miriamne, the iron I wore so long—it's eaten through and fallen from me. Let me have your arms. They'll say we're children—Well—the world's made up of children.

MIRIAMNE. Yes.

MIO. But it's too late for me.

MIRIAMNE. No. [*She goes into his arms, and they kiss for the first time*]

Then we'll meet again?

MIO. Yes.

MIRIAMNE. Where?

MIO. I'll write—
or send Carr to you.

MIRIAMNE. You won't forget?

MIO. Forget?

Whatever streets I walk, you'll walk them, too, 20
from now on, and whatever roof or stars
I have to house me, you shall share my roof
and stars and morning. I shall not forget.

MIRIAMNE. God keep you!

MIO. And keep you. And this to remember! 25
if I should die, Miriamne, this half-hour
is our eternity. I came here seeking
light in darkness, running from the dawn,
and stumbled on a morning. [*One of the YOUNG
MEN IN SERGE strolls in casually from the right, 30
looks up and down without expression, then,
seemingly having forgotten something, retraces
his steps and goes out. ESDRAS comes in slowly
from the left. He has lost his hat, and his face is
bleeding from a slight cut on the temple. He 35
stands abjectly near the tenement*]

MIRIAMNE. Father—what is it? [*She goes toward ESDRAS*]

ESDRAS. Let me alone. [*He goes nearer to MIO*] He wouldn't let me pass.

The street's so icy up along the bridge
I had to crawl on my knees—he kicked me
back

three times—and then he held me there—I
swear

what I could do I did! I swear to you
I'd save you if I could.

MIO. What makes you think
that I need saving?

ESDRAS. Child, save yourself if you can!
He's waiting for you.

MIO. Well, we knew that before.

ESDRAS. He won't wait much longer. He'll
come here—

he told me so. Those damned six months of
his—

5 he wants them all—and you're to die—you'd
spread

his guilt—I had to listen to it—

MIO. Wait—[*He walks forward and looks casually to the right, then returns*]

10 There must be some way up through the house
and out
across the roof—

ESDRAS. He's watching that. But come in—
and let me look.—

15 MIO. I'll stay here, thanks. Once in
and I'm a rat in a deadfall—I'll stay here—
look for me if you don't mind.

ESDRAS. Then watch for me—

I'll be on the roof—[*He goes in hurriedly*]

MIO. [*looking up*] Now all you silent powers
that make the sleet and dark, and never yet
have spoken, give us a sign, let the throw be
ours

this once, on this longest night, when the winter
sets

his foot on the threshold leading up to spring
and enters with remembered cold—let fall
some mercy with the rain. We are two lovers
here in your night, and we wish to live.

MIRIAMNE. Oh, Mio—

if you pray that way, nothing good will come!
You're bitter, Mio.

MIO. How many floors has this building?

MIRIAMNE. Five or six. It's not as high as the
bridge.

MIO. No, I thought not. How many pome-
granate seeds

did you eat, Persephone?⁶

MIRIAMNE. Oh, darling, darling,
40 if you die, don't die alone.

MIO. I'm afraid I'm damned

to hell, and you're not damned at all. Good
God,

how long he takes to climb!

45 MIRIAMNE. The stairs are steep.

[*A slight pause*]

⁶ daughter of Zeus and Demeter who had been carried off by Hades, or Pluto, and made queen of the lower world. Her mother moved Zeus to allow the girl to return, but since she had eaten pomegranate seeds in the lower world, she was allowed to spend only half of each year on earth.

MIO. I'll follow him.
 MIRIAMNE. He's there—at the window—
 now.
 He waves you to go back, not to go in.
 Mio, see, that path between the rocks—
 they're not watching that—they're out at the
 river—
 I can see them there—they can't watch both—
 it leads to a street above.
 MIO. I'll try it, then.
 Kiss me. You'll hear. But if you never hear—
 then I'm the king of hell, Persephone,
 and I'll expect you.
 MIRIAMNE. Oh, lover, keep safe
 MIO. Good-bye. [*He slips out quickly be-*
tween the rocks. There is a quick machine gun
rat-tat. The violin stops. MIRIAMNE runs toward
the path. MIO comes back slowly, a hand
pressed under his heart]
 It seems you were mistaken
 MIRIAMNE. Oh, God, forgive me! [*She puts*
an arm round him. He sinks to his knees]
 Where is it, Mio? Let me help you in! Quick,
 quick,
 let me help you!
 MIO. I hadn't thought to choose—thus—
 ground—
 but it will do. [*He slips down*]
 MIRIAMNE. Oh, God, forgive me!
 MIO. Yes?
 The king of hell was not forgiven then,
 Dis is his name, and Hades is his home—
 and he goes alone—
 MIRIAMNE. Why does he bleed so? Mio, if
 you go
 I shall go with you.
 MIO. It's better to stay alive.
 I wanted to stay alive—because of you—
 I leave you that—and what he said to me dy-
 ing:
 I love you, and will love you after I die.
 Tomorrow, I shall still love you, as I've loved
 the stars I'll never see, and all the mornings
 that might have been yours and mine. Oh,
 Miriamne,
 you taught me this.,
 MIRIAMNE. If only I'd never seen you
 then you could live—
 MIO. That's blasphemy—Oh, God,
 there might have been some easier way of it
 You didn't want me to die, did you,
 Miriamne—?
 You didn't send me away—?
 MIRIAMNE. Oh, never, never—
 MIO. Forgive me—kiss me—I've got blood
 on your lips—
 5 I'm sorry—it doesn't matter—I'm sorry—
 ESDRAS and GARTH come out
 MIRIAMNE. Mio—
 I'd have gone to die myself—you must hear
 10 this, Mio,
 I'd have died to help you—you must listen
 sweet,
 you must hear it—[*She rises*]
 I can die, too, see! You! There!
 15 You in the shadows!—You killed him to silence
 him! [*She walks toward the path*]
 But I'm not silenced! All that he knew I know,
 and I'll tell it tonight! Tonight—
 tell it and scream it
 20 through all the streets—that Trock's a murderer
 and he hired you for this murder!
 Your work's not done—
 and you won't live long! Do you hear?
 You're murderers, and I know who you are!
 25 [*The machine gun speaks again. She sinks*
to her knees. GARTH runs to her.]
 GARTH. You little fool! [*He tries to lift her*]
 MIRIAMNE. Don't touch me! [*She crawls to*
ward MIO]
 30 Look, Mio! They killed me, too. Oh, you can
 believe me
 now, Mio. You can believe I wouldn't hurt you,
 because I'm dying! Why doesn't he answer
 me?
 35 Oh, now he'll never know! [*She sinks down, her*
hand over her mouth, choking. GARTH kneels
beside her, then rises, shuddering. The HOBBO
comes out. LUCIA and PINY look out.]
 ESDRAS. It lacked only this.
 40 GARTH. Yes. [*ESDRAS bends over MIRIAMNE,*
then rises slowly]
 Why was the bastard born? Why did he come
 here?
 ESDRAS. Miriamne—Miriamne—yes, and
 45 Mio,
 one breath shall call you now—forgive us
 both—
 forgive the ancient evil of the earth
 that brought you here—
 50 GARTH. Why must she be a fool?
 ESDRAS. Well, they were wiser than you and
 I. To die

when you are young and untouched, that's beg-
gary
to a miser of years, but the devils locked in
synod
shake and are daunted when men set their
lives
at hazard for the heart's love, and lose. And
these,
who were yet children, will weigh more than
all
a city's elders when the experiment
is reckoned up in the end. Oh, Miriamne,
and Mio—Mio, my son—know this where you
lie,
this is the glory of earth-born men and women, 15
not to cringe, never to yield, but standing,
take defeat implacable and defiant,
die unsubmitting. I wish that I'd died so,
long ago; before you're old you'll wish
that you had died as they have. On this star, 20

in this hard star-adventure, knowing not
what the fires mean to right and left, nor
whether
a meaning was intended or presumed,
5 man can stand up, and look out blind, and say:
in all these turning lights I find no clue,
only a masterless night, and in my blood
no certain answer, yet is my mind my own,
yet is my heart a cry toward something dim
10 in distance, which is higher than I am
and makes me emporor of the endless dark
even in seeking! What odds and ends of life
men may live otherwise, let them live, and then
go out, as I shall go, and you. Our part
is only to bury them. Come, take her up.
They must not lie here.

[LUCIA and PINY come near to help. ESDRAS and
GARTH stoop to carry MIRIAMNE.]
[Curtain]

THE ADDING MACHINE*

ELMER RICE

Rice (1892–), whose plays appear at regular intervals on Broadway, has been chosen for last position in the drama section of this anthology. He thus represents a group of recognized playwrights (see I, 405), any one of whom

might equally well stand here. After taking a law degree, Rice tried playwrighting, and his first play, On Trial, was successful. From early work with little theater groups he progressed

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to a point at which he attracted wide attention (1923) with *The Adding Machine*, a truly original American play and an early experiment in expressionism. *Street Scene* and other social plays followed. Counsellor-at-Law was a hit on stage and screen, and Rice has since continued popular. His 1930 novel, *Voyage to Purulia*, was a satire on the movies. From 1935 to 1937 he was a regional director for the Federal Theatre Project. With two dozen plays to his credit (some in collaboration) and a sheaf of articles on the theater, Rice is a typical first-rank playwright of the older modern generation.

Characters

MR. ZERO
MRS. ZERO
DAISY DIANA DOROTHEA DEVORE
THE BOSS
MR. ONE
MRS. ONE
MR. TWO
MRS. TWO
MR. THREE
MRS. THREE
MR. FOUR
MRS. FOUR
MR. FIVE
MRS. FIVE
MR. SIX
MRS. SIX
POLICEMAN
JUDY O'GRADY
YOUNG MAN
SHRDLU
A HEAD
LIEUTENANT CHARLES
JOE
SCENE I. A bedroom
SCENE II. An office
SCENE III. A living room
SCENE IV. A place of justice
SCENE V. A graveyard
SCENE VI. A pleasant place
SCENE VII. Another office

SCENE I.

SCENE—A bedroom. A small room containing an "instalment-plan" bed, dresser, and chairs. An ugly electric-light fixture over the

bed with a single glaring naked lamp. One small window with the shade drawn. The walls are papered with sheets of foolscap covered with columns of figures.

MR. ZERO is lying in the bed, facing the audience, his head and shoulders visible. He is thin, sallow, under-sized, and partially bald. MRS. ZERO is standing before the dresser arranging her hair for the night. She is forty-five, sharp-featured, gray streaks in her hair. She is shapeless in her long-sleeved cotton nightgown. She is wearing her shoes, over which sag her ungartered stockings.

MRS. ZERO. [*as she takes down her hair*] I'm gettin' sick o' them Westerns. All them cow-boys ridin' around an' foolin' with them ropes. I don't care nothin' about that. I'm sick of 'em.
5 I don't see why they don't have more of them stories like "For Love's Sweet Sake." I like them sweet little love stories. They're nice an' wholesome. Mrs. Twelve was savin' to me only yesterday, "Mrs. Zero," says she, "what I like
10 is one of them wholesome stories, with just a sweet, simple little love story." "You're right, Mrs. Twelve," I says. "That's what I like, too." They're showin' too many Westerns at the Rosebud. I'm gettin' sick of them. I think we'll
15 start goin' to the Peter Stuyvesant. They got a good bill there Wednesday night. There's a Chubby Delano comedy called "Sea-Sick." Mrs. Twelve was tellin' me about it. She says it's a scream. They're havin' a picnic in the country
20 and they sit Chubby next to an old maid with a great big mouth. So he gets sore an' when she ain't lookin' he goes and catches a frog and drops it in her clam chowder. An' when she goes to eat the chowder the frog jumps out of it
25 an' right into her mouth. Talk about laugh! Mrs. Twelve was tellin' me she laughed so she nearly passed out. He sure can pull some funny ones. An' they got that big Grace Darling feature, "A Mother's Tears." She's sweet. But I don't like
30 her clothes. There's no style to them. Mrs. Nine was tellin' me she read in *Pictureland* that she ain't livin' with her husband. He's her second, too. I don't know whether they're divorced or just separated. You wouldn't think it to see her
35 on the screen. She looks so sweet and innocent. Maybe it ain't true. You can't believe all you read. They say some Pittsburgh millionaire is crazy about her and that's why she ain't livin'

with her husband. Mrs. Seven was tellin' me her brother-in-law has a friend that used to go to school with Grace Darling. He says her name ain't Grace Darling at all. Her right name is Elizabeth Dugan, he says, an' all them stories about her gettin' five thousand a week is the bunk, he says. She's sweet, though. Mrs. Eight was tellin' me that "A Mother's Tears" is the best picture she ever made. "Don't miss it, Mrs. Zero," she says. "It's sweet," she says. "Just sweet and wholesome. Cry!" she says, "I nearly cried my eyes out." There's one part in it where this big bum of an Englishman—he's a married man, too—an' she's this little simple country girl. An' she nearly falls for him, too. But she's sittin' out in the garden one day, and she looks up and there's her mother lookin' at her, right out of the clouds. So that night she locks the door of her room. An' sure enough, when everybody's in bed, along comes this big bum of an Englishman an' when she won't let him in what does he do but go an' kick open the door. "Don't miss it, Mrs. Zero," Mrs. Eight was tellin' me. It's at the Peter Stuyvesant Wednesday night, so don't be tellin' me you want to go to the Rosebud. The Eights seen it downtown at the Strand. They go downtown all the time. Just like us—nit! I guess by the time it gets to the Peter Stuyvesant all that part about kickin' in the door will be cut out. Just like they cut out that big cabaret scene in "The Price of Virtue." They sure are pullin' some rough stuff in the pictures nowadays. "It's no place for a young girl," I was tellin' Mrs. Eleven, only the other day. An' by the time they get uptown half of it is cut out. But you wouldn't go downtown—not if wild horses was to drag you. You can wait till they come uptown! Well, I don't want to wait, see? I want to see 'em when everybody else is seein' them an' not a month later. Now don't go tellin' me you ain't got the price. You could dig up the price all right, all right, if you wanted to. I notice you always got the price to go to the ball game. But when it comes to me havin' a good time then it's always: "I ain't got the price, I gotta start savin'." A fat lot you'll ever save! I got all I can do now makin' both ends meet an' you talkin' about savin'. [*She seats herself on a chair and begins removing her shoes and stockings*] An' don't go pullin' that stuff about bein' tired. "I been workin' hard all day. Twice a day in the subway's enough for

me." Tired! Where do you get that tired stuff, anyhow? What about me? Where do I come in? Scrubbin' floors an' cookin' your meals an' washin' your dirty clothes. An' you sittin' on a chair all day, just addin' figgers an' waitin' for five-thirty. There's no five-thirty for me. I don't wait for no whistle. I don't get no vacations neither. And what's more I don't get no pay envelope every Saturday night neither. I'd like to know where you'd be without me. An' what have I got to show for it?—slavin' my life away to give you a home. What's in it for me, I'd like to know? But it's my own fault, I guess. I was a fool for marryin' you. If I'd 'a' had any sense, I'd 'a' known what you were from the start. I wish I had it to do over again, I hope to tell you. You was goin' to do wonders, you was! You wasn't goin' to be a bookkeeper long—oh, no, not you. Wait till you got started—you was goin' to show 'em. There wasn't no job in the store that was too big for you. Well, I've been waitin'—waitin' for you to get started—see? It's been a good long wait, too. Twenty-five years! An' I ain't seen nothin' happen. Twenty-five years in the same job. Twenty-five years tomorrow! You're proud of it, ain't you? Twenty-five years in the same job an' never missed a day! That's somethin' to be proud of, ain't it? Sittin' for twenty-five years on the same chair, addin' up figures. What about bein' store-manager? I guess you forgot about that, didn't you? An' me at home here lookin' at the same four walls an' workin' my fingers to the bone to make both ends meet. Seven years since you got a raise! Ap' if you don't get one tomorrow, I'll bet a nickel you won't have the guts to go an' ask for one. I didn't pick much when I picked you, I'll tell the world. You ain't much to be proud of. [*She rises, goes to the window, and raises the shade. A few lighted windows are visible on the other side of the closed court. Looking out for a moment*] She ain't walkin' around tonight, you can bet your sweet life on that. An' she won't be walkin' around any more nights, neither. Not in this house, anyhow. [*She turns away from the window*] The dirty bum! The idea of her comin' to live in a house with respectable people. They should 'a' gave her six years, not six months. If I was the judge I'd of gave her life. A bum like that. [*She approaches the bed and stands there a moment*] I guess you're sorry she's gone. I guess you'd

like to sit home every night an' watch her goin's-on. You're somethin' to be proud of, you are! [*She stands on the bed and turns out the light. . . . A thin stream of moonlight filters in from the court. The two figures are dimly visible. MRS. ZERO gets into bed*] You'd better not start nothin' with women, if you know what's good for you. I've put up with a lot, but I won't put up with that. I've been slavin' away for twenty-five years, makin' a home for you an' nothin' to show for it. If you was any kind of a man you'd have a decent job by now an' I'd be gettin' some comfort out of life—instead of bein' just a slave, washin' pots an' standin' over the hot stove. I've stood it for twenty-five years an' I guess I'll have to stand it twenty-five more. But don't you go startin' nothin' with women—[*She goes on talking as the curtain falls.*]

SCENE II.

SCENE—An office in a department store. Wood and glass partitions. In the middle of the room, two tall desks back to back. At one desk on a high stool is ZERO. Opposite him at the other desk, also on a high stool, is DAISY DIANA DOROTHEA DEVORE, a plain, middle-aged woman. Both wear green eye shades and paper sleeve protectors. A pendent electric lamp throws light upon both desks. DAISY reads aloud figures from a pile of slips which lie before her. As she reads the figures, ZERO enters them upon a large square sheet of ruled paper which lies before him.

DAISY. [*reading aloud*] Three ninety-eight. Forty-two cents. A dollar fifty. A dollar fifty. A dollar twenty-five. Two dollars. Thirty-nine cents. Twenty-seven fifty.

ZERO. [*petulantly*] Speed it up a little, cancha?

DAISY. What's the rush? Tomorrer's another day.

ZERO. Aw, you make me sick.

DAISY. An' you make me sicker.

ZERO. Go on. Go on. We're losin' time.

DAISY. Then quit bein' so bossy. [*She reads*] Three dollars. Two sixty-nine. Eighty-one fifty. Fifty dollars. Eight seventy-five. Who do you think you are, anyhow?

ZERO. Never mind who I think I am. You tend to your work.

DAISY. Aw, don't be givin' me so many orders. Sixty cents. Twenty-four cents. Seventy-five cents. A dollar fifty. Two fifty. One fifty. One fifty. Two fifty. I don't have to take it from you and what's more I won't.

ZERO. Aw, quit talkin'.

DAISY. I'll talk all I want. Three dollars. Fifty cents. Fifty cents. Seven dollars. Fifty cents. Two fifty. Three fifty. Fifty cents. One fifty. Fifty cents. [*She goes on, bending over the slips and transferring them from one pile to another. ZERO bends over his desk, busily entering the figures*]

ZERO. [*without looking up*] You make me sick. Always shootin' off your face about somethin'. Talk, talk, talk. Just like all the other women. Women make me sick.

DAISY. [*busily fingering the slips*] Who do you think you are, anyhow? Bossin' me around. I don't have to take it from you, and what's more I won't. [*They both attend closely to their work, neither looking up*]

ZERO. Women make me sick. They're all alike. The judge gave her six months. I wonder what they do in the workhouse. Peel potatoes. I'll bet she's sore at me. Maybe she'll try to kill me when she gets out. I better be careful. Hello. Gul Slays Betrayer. Jealous Wife Slays Rival. You can't tell what a woman's liable to do. I better be careful.

DAISY. I'm gettin' sick of it. Always pickin' on me about somethin'. Never a decent word out of you. Not even the time o' day.

ZERO. I guess she wouldn't have the nerve at that. Maybe she don't even know it's me. They didn't even put my name in the paper, the big bums. Maybe she's been in the workhouse before. A bum like that. She didn't have nothin' on that one time—nothin' but a shirt. [*He glances up quickly, then bends over again*] You make me sick. I'm sick of lookin' at your face.

DAISY. Gee, ain't that whistle ever goin' to blow? You didn't used to be like that. Not even good mornin' or good evenin'. I ain't done nothin' to you. It's the young girls. Goin' around without corsets.

ZERO. Your face is gettin' all yellor. Why don't you put some paint on it? She was puttin' on paint that time. On her cheeks and on her lips. And that blue stuff on her eyes. Just sittin'

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there in a shimmy puttin' on the paint. An' walkin' around the room with her legs all bare.

DAISY. I wish I was dead.

ZERO. I was a goddam fool to let the wife get on to me. She oughta get six months at that. The dirty bum. Livin' in a house with respectable people. She'd be livin' there yet, if the wife hadn't o' got on to me. Damn her!

DAISY. I wish I was dead.

ZERO. Maybe another one'll move in. Gee, that would be great. But the wife's got her eye on me now.

DAISY. I'm scared to do it, though.

ZERO. You oughta move into that room. It's cheaper than where you're livin' now. I better tell you about it. I don't mean to be always pickin' on you.

DAISY. Gas. The smell of it makes me sick. [ZERO looks up and clears his throat] [Looking up, startled] Whadja say?

ZERO. I didn't say nothin'.

DAISY. I thought you did.

ZERO. You thought wrong.

[They bend over their work again]

DAISY. A dollar sixty. A dollar fifty. Two ninety. One sixty-two.

ZERO. Why the hell should I tell you? Fat chance of you forgettin' to pull down the shade!

DAISY. If I asked for carbolic they might get on to me.

ZERO. Your hair's gettin' gray. You don't wear them shirt waists any more with the low collars. When you'd bend down to pick some-
thin' up—

DAISY. I wish I knew what to ask for. Girl Takes Mercury After All-Night Party. Woman In Ten-Story Death Leap.

ZERO. I wonder where'll she go when she gets out. Gee, I'd like to make a date with her. Why didn't I go over there the night my wife went to Brooklyn? She never woulda found out.

DAISY. I seen Pauline Frederick¹ do it once. Where could I get a pistol though?

ZERO. I guess I didn't have the nerve.

DAISY. I'll bet you'd be sorry then that you been so mean to me. How do I know, though? Maybe you wouldn't.

ZERO. Nerve! I got as much nerve as anybody. I'm on the level, that's all. I'm a married man and I'm on the level.

DAISY. Anyhow, why ain't I got a right to

live? I'm as good as anybody else. I'm too refined, I guess. That's the whole trouble.

ZERO. The time the wife had pneumonia I thought she was goin' to pass out. But she didn't. The doctor's bill was eighty-seven dollars. [Looking up] Hey, wait a minute! Didn't you say eighty-seven dollars?

DAISY. [looking up] What?

ZERO. Was the last you said eighty-seven dollars?

DAISY. [consulting the slip] Forty-two fifty.

ZERO. Well, I made a mistake. Wait a minute. [He busies himself with an eraser] All right. Shoot.

DAISY. Six dollars. Three fifteen. Two twenty-five. Sixty-five cents. A dollar twenty. You talk to me as if I was dirt.

ZERO. I wonder if I could kill the wife without anybody findin' out. In bed some night. With a pillow.

DAISY. I used to think you was stuck on me.

ZERO. I'd get found out, though. They always have ways.

DAISY. We used to be so nice and friendly together when I first came here. You used to talk to me then.

ZERO. Maybe she'll die soon. I noticed she was coughin' this mornin'.

DAISY. You used to tell me all kinds o' things. You were goin' to show them all. Just the same, you're still sittin' here.

ZERO. Then I could do what I damn please. Oh, boy!

DAISY. Maybe it ain't all your fault neither. Maybe if you'd had the right kind of wife—somebody with a lot of common-sense, somebody refined—me!

ZERO. At that, I guess I'd get tired of bummin' around. A feller wants some place to hang his hat.

DAISY. I wish she would die.

ZERO. And when you start goin' with women you're liable to get into trouble. And lose your job maybe.

DAISY. Maybe you'd marry me.

ZERO. Gee, I wish I'd gone over there that night.

DAISY. Then I could quit workin'.

ZERO. Lots o' women would be glad to get me.

DAISY. You could look a long time before you'd find a sensible, refined girl like me.

¹ an early movie queen.

ZERO. Yes, sir, they could look a long time before they'd find a steady meal-ticket like me.

DAISY. I guess I'd be too old to have any kids. They say it ain't safe after thirty-five.

ZERO. Maybe I'd marry you. You might be all right, at that.

DAISY. I wonder—if you don't want kids—whether—if there's any way—

ZERO. [*looking up*] Hey! Hey! Can't you slow up? What do you think I am—a machine?

DAISY. [*looking up*] Say, what do you want, anyhow? First it's too slow an' then it's too fast. I guess you don't know what you want.

ZERO. Well, never mind about that. Just you slow up.

DAISY. I'm gettin' sick o' this. I'm goin' to ask to be transferred.

ZERO. Go ahead. You can't make me mad.

DAISY. Aw, keep quiet. [*She reads*] Two forty-five. A dollar twenty. A dollar fifty. Ninety cents. Sixty-three cents.

ZERO. Marry you! I guess not! You'd be as bad as the one I got.

DAISY. You wouldn't care if I did ask. I got a good mind to ask.

ZERO. I was a fool to get married.

DAISY. Then I'd never see you at all.

ZERO. What chance has a guy got with a woman tied around his neck?

DAISY. That time at the store picnic—the year your wife couldn't come—you were nice to me then.

ZERO. Twenty-five years holdin' down the same job!

DAISY. We were together all day—just sittin' around under the trees.

ZERO. I wonder if the boss remembers about it bein' twenty-five years.

DAISY. And comin' home that night—you sat next to me in the big delivery wagon.

ZERO. I got a hunch there's a big raise comin' to me.

DAISY. I wonder what it feels like to be really kissed. Men—dirty pigs! They want the bold ones.

ZERO. If he don't come across I'm goin' right up to the front office and tell him where he gets off.

DAISY. I wish I was dead.

ZERO. "Boss," I'll say, "I want to have a talk with you." "Sure," he'll say, "sit down. Have a Corona Corona." "No," I'll say, "I don't smoke."

"How's that?" he'll say. "Well, boss," I'll say, "it's this way. Every time I feel like smokin' I just take a nickel and put it in the old sock. A penny saved is a penny earned, that's the way I look at it." "Damn sensible," he'll say. "You got a wise head on you, Zero."

DAISY. I can't stand the smell of gas. It makes me sick. You coulda kissed me if you wanted to.

ZERO. "Boss," I'll say, "I ain't quite satisfied. I been on the job twenty-five years now and if I'm gonna stay I gotta see a future ahead of me." "Zero," he'll say, "I'm glad you came in. I've had my eye on you, Zero! Nothin' gets by me." "Oh, I know that, boss," I'll say. That'll hand him a good laugh, that will. "You're a valuable man, Zero," he'll say, "and I want you right up here with me in the front office. You're done addin' figgers. Mond'ay mornin' you move up here."

DAISY. Them kisses in the movies—them long ones—right on the mouth—

ZERO. I'll keep a-goin' right on up after that. I'll show some of them birds where they get off.

DAISY. That one the other night—"The Devil's Ahbi"—he put his arms around her—and her head fell back and her eyes closed—like she was in a daze.

ZERO. Just give me about two years and I'll show them birds where they get off.

DAISY. I guess that's what it's like—a kinda daze—when I see them like that, I just seem to forget everything.

ZERO. Then me for a place in Jersey. And maybe a little Buick. No tin Lizzie for mine. Wait till I get started—I'll show 'em.

DAISY. I can see it now when I kinda half-close my eyes. The way her head fell back. And his mouth pressed right up against hers. Oh, Gawd! it must be grand! [*There is a sudden shrill blast from a steam whistle*]

DAISY AND ZERO. [*together*] The whistle! [*With great agility they get off their stools, remove their eye shades and sleeve protectors and put them on the desks. Then each produces from behind the desk a hat—ZERO, a dusty derby, DAISY, a frowsy straw. . . . DAISY puts on her hat and turns towards ZERO as though she were about to speak to him. But he is busy cleaning his pen and pays no attention to her. She sighs and goes towards the door at the left*]

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ZERO. [*looking up*] G'night, Miss Devore. [*But she does not hear him and exits. ZERO takes up his hat and goes left. The door at the right opens and the BOSS enters—middle-aged, stoutish, bald, well dressed*]

THE BOSS. [*calling*] Oh—er—Mister—er—
[ZERO turns in surprise, sees who it is and trembles nervously]

ZERO. [*obsequiously*] Yes, sir. Do you want me, sir?

BOSS. Yes. Just come here a moment, will you?

ZERO. Yes, sir. Right away, sir. [*He fumbles his hat, picks it up, stumbles, recovers himself, and approaches the boss, every fiber quivering*]

BOSS. Mister—er—er—

ZERO. Zero.

BOSS. Yes, Mr. Zero. I wanted to have a little talk with you.

ZERO. [*with a nervous grin*] Yes sir, I been kinda expectin' it.

BOSS. [*staring at him*] Oh, have you?

ZERO. Yes, sir.

BOSS. How long have you been with us, Mister—er—Mister—

ZERO. Zero.

BOSS. Yes, Mister Zero.

ZERO. Twenty-five years today.

BOSS. Twenty-five years! That's a long time.

ZERO. Never missed a day.

BOSS. And you've been doing the same work all the time?

ZERO. Yes, sir. Right here at this desk.

BOSS. Then, in that case, a change probably won't be unwelcome to you.

ZERO. No, sir, it won't. And that's the truth.

BOSS. We've been planning a change in this department for some time.

ZERO. I kinda thought you had your eye on me.

BOSS. You were right. The fact is that my efficiency experts have recommended the installation of adding machines.

ZERO. [*staring at him*] Addin' machines?

BOSS. Yes, you've probably seen them. A mechanical device that adds automatically.

ZERO. Sure. I've seen them. Keys—and a handle that you pull. [*He goes through the motions in the air*]

BOSS. That's it. They do the work in half the time and a high-school girl can operate them.

Now, of course, I'm sorry to lose an old and faithful employee—

ZERO. Excuse me, but would you mind sayin' that again?

5 BOSS. I say I'm sorry to lose an employee who's been with me for so many years—

[*Soft music is heard—the sound of the mechanical player of a distant merry-go-round.*]

The part of the floor upon which the desk and

10 stools are standing begins to revolve very slowly] But, of course, in an organization like this, efficiency must be the first consideration—

[*The music becomes gradually louder and the revolutions more rapid*]

15 You will draw your salary for the full month. And I'll direct my secretary to give you a letter of recommendation—

ZERO. Wait a minute, boss. Let me get this right. You mean I'm canned?

20 BOSS. [*barely making himself heard above the increasing volume of sound*] I'm sorry—

no other alternative—greatly regret—old employee — efficiency — economy — business —

business—BUSINESS—[*His voice is drowned*]

25 by the music. The platform is revolving rapidly now. ZERO and the boss face each other. They are entirely motionless save for the boss's jaws,

which open and close incessantly. But the words are inaudible. The music swells and swells. To

30 it is added every off-stage effect of the theatre: the wind, the waves, the galloping horses, the locomotive whistle, the sleigh bells, the automobile siren, the glass-crash. New Year's Eve,

Election Night, Armistice Day, and the Mardi-

35 Gras. The noise is deafening, maddening, unendurable. Suddenly it culminates in a terrific

peal of thunder. For an instant there is a flash

of red and then everything is plunged into

blackness.]

[Curtain]

SCENE III.

SCENE—The ZERO dining room. Entrance

45 door at right. Doors to kitchen and bedroom at left. The walls, as in the first scene, are paper

with foolscap sheets covered with columns of

50 figures. In the middle of the room, upstage, a table set for two. Along each side wall seven

At the rise of the curtain MRS. ZERO is seen

seated at the table looking alternately at the en-

trance door and a clock on the wall. She wears a bungalow apron over her best dress

After a few moments, the entrance door opens and ZERO enters. He hangs his hat on a rack behind the door and coming over to the table seats himself at the vacant place. His movements throughout are quiet and abstracted.

MRS. ZERO. [*breaking the silence*] Well, it was nice of you to come home. You're only an hour late and that ain't very much. The supper don't get very cold in an hour. An' of course the part about our havin' a lot of company to-night don't matter. [*They begin to eat*] Amn' you even got sense enough to come home on time? Didn't I tell you we're gom' to have a lot o' company tonight? Didn't you know the Ones are comin'? An' the Twos? An' the Threes? An' the Fours? An' the Fives? And the Sixes? Didn't I tell you to be home on time? I might as well talk to a stone wall. [*They eat for a few moments in silence*] I guess you musta had some important business to attend to. Like watchin' the score-board. Or was two kids havin' a fight an' you was the referee? You sure do have a lot of business to attend to. It's a wonder you have time to come home at all. You gotta tough life, you have. Walk in, hang up your hat, an' put on the nose-bag. An' me in the hot kitchen all day, cookin' your supper an' waitin' for you to get good an' ready to come home! [*Again they eat in silence*] Maybe the boss kept you late tonight. Tellin' you what a big noise you are and how the store couldn't 'a' got along if you hadn't been pushin' a pen for twenty-five years. Where's the gold medal he pinned on you? Did some blind old lady take it away from you or did you leave it on the seat of the boss's limousine when he brought you home? [*Again a few moments of silence*] I'll bet he gave you a big raise, didn't he? Promoted you from the third floor to the fourth, maybe. Raise? A fat chance you got o' gettin' a raise. All they gotta do is put an ad in the paper. There's ten thousand like you layin' around the streets. You'll be holdin' down the same job at the end of another twenty-five years—if you ain't forgot how to add by that time. [*A noise is heard off-stage, a sharp clicking such as is made by the operation of the keys and levers of an adding machine. ZERO raises his*

head for a moment, but lowers it almost instantly] There's the door-bell. The company's here already. And we ain't hardly finished supper. [*She rises*] But I'm gom' to clear off the table whether you're finished or not. If you want your supper, you got a right to be home on time. Not standin' around lookin' at score-boards. [*As she piles up the dishes, ZERO rises and goes towards the entrance door*] Wait a minute! Don't open the door yet. Do you want the company to see all the mess? An' go an' put on a clean collar. You got red ink all over it. [*ZERO goes towards bedroom door*] I should think after pushin' a pen for twenty-five years, you'd learn how to do it without gettin' ink on your collar. [*ZERO exits to bedroom*] MRS. ZERO takes dishes to kitchen, talking as she goes] I guess I can stay up all night now washin' dishes. You should worry! That's what a man's got a wife for, ain't it? Don't he buy her her clothes an' let her eat with him at the same table? An' all she's gotta do is cook the meals an' do the washin' an' scrub the floor, an' wash the dishes, when the company goes. But, believe me, you're goin' to sling a mean dish-towel when the company goes tonight! [*While she is talking ZERO enters from bedroom. He wears a clean collar and is cramming the soiled one furtively into his pocket. MRS. ZERO enters from kitchen. She has removed her apron and carries a table cover which she spreads hastily over the table. The clicking noise is heard again*] There's the bell again. Open the door, cancha? [*ZERO goes to the entrance door and opens it*] Six men and six women file into the room in a double column. The men are all shapes and sizes, but their dress is identical with that of ZERO in every detail. Each, however, wears a wig of a different color. The women are all dressed alike, too, except that the dress of each is of a different color. [*Taking the first woman's hand*] How de do, Mrs. One.

MRS. ONE. How de do, Mrs. Zero. [*MRS. ZERO repeats this formula with each woman in turn. ZERO does the same with the men except that he is silent throughout. The files now separate, each man taking a chair from the right wall and each woman one from the left wall. Each sex forms a circle with the chairs very close together. The men—all except ZERO—smoke cigars. The women munch chocolates*]

SIX. Some rain we're havin'.

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FIVE. Never saw the like of it.
 FOUR. Worst in fourteen years, paper says.
 THREE. Y' can't always go by the papers.
 TWO. No, that's right, too.
 ONE. We're liable to forget from year to year.
 SIX. Yeh, come t' think, last year was pretty bad, too.
 FIVE. An' how about two years ago?
 FOUR. Still this year's pretty bad.
 THREE. Yeh, no gettin' away from that.
 TWO. Might be a whole lot worse.
 ONE. Yeh, it's all the way you look at it. Some rain, though.
 MRS. SIX. I like them little organdie dresses.
 MRS. FIVE. Yeh, with a little lace trimmin' on the sleeves.
 MRS. FOUR. Well, I like 'em plain myself.
 MRS. THREE. Yeh, what I always say is the plainer the more refined.
 MRS. TWO. Well, I don't think a little lace does any harm.
 MRS. ONE. No, it kinda dresses it up.
 MRS. ZERO. Well, I always say it's all a matter of taste.
 MRS. SIX. I saw you at the Rosebud Movie Thursday night, Mr. One.
 ONE. Pretty punk show, I'll say.
 TWO. They're gettin' worse all the time.
 MRS. SIX. But who was the charming lady, Mr. One?
 ONE. Now don't you go makin' trouble for me. That was my sister.
 MRS. FIVE. Oh! That's what they all say.
 MRS. FOUR. Never mind! I'll bet Mrs. One knows what's what, all right.
 MRS. ONE. Oh, well, he can do what he likes—'slong as he behaves himself.
 THREE. You're in luck at that, One. Fat chance I got of gettin' away from the frau even with my sister.
 MRS. THREE. You oughta be glad you got a good wife to look after you.
 THE OTHER WOMEN. [*in unison*] That's right, Mrs. Three.
 FIVE. I guess I know who wears the pants in your house, Three.
 MRS. ZERO. Never mind. I saw them holdin' hands at the movie the other night.
 THREE. She musta been tryin' to get some money away from me.
 MRS. THREE. Swell chance anybody'd have of gettin' any money away from you. [*General laughter*]
 FOUR. They sure are a loving couple.
 MRS. TWO. Well, I think we oughta change the subject.
 MRS. ONE. Yes, let's change the subject.
 SIX. [*sotto voce*] Did you hear the one about the travellin' salesman?
 FIVE. It seems this guy was in a sleeper.
 FOUR. Goin' from Albany to San Diego.
 THREE. And in the next berth was an old maid.
 TWO. With a wooden leg.
 ONE. Well, along about midnight—[*They all put their heads together and whisper*]
 MRS. SIX. [*sotto voce*] Did you hear about the Sevens?
 MRS. FIVE. They're gettin' a divorce.
 MRS. FOUR. It's the second time for him.
 MRS. THREE. They're two of a kind, if you ask me.
 MRS. TWO. One's as bad as the other.
 MRS. ONE. Worse.
 MRS. ZERO. They say that she—
 [*They all put their heads together and whisper*]
 SIX. I think this woman suffrage is the bunk.
 FIVE. It sure is! Politics is a man's business.
 FOUR. Woman's place is in the home.
 THREE. That's it! Lookin' after the kids, 'stead of hangin' around the streets.
 TWO. You hit the nail on the head that time.
 ONE. The trouble is they don't know what they want.
 MRS. SIX. Men sure get me tired.
 MRS. FIVE. They sure are a lazy lot.
 MRS. FOUR. And dirty.
 MRS. THREE. Always grumblin' about some-
 thin'.
 MRS. TWO. When they're not lyin'!
 MRS. ONE. Or messin' up the house.
 MRS. ZERO. Well, believe me, I tell mine where he gets off.
 SIX. Business conditions are sure bad.
 FIVE. Never been worse.
 FOUR. I don't know what we're comin' to.
 THREE. I look for a big smash-up in about three months.
 TWO. Wouldn't surprise me a bit.
 ONE. We're sure headin' for trouble.
 MRS. SIX. My aunt has gall-stones.
 MRS. FIVE. My husband has bunions.
 MRS. FOUR. My sister expects next month.

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MRS. THREE. My cousin's husband has erysipelas.

MRS. TWO. My niece has St. Vitus's dance.

MRS. ONE. My boy has fits.

MRS. ZERO. I never felt better in my life. 5 Knock wood!

SIX. Too damn much agitation, that's at the bottom of it.

FIVE. That's it! Too damn many strikes.

FOUR. Foreign agitators, that's what it is. 10

THREE. They ought to be run outa the country.

TWO. What the hell do they want, anyhow?

ONE. They don't know what they want, if you ask me. 15

SIX. America for the Americans is what I say!

ALL. [*in unison*] That's it! Damn foreigners! Damn dagoes! Damn Catholics! Damn sheen-ies! 20 Damn niggers! Jail 'em! shoot 'em! hang 'em! lynch 'em! burn 'em! [*They all rise*] [*Sing in unison*]

My country 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty!

MRS. FOUR. Why so pensive, Mr. Zero? 25

ZERO. [*speaking for the first time*] I'm thinkin'.

MRS. FOUR. Well, be careful not to sprain your mind. [*Laughter*]

MRS. ZERO. Look at the poor men all by 30 themselves. We ain't very sociable.

ONE. Looks like we're neglectin' the ladies. [*The women cross the room and join the men, all chattering loudly. The door-bell rings*]

MRS. FOUR. Sh! The door-bell! [*The volume 35 of sound slowly diminishes. Again the door-bell*]

ZERO. [*quietly*] I'll go. It's for me. [*They watch curiously as ZERO goes to the door and opens it, admitting a policeman. There is a 40 murmur of surprise and excitement*]

POLICEMAN. I'm lookin' for Mr. Zero. [*They all point to ZERO*]

ZERO. I've been expectin' you.

POLICEMAN. Come along! 45

ZERO. Just a minute. [*He puts his hand in his pocket*]

POLICEMAN. What's he tryin' to pull? [*He draws a revolver*] I got you covered.

ZERO. Sure, that's all right. I just want to 50 give you somethin'. [*He takes the collar from his pocket and gives it to the policeman*]

POLICEMAN. [*suspiciously*] What's that?

ZERO. The collar I wore.

POLICEMAN. What do I want it for?

ZERO. It's got blood-stains on it.

POLICEMAN. [*pocketing it*] All right, come along!

ZERO. [*turning to MRS. ZERO*] I gotta go with him. You'll have to dry the dishes yourself.

MRS. ZERO. [*rushing forward*] What are they 10 takin' you for?

ZERO. [*calmly*] I killed the boss this afternoon.

[*Quick curtain as the POLICEMAN takes him off.*]

SCENE IV.

SCENE—A court of justice. Three bare white walls without door or windows except for a 20 single door in the right wall. At the right is a jury-box in which are seated MESSRS. ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR, FIVE, and SIX, and their respective wives. On either side of the jury box stands a uniformed OFFICER. Opposite the jury-box is 25 a long, bare oak table piled high with law books. Behind the books ZERO is seated, his face buried in his hands. There is no other furniture in the room. A moment after the rise of the curtain, one of the officers rises and, going 30 around the table, taps ZERO on the shoulder. ZERO rises and accompanies the OFFICER. The OFFICER escorts him to the great empty space in the middle of the courtroom, facing the jury. He motions to ZERO to stop, then points to the 35 jury and resumes his place beside the jury-box. ZERO stands there looking at the jury, bewildered and half afraid. The JURORS give no sign of having seen him. Throughout they sit with folded arms, staring stolidly before them.

ZERO. [*beginning to speak; haltingly*] Sure I killed him. I ain't sayin' I didn't, am I? Sure I killed him. Them lawyers! They give me a good stiff pain, that's what they give me. Half the 45 time I don't know what the hell they're talkin' about. Objection sustained. Objection overruled. What's the big idea, anyhow? You ain't heard me do any objectin', have you? Sure not! What's the idea of objectin'? You got a right to know. What I say is if one bird kills another bird, why you got a right to call him for it. That's what I say. I know all about that. I been

on the jury, too. Them lawyers! Don't let 'em fill you full of bunk. All that bull about it bein' red ink on the bill-file. Red ink nothin'! It was blood, see? I want you to get that right. I killed him, see? Right through the heart with the bill-file, see? I want you to get that right—all of you. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve. Twelve of you. Six and six. That makes twelve. I figgered it up often enough. Six and six makes twelve. And five is seventeen. And eight is twenty-five. And three is twenty-eight. Eight and carry two. Aw, cut it out! Them damn figgers! I can't forget 'em. Twenty-five years, see? Eight hours a day, exceptin' Sundays. And July and August half-day Saturday. One week's vacation with pay. And another week without pay if you want it. Who the hell wants it? Layin' around the house listenin' to the wife tellin' you where you get off. Nix! An' legal holidays. I nearly forgot them. New Year's, Washington's Birthday, Decoration Day, Fourth o' July, Labor Day, Election Day, Thanksgivin', Christmas. Good Friday if you want it. An' if you're a Jew, Young Kipper an' the other one—I forget what they call it. The dirty sheenies—always gettin' two to the other bird's one. An' when a holiday comes on Sunday, you get Monday off. So that's fair enough. But when the Fourth o' July comes on Saturday, why you're out of luck on account of Saturday bein' a half-day anyhow. Get me? Twenty-five years—I'll tell you somethin' funny. Decoration Day an' the Fourth o' July are always on the same day o' the week. Twenty-five years. Never missed a day, and never more'n five minutes late. Look at my time card if you don't believe me. Eight twenty-seven, eight thirty, eight twenty-nine, eight twenty-seven, eight thirty-two. Eight an' thirty-two's forty an'—Goddam them figgers! I can't forget 'em. They're funny things, them figgers. They look like people sometimes. The eights, see? Two dots for the eyes and a dot for the nose. An' a line. That's the mouth, see? An' there's others remind you of other things—but I can't talk about them, on account of there bein' ladies here. Sure I killed him. Why didn't he shut up? If he'd only shut up! Instead o' talkin' an' talkin' about how sorry he was an' what a good guy I was an' this an' that. I felt like sayin' to him: "For Christ's sake, shut up!" But I didn't have the nerve, see? I didn't have

the nerve to say that to the boss. An' he went on talkin', sayin' how sorry he was, see? He was standin' right close to me. An' his coat only had two buttons on it. Two an' two makes four an' —aw, can it! An' there was the bill-file on the desk. Right where I could touch it. It ain't right to kill a guy. I know that. When I read all about him in the paper an' about his three kids I felt like a cheap skate, I tell you. They had the kids' pictures in the paper, right next to mine. An' his wife, too. Gee, it must be swell to have a wife like that. Some guys sure is lucky. An' he left fifty thousand dollars just for a rest-room for the girls in the store. He was a good guy, at that. Fifty thousand. That's more'n twice as much as I'd have if I saved every nickel I ever made. Let's see. Twenty-five an' twenty-five an' twenty-five an'—aw, cut it out! An' the ads had a big, black border around 'em; an' all it said was that the store would be closed for three days on account of the boss bein' dead. That nearly handed me a laugh, that did. All them floor-walkers an' buyers an' high-muck-a-mucks havin' me to thank for gettin' three days off. I hadn't oughta killed him. I ain't sayin' nothin' about that. But I thought he was goin' to give me a raise, see? On account of bein' there twenty-five years. He never talked to me before, see? Except one mornin' we happened to come in the store together and I held the door open for him and he said "Thanks." Just like that, see? "Thanks!" That was the only time he ever talked to me. An' when I see him comin' up to my desk, I didn't know where I got off. A big guy like that comin' up to my desk. I felt like I was chokin' like and all of a sudden I got a kind o' bad taste in my mouth like when you get up in the mornin'. I didn't have no right to kill him. The district attorney is right about that. He read the law to you right out o' the book. Killin' a bird—that's wrong. But there was that girl, see? Six months they gave her. It was a dirty trick tellin' the cops on her like that. I shouldn't 'a' done that. But what was I gonna do? The wife wouldn't let up on me. I hadda do it. She used to walk around the room, just in her undershirt, see? Nothin' else on. Just her undershirt. An' they gave her six months. That's the last I'll ever see of her. Them birds—how do they get away with it? Just grabbin' women, the way you see 'em do in the pictures. I've seen lots I'd like to grab like that, but I ain't

got the nerve—in the subway an' on the street an' in the store buyin' things. Pretty soft for them shoe-salesmen, I'll say, lookin' at women's legs all day. Them lawyers! They give me a pain, I tell you—a pam! Sayin' the same thing over an' over again. I never said I didn't kill him. But that ain't the same as bein' a regular murderer. What good did it do me to kill him? I didn't make nothin' out of it. Answer yes or no! Yes or no, me elbow! There's some things you can't answer yes or no. Give me the once-over, you guys. Do I look like a murderer? Do I? I never did no harm to nobody. Ask the wife. She'll tell you. Ask anybody. I never got into trouble. You wouldn't count that one time at the Polo Grounds. That was just fun like. Everybody was yellin', "Kill the umpire! Kill the umpire!" An' before I knew what I was doin' I fired the pop bottle. It was on account of everybody yellin' like that. Just in fun like, see? The yellin' dog! Callin' that one a strike—a mile away from the plate. Anyhow, the bottle didn't hit him. An' when I seen the cop comin' up the aisle, I beat it. That didn't hurt nobody. It was just in fun like, see? An' that time in the subway. I was readin' about a lynchin', see? Down in Georgia. They took the nigger an' they tied him to a tree. An' they poured kerosene on him and lit a big fire under him. The dirty nigger! Boy, I'd of liked to been there, with a gat in each hand, pumpin' him full of lead. I was readin' about it in the subway, see? Right at Times Square where the big crowd gets on. An' all of a sudden this big nigger steps right on my foot. It was lucky for him I didn't have a gun on me. I'd of killed him sure, I guess. I guess he couldn't help it all right on account of the crowd, but a nigger's got no right to step on a white man's foot. I told him where he got off all right. The dirty nigger. But that didn't hurt nobody, either. I'm a pretty steady guy, you gotta admit that. Twenty-five years in one job an' I never missed a day. Fifty-two weeks in a year. Fifty-two an' fifty-two an' fifty-two an'—They didn't have t' look for me, did they? I didn't try to run away, did I? Where was I goin' to run to! I wasn't thinkin' about it at all, see? I'll tell you what I was thinkin' about—how I was goin' to break it to the wife about bein' canned. He canned me after twenty-five years, see? Did the lawyers tell you about that? I forget. All that talk gives me a headache. Ob-

jection sustained. Objection overruled. Answer yes or no. It gives me a headache. And I can't get the figgers outta my head. But that's what I was thinkin' about—how I was goin' t' break it to the wife about bein' canned. An' what Miss Devore would think when she heard about me killin' him. I bet she never thought I had the nerve to do it. I'd of married her if the wife had passed out. I'd be holdin' down my job yet, if he hadn't o' canned me. But he kept talkin' an' talkin'. An' there was the bill file right where I could reach it. Do you get me? I'm just a regular guy like anybody else. Like you birds, now. [*For the first time the jurors relax, looking indignantly at each other and whispering*] Suppose you was me, now. Maybe you'd 'a' done the same thing. That's the way you oughta look at it, see? Suppose you was me—

THE JURORS. [*rising as one and shouting in unison*] GUILTY! [*zero falls back, stunned for a moment by their vociferousness. The jurors right-face in their places and file quickly out of the jury-box and towards the door in a double column*]

ZERO. [*recovering speech as the jurors pass out at the door*] Wait a minute. Jest a minute. You don't get me right. Jest give me a chance an' I'll tell you how it was. I'm all mixed up, see? On account of them lawyers. And the figgers in my head. But I'm goin' to tell you how it was. I was there twenty-five years, see? An' they gave her six months, see? [*He goes on haranguing the empty jury-box as the curtain falls.*]

SCENE V.

SCENE—A grave-yard in full moonlight. It is a second-rate grave-yard—no elaborate tombstones or monuments—just simple headstones and here and there a cross. At the back is an iron fence with a gate in the middle. At first no one is visible, but there are occasional sounds throughout: the hooting of an owl, the whistle of a distant whippoorwill, the croaking of a bull-frog, and the yowling of a serenading cat. After a few moments two figures appear outside the gate—a man and a woman. She pushes the gate and it opens with a rusty creak. The couple enter. They are now fully visible in the moonlight—JUDY O'GRADY and a YOUNG MAN.

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JUDY. [*advancing*] Come on, this is the place.

YOUNG MAN. [*hanging back*] This! Why this here is a cemetery.

JUDY. Aw, quit yer kiddin'!

YOUNG MAN. You don't mean to say—

JUDY. What's the matter with this place?

YOUNG MAN. A cemetery!

JUDY. Sure. What of it?

YOUNG MAN. You must be crazy.

JUDY. This place is all right, I tell you. I been here lots o' times.

YOUNG MAN. Nix on this place for me!

JUDY. Ain't this place as good as another? Whaddya afraid of? They're all dead ones here! They don't bother you. [*With sudden interest*] Oh, look, here's a new one.

YOUNG MAN. Come on out of here.

JUDY. Wait a minute. Let's see what it says. [*She kneels on a grave in the foreground and putting her face close to headstone spells out the inscription*] Z-E-R-O. Z-e-r-o. Zero! Say, that's the guy—

YOUNG MAN. Zero? He's the guy killed his boss, ain't he?

JUDY. Yeh, that's him, all right. But what I'm thinkin' of is that I went to the hoosegow on account of him.

YOUNG MAN. What for?

JUDY. You know, same old stuff. Tenement House Law. [*Mincingly*] Section blaa-blaa of the Penal Code. Third Offence. Six months.

YOUNG MAN. And this bird—

JUDY. [*contemptuously*] Him? He was mamma's white-haired boy. We lived in the same house. Across the airshaft, see? I used to see him lookin' in my window. I guess his wife musta seen him, too. Anyhow, they went and turned the bulls on me. And now I'm out and he's in. [*Suddenly*] Say—say—[*She bursts into a peal of laughter*]

YOUNG MAN. [*nervously*] What's so funny?

JUDY. [*rocking with laughter*] Say, wouldn't it be funny—if—if—[*She explodes again*] That would be a good joke on him, all right. He can't do nothin' about it now, can he?

YOUNG MAN. Come on out of here. I don't like this place.

JUDY. Aw, you're a bum sport. What do you want to spoil my joke for? [*A cat yammers melodiously*]

YOUNG MAN. [*half hysterically*] What's that?

JUDY. It's only the cats. They seem to like it here all right. But come on if you're afraid. [*They go towards the gate. As they go out*] You nervous men sure are the limit. [*They go out through the gate. As they disappear ZERO's grave opens suddenly and his head appears*]

ZERO. [*looking about*] That's funny! I thought I heard her talkin' and laughin'. But I don't see nobody. Anyhow, what would she be doin' here? I guess I must 'a' been dreamin'. But how could I be dreamin' when I ain't been asleep? [*He looks about again*] Well, no use goin' back. I can't sleep, anyhow. I might as well walk around a little. [*He rises out of the ground, very rigidly. He wears a full-dress suit of very antiquated cut and his hands are folded stiffly across his breast*] [*Walking woodenly*] Gee! I'm stiff! [*He slowly walks a few steps, then stops*] Gee, it's lonesome here! [*He shivers and walks on aimlessly*] I should 'a' stayed where I was. But I thought I heard her laughin'. [*A loud sneeze is heard. ZERO stands motionless, quaking with terror. The sneeze is repeated*] [*Hoarsely*] What's that?

A MILD VOICE. It's all right. Nothing to be afraid of. [*From behind a headstone SHRDLU appears. He is dressed in a shabby and ill-fitting cutaway. He wears silver-rimmed spectacles and is smoking a cigarette*]

SHRDLU.² I hope I didn't frighten you.

ZERO. [*still badly shaken*] No-o. It's all right. You see, I wasn't expectin' to see anybody.

SHRDLU. You're a newcomer, aren't you?

ZERO. Yeh, this is my first night. I couldn't seem to get to sleep.

SHRDLU. I can't sleep either. Suppose we keep each other company, shall we?

ZERO. [*eagerly*] Yeh, that would be great. I been feelin' awful lonesome.

SHRDLU. [*nodding*] I know. Let's make ourselves comfortable. [*He scats himself easily on a grave. ZERO tries to follow his example but he is stiff in every joint and groans with pain*]

ZERO. I'm kinda stiff.

SHRDLU. You mustn't mind the stiffness. It wears off in a few days. [*He seats himself on the grave beside ZERO and produces a package of cigarettes*] Will you have a Camel?

² The name, formed from the letters on one bank of keys on a linotype machine, preserves the wooden anonymity of most of the play's characters.

ZERO. No, I don't smoke.

SHRDLU. I find it helps keep the mosquitoes away. [*He lights a cigarette. Suddenly taking the cigarette out of his mouth*] Do you mind if I smoke, Mr.—Mr.—?

ZERO. No, go right ahead.

SHRDLU. [*replacing the cigarette*] Thank you. I didn't catch your name. [*ZERO does not reply*] [*Mildly*] I say I didn't catch your name.

ZERO. I heard you the first time. [*Hesitant*] I'm scared if I tell you who I am and what I done, you'll be off me.

SHRDLU. [*sadly*] No matter what your sins may be, they are as snow compared to mine.

ZERO. You got another guess comin'. [*He pauses dramatically*] My name's Zero. I'm a murderer.

SHRDLU. [*nodding calmly*] Oh, yes, I remember reading about you, Mr. Zero.

ZERO. [*a little piqued*] And you still think 20 you're worse than me?

SHRDLU. [*throwing away his cigarette*] Oh, a thousand times worse, Mr. Zero—a million times worse.

ZERO. What did you do?

SHRDLU. I, too, am a murderer.

ZERO. [*looking at him in amazement*] Go on! You're kiddin' me!

SHRDLU. Every word I speak is the truth. Mr. Zero. I am the foulest, the most sinful of 30 murderers! You only murdered your employer, Mr. Zero. But I—I murdered my mother. [*He covers his face with his hands and sobs*]

ZERO. [*horrified*] The hell yer say!

SHRDLU. [*sobbing*] Yes, my mother!—my 35 beloved mother!

ZERO. [*suddenly*] Say, you don't mean to say you're Mr.—

SHRDLU. [*nodding*] Yes. [*He wipes his eyes, still quivering with emotion*]

ZERO. I remember readin' about you in the papers.

SHRDLU. Yes, my guilt has been proclaimed to all the world. But that would be a trifle if only I could wash the stain of sin from my soul. 45

ZERO. I never heard of a guy killin' his mother before. What did you do it for?

SHRDLU. Because I have a sinful heart—there is no other reason.

ZERO. Did she always treat you square and 50 all like that?

SHRDLU. She was a saint—a saint, I tell you.

She cared for me and watched over me as only a mother can.

ZERO. You mean to say you didn't have a scrap or nothin'?

5 SHRDLU. Never a harsh or an unkind word. Nothing except loving care and good advice. From my infancy she devoted herself to guiding me on the right path. She taught me to be thrifty, to be devout, to be unselfish, to shun 10 evil companions and to shut my ears to all the temptations of the flesh—in short, to become a virtuous, respectable, and God-fearing man. [*He groans*] But it was a hopeless task. At fourteen I began to show evidence of my sinful 15 nature.

ZERO. [*breathlessly*] You didn't kill anybody else, did you?

SHRDLU. No, thank God, there is only one murder on my soul. But I ran away from home.

ZERO. You did!

SHRDLU. Yes. A companion lent me a profane book—the only profane book I have ever read, I'm thankful to say. It was called *Treasure Island*. Have you ever read it?

25 ZERO. No, I never was much on readin' books.

SHRDLU. It is a wicked book—a lurid tale of adventure. But it kindled in my sinful heart a desire to go to sea. And so I ran away from 30 home.

ZERO. What did you do—get a job as a sailor?

SHRDLU. I never saw the sea—not to the day of my death. Luckily, my mother's loving intuition warned her of my intention and I was sent back home. She welcomed me with open arms. Not an angry word, not a look of reproach. But I could read the mute suffering in her eyes as we prayed together all through the night.

40 ZERO [*sympathetically*] Gee, that must 'a' been tough. Gee, the mosquitoes are bad, ain't they? [*He tries awkwardly to slap at them with his stiff hands*]

SHRDLU. [*absorbed in his narrative*] I thought that experience had cured me of evil and I began to think about a career. I wanted to go in foreign missions at first, but we couldn't bear the thought of the separation. So we finally decided that I should become a proof- 50 reader.

³ R. L. Stevenson's anything-but-profane novel of one boy's adventures.

ZERO. Say, slip me one o' them Camels, will you? I'm gettin' all bit up.

SHRDLU. Certainly. [*He hands ZERO cigarettes and matches*]

ZERO. [*lighting up*] Go ahead. I'm listenin'.

SHRDLU. By the time I was twenty I had a good job reading proof for a firm that printed catalogues. After a year they promoted me and let me specialize in shoe catalogues.

ZERO. Yeh? That must 'a' been a good job.

SHRDLU. It was a very good job. I was on the shoe catalogues for thirteen years. I'd been on them yet, if I hadn't—[*He chokes back a sob*]

ZERO. They oughta put a shot o' citronella in that embalmin'-fluid.

SHRDLU. [*he sighs*] We were so happy together. I had my steady job. And Sundays we would go to morning, afternoon, and evening service. It was an honest and moral mode of life.

ZERO. It sure was.

SHRDLU. Then came that fatal Sunday. Dr. Amaranth, our minister, was having dinner with us—one of the few pure spirits on earth. When he had finished saying grace, we had our soup. Everything was going along as usual—we were eating our soup and discussing the sermon, just like every other Sunday I could remember. Then came the leg of lamb—[*He breaks off, then resumes in a choking voice*] I see the whole scene before me so plainly—it never leaves me—Dr. Amaranth at my right, my mother at my left, the leg of lamb on the table in front of me and the cuckoo clock on the little shelf between the windows. [*He stops and wipes his eyes*]

ZERO. Yeh, but what happened?

SHRDLU. Well, as I started to carve the lamb—Did you ever carve a leg of lamb?

ZERO. No, corned beef was our speed.

SHRDLU. It's very difficult on account of the bone. And when there's gravy in the dish there's danger of spilling it. So Mother always used to hold the dish for me. She leaned forward, just as she always did, and I could see the gold locket around her neck. It had my picture in it and one of my baby curls. Well, I raised my knife to carve the leg of lamb—and instead I cut my mother's throat! [*He sobs*]

ZERO. You must 'a' been crazy!

SHRDLU. [*raising his head, vehemently*] No! Don't try to justify me. I wasn't crazy. They

tried to prove at the trial that I was crazy. But Dr. Amaranth saw the truth! He saw it from the first! He knew that it was my sinful nature—and he told me what was in store for me.

5 ZERO. [*trying to be comforting*] Well, your troubles are over now.

SHRDLU. [*his voice rising*] Over! Do you think this is the end?

ZERO. Sure. What more can they do to us?

10 SHRDLU. [*his tones growing shriller and shriller*] Do you think there can ever be any peace for such as we are—murderers, sinners? Don't you know what awaits us—flames, eternal flames!

15 ZERO. [*nervously*] Keep your shirt on, Buddy—they wouldn't do that to us.

SHRDLU. There's no escape—no escape for us, I tell you. We're doomed! We're doomed to suffer unspeakable torments through all eternity. [*His voice rises higher and higher*] [*A grave opens suddenly and a head appears*]

20 THE HEAD. Hey, you birds! Can't you shut up and let a guy sleep? [*ZERO scrambles painfully to his feet*]

25 ZERO. [*to SHRDLU*] Hey, put on the soft pedal.

SHRDLU. [*too wrought up to attend*] It won't be long now! We'll receive our summons soon.

30 THE HEAD. Are you goin' to beat it or not? [*He calls into the grave*] Hey, Bill, lend me your head a minute. [*A moment later his arm appears holding a skull*]

ZERO. [*warningly*] Look out! [*He seizes SHRDLU and drags him away just as THE HEAD throws the skull*]

35 THE HEAD. [*disgustedly*] Missed 'em. Damn old tabby cats! I'll get 'em next time. [*A prodigious yawn*] Ho-hum! Me for the worms!

[*THE HEAD disappears as the curtain falls.*]

SCENE VI.

SCENE—A pleasant place A scene of pastoral loveliness. A meadow dotted with fine old trees and carpeted with rich grass and field flowers. In the background are seen a number of tents fashioned of gay-striped silks and beyond gleams a meandering river. Clear air and a fleckless sky. Sweet distant music throughout. At the rise of the curtain, SHRDLU is seen seated under a tree in the foreground in an attitude of deep dejection. His knees are drawn up

and his head is buried in his arms. He is dressed as in the preceding scene.

A few minutes later, ZERO enters at right. He walks slowly and looks about him with an air of half-suspicious curiosity. He, too, is dressed as in the preceding scene. Suddenly he sees SHRDLU seated under the tree. He stands still and looks at him half fearfully. Then, seeing something familiar in him, goes closer. SHRDLU is unaware of his presence. At last ZERO recognizes him and grins in pleased surprise.

ZERO. Well, if it ain't——! [*He claps SHRDLU on the shoulder*] Hello, Buddy! [*SHRDLU looks up slowly, then recognizing ZERO, he rises 15 gravely and extends his hand courteously*]

SHRDLU. How do you do, Mr. Zero? I'm very glad to see you again.

ZERO. Same here. I wasn't expectin' to see you, either. [*Looking about*] This is a kinda nice place. I wouldn't mind restin' here a while.

SHRDLU. You may if you wish.

ZERO. I'm kinda tired. I ain't used to bein' outdoors. I ain't walked so much in years.

SHRDLU. Sit down here, under the tree.

ZERO. Do they let you sit on the grass?

SHRDLU. Oh, yes.

ZERO. [*seating himself*] Boy, this feels good. I'll tell the world my feet are sore. I ain't used to so much walkin'. Say, I wonder would it be all right if I took my shoes off, my feet are tired.

SHRDLU. Yes. Some of the people here go barefoot.

ZERO. Yeh? They sure must be nuts. But I'm goin' t' leave 'em off for a while. So long as it's all right. The grass feels nice and cool. [*He stretches out comfortably*] Say, this is the life of Riley all right, all right. This sure is a nice place. What do they call this place, anyhow?

SHRDLU. The Elysian Fields.⁴

ZERO. The which?

SHRDLU. The Elysian Fields.

ZERO. [*dubiously*] Oh! Well, it's a nice place, all right.

SHRDLU. They say that this is the most desirable of all places. Only the most favored remain here.

ZERO. Yeh? Well, that let's me out, I guess. [*Suddenly*] But what are you dom' here? I thought you'd be burned by now.

SHRDLU. [*sadly*] Mr. Zero, I am the most unhappy of men.

ZERO. [*in mild astonishment*] Why, because you ain't ben' roasted alive?

SHRDLU. [*nodding*] Nothing is turnin' out as I expected. I saw everything so clearly—the flames, the tortures, an eternity of suffering as the just punishment for my unspeakable crime. And it has all turned out so differently.

ZERO. Well, that's pretty soft for you, ain't it?

SHRDLU. [*wailingly*] No, no, no! It's right and just that I should be punished. I could have endured it stoically. All through those endless ages of indescribable torment I should have exulted in the magnificence of divine justice. But this—this is maddening! What becomes of justice? What becomes of morality? What becomes of right and wrong? It's maddening—simply maddening! Oh, if Dr. Amaranth were only here to advise me! [*He buries his face and groans*]

ZERO. [*trying to puzzle it out*] You mean to say they ain't called you for cuttin' your mother's throat?

SHRDLU. No! It's terrible—terrible! I was prepared for anything—anything but this.

ZERO. Well, what did they say to you?

SHRDLU. [*looking up*] Only that I was to come here and remain until I understood.

ZERO. I don't get it. What do they want you to understand?

SHRDLU. [*despairingly*] I don't know—I don't know! If I only had an inkling of what they meant——[*Interrupting him*] Just listen quietly for a moment, do you hear anything? [*They are both silent, straining their ears*]

ZERO. [*at length*] Nope.

SHRDLU. You don't hear any music? Do you?

ZERO. Music? No, I don't hear nothin'.

SHRDLU. The people here say that the music never stops.

ZERO. They're kiddin' you.

SHRDLU. Do you think so?

ZERO. Sure thing. There ain't a sound.

SHRDLU. Perhaps. They're capable of anything. But I haven't told you of the bitterest of my disappointments.

ZERO. Well, spill it. I'm gettin' used to hearin' bad news.

SHRDLU. When I came to this place, my first thought was to find my dear mother. I wanted

⁴ the mythological paradise.

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to ask her forgiveness. And I wanted her to help me to understand.

ZERO. An' she couldn't do it?

SHRDLU. [*with a deep groan*] She's not here! Mr. Zerol Here where only the most favored dwell, that wisest and purest of spirits is nowhere to be found. I don't understand it.

A WOMAN'S VOICE. [*in the distance*] Mr. Zerol Oh, Mr. Zerol [*ZERO raises his head and listens attentively*]

SHRDLU. [*going on, unheedingly*] If you were to see some of the people here—the things they do—

ZERO. [*interrupting*] Wait a minute, will you? I think somebody's callin' me.

THE VOICE. [*somewhat nearer*] Mr. Ze-rol! Oh! Mr. Ze-rol

ZERO. Who the hell's that now? I wonder if the wife's on my trail already. That would be swell, wouldn't it? An' I figured on her bein' good for another twenty years, anyhow.

THE VOICE. [*nearer*] Mr. Ze-rol! Yoo-hoo!

ZERO. No. That ain't her voice. [*Calling, savagely*] Yoo-hoo. [*To SHRDLU*] Ain't that always the way? Just when a guy is takin' life easy an' havin' a good time! [*He rises and looks off left*] Here she comes, whoever she is. [*In sudden amazement*] Well, I'll be—! Well, what do you know about that! [*He stands looking in wonderment, as DAISY DIANA DOROTHEA DEVORE enters. She wears a much-beruffled white muslin dress which is a size too small and fifteen years too youthful for her. She is red-faced and breathless*]

DAISY. [*panting*] Oh! I thought I'd never catch up to you. I've been followin' you for days—callin' an' callin'. Didn't you hear me?

ZERO. Not till just now. You look kinda winded.

DAISY. I sure am. I can't hardly catch my breath.

ZERO. Well, sit down an' take a load off your feet. [*He leads her to the tree*] [*DAISY sees SHRDLU for the first time and shrinks back a little*] It's all right, he's a friend of mine. [*To SHRDLU*] Buddy, I want you to meet my friend, Miss Devore.

SHRDLU. [*rising and extending his hand courteously*] How do you do, Miss Devore?

DAISY. [*self-consciously*] How do!

ZERO. [*to DAISY*] He's a friend of mine. [*To SHRDLU*] I guess you don't mind if she sits here

a while an' cools off, do you?

SHRDLU. No, no, certainly not. [*They all seat themselves under the tree. ZERO and DAISY are a little self-conscious. SHRDLU gradually becomes absorbed in his own thoughts*]

ZERO. I was just takin' a rest myself. I took my shoes off on account of my feet bein' so sore.

DAISY. Yeh, I'm kinda tired, too. [*Looking about*] Say, ain't it pretty here, though?

10 ZERO. Yeh, it is at that.

DAISY. What do they call this place?

ZERO. Why—er—let's see. He was tellin' me just a minute ago. The—er—I don't know. Some kind o' fields. I forget now. [*To SHRDLU*]

15 Say, Buddy, what do they call this place again? [*SHRDLU, absorbed in his thoughts, does not hear him. To DAISY*] He don't hear me. He's thinkin' again.

DAISY. [*sotto voce*] What's the matter with 20 him?

ZERO. Why, he's the guy that murdered his mother—remember?

DAISY. [*interested*] Oh, yeh! Is that him?

ZERO. Yeh. An' he had it all figured out how 25 they was goin' t' roast him or somethin'. And now they ain't goin' to do nothin' to him an' it's kinda got his goat.

DAISY. [*sympathetically*] Poor feller!

ZERO. Yeh. He takes it kinda hard.

30 DAISY. He looks like a nice young feller.

ZERO. Well, you sure are good for sore eyes. I never expected to see you here.

DAISY. I thought maybe you'd be kinda surprised.

35 ZERO. Surprised is right. I thought you was alive an' kickin'. When did you pass out?

DAISY. Oh, right after you did—a coupla days.

ZERO. [*interested*] Yeh? What happened? 40 Get hit by a truck or somethin'?

DAISY. No. [*Hesitantly*] You see—it's this way. I blew out the gas.

ZERO. [*astonished*] Go on! What was the big idea?

45 DAISY. [*falteringly*] Oh, I don't know. You see, I lost my job.

ZERO. I'll bet you're sorry you did it now, ain't you?

DAISY. [*with conviction*] No, I ain't sorry.

50 Not a bit. [*Then hesitantly*] Say, Mr. Zero, I been thinkin'— [*She stops*]

ZERO. What?

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DAISY. [*plucking up courage*] I been thinkin' it would be kinda nice—if you an' me—if we could kinda talk things over.

ZERO. Yeh. Sure. What do you want to talk about?

DAISY. Well—I don't know—but you and me—we ain't really ever talked things over, have we?

ZERO. No, that's right, we ain't. Well, let's go to it.

DAISY. I was thinkin' if we could be alone—just the two of us, see?

ZERO. Oh, yeh! Yeh, I get you. [*He turns to SHRDLU and coughs loudly. SHRDLU does not stir. To DAISY*] He's dead to the world. [*He turns to SHRDLU*] Say, Buddy! [*No answer*] Say, Buddy!

SHRDLU. [*looking up with a start*] Were you speaking to me?

ZERO. Yeh. How'd you guess it? I was thinkin' that maybe you'd like to walk around a little and look for your mother.

SHRDLU. [*shaking his head*] It's no use. I've looked everywhere. [*He relapses into thought again*]

ZERO. Maybe over there they might know.

SHRDLU. No, no! I've searched everywhere. She's not here. [*ZERO and DAISY look at each other in despair*]

ZERO. Listen, old shirt, my friend here and me—see?—we used to work in the same store. An' we got some things to talk over—business, see?—kinda confidential. So if it ain't askin' too much—

SHRDLU. [*springing to his feet*] Why, certainly! Excuse me! [*He bows politely to DAISY and walks off. DAISY and ZERO watch him until he has disappeared*]

ZERO. [*with a forced laugh*] He's a good guy at that. [*Now that they are alone, both are very self-conscious, and for a time they sit in silence*]

DAISY. [*breaking the silence*] It sure is pretty here, ain't it?

ZERO. Sure is.

DAISY. Look at the flowers! Ain't they just perfect! Why, you'd think they was artificial, wouldn't you?

ZERO. Yeh, you would.

DAISY. And the smell of them. Like perfume.

ZERO. Yeh.

DAISY. I'm crazy about the country, ain't you?

ZERO. Yeh. It's nice for a change.

DAISY. Them store picnics—remember?

ZERO. You bet. They sure was fun.

DAISY. One time—I guess you don't remember—the two of us—me and you—we sat down on the grass together under a tree—just like we're doin' now.

ZERO. Sure I remember.

DAISY. Go on! I'll bet you don't.

ZERO. I'll bet I do. It was the year the wife didn't go.

DAISY. [*her face brightening*] That's right! I didn't think you'd remember.

ZERO. An' comin' home we sat together in the truck.

DAISY. [*eagerly, rather shamefacedly*] Yeh! There's somethin' I've always wanted to ask you.

ZERO. Well, why didn't you?

DAISY. I don't know. It didn't seem refined. But I'm goin' to ask you now, anyhow.

ZERO. Go ahead. Shoot.

DAISY. [*falteringly*] Well—while we was comin' home—you put your arm up on the bench behind me—and I could feel your knee kinda pressin' against mine. [*She stops*]

ZERO. [*becoming more and more interested*] Yeh—well—what about it?

DAISY. What I wanted to ask you was—was it just kinda accidental?

ZERO. [*with a laugh*] Sure it was accidental. Accidental on purpose.

DAISY. [*eagerly*] Do you mean it?

ZERO. Sure I mean it. You mean to say you didn't know it?

DAISY. No. I've been wantin' to ask you—

ZERO. Then why did you get sore at me?

DAISY. Sore? I wasn't sore! When was I sore?

ZERO. That night. Sure you was sore. If you wasn't sore why did you move away?

DAISY. Just to see if you meant it. I thought if you meant it you'd move up closer. An' then when you took your arm away I was sure you didn't mean it.

ZERO. An' I thought all the time you was sore. That's why I took my arm away. I thought if I moved up you'd holler and then I'd be in a jam, like you read in the paper all the time about guys gettin' pulled in for annoyin' women.

DAISY. An' I was wishin' you'd put your arm

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around me—just sittin' there wishin' all the way home.

ZERO. What do you know about that? That sure is hard luck, that is. If I'd 'a' only knew! You know what I felt like doin'—only I didn't have the nerve?

DAISY. What?

ZERO. I felt like kissin' you.

DAISY. [*fervently*] I wanted you to.

ZERO. [*astounded*] You would 'a' let me?

DAISY. I wanted you to! I wanted you to! Oh, why didn't you—why didn't you?

ZERO. I didn't have the nerve. I sure was a dumbbell.

DAISY. I would 'a' let you all you wanted to. I wouldn't 'a' cared. I know it would 'a' been wrong but I wouldn't 'a' cared. I wasn't thinkin' about right an' wrong at all. I didn't care—see? I just wanted you to kiss me.

ZERO. [*feelingly*] If I'd only knew. I wanted to do it, I swear I did. But I didn't think you cared nothin' about me.

DAISY. [*passionately*] I never cared nothin' about nobody else.

ZERO. Do you mean it—on the level? You ain't kiddin' me, are you?

DAISY. No, I ain't kiddin'. I mean it. I'm tellin' you the truth. I ain't never had the nerve to tell you before—but now I don't care. It don't make no difference now. I mean it—every word of it.

ZERO. [*dejectedly*] If I'd only knew it.

DAISY. Listen to me. There's somethin' else I want to tell you. I may as well tell you every-thing now. It don't make no difference now. About my blowin' out the gas—see? Do you know why I done it?

ZERO. Yeh, you told me—on account o' bein' canned.

DAISY. I just told you that. That ain't the real reason. The real reason is on account o' you.

ZERO. You mean to say on account o' me passin' out—?

DAISY. Yeh. That's it. I didn't want to go on livin'. What for? What did I want to go on livin' for? I didn't have nothin' to live for with you gone. I often thought of doin' it before. But I never had the nerve. An' anyhow I didn't want to leave you.

ZERO. An' me bawlin' you out, about readin' too fast an' readin' too slow.

DAISY. [*reproachfully*] Why did you do it?

ZERO. I don't know, I swear I don't. I was always stuck on you. An' while I'd be addin' them figgers, I'd be thinkin' how if the wife died, you an' me could get married.

DAISY. I used to think o' that, too.

ZERO. An' then before I knew it, I was bawlin' you out.

DAISY. Them was the times I'd think o' blowin' out the gas. But I never did till you was gone. There wasn't nothin' to live for then. But it wasn't so easy to do, anyhow. I never could stand the smell o' gas. An' all the while I was gettin' ready, you know, stuffin' up all the cracks, the way you read about in the paper—I was thinkin' of you and hopin' that maybe I'd meet you agam. An' I made up my mind if I ever did see you, I'd tell you.

ZERO. [*taking her hand*] I'm sure glad you did. I'm sure glad. [*ruefully*] But it don't do much good now, does it?

DAISY. No, I guess it don't. [*summoning courage*] But there's one thing I'm goin' to ask you.

ZERO. What's that?

DAISY. [*in a low voice*] I want you to kiss me.

ZERO. You bet I will! [*He leans over and kisses her cheek*]

DAISY. Not like that. I don't mean like that. I mean really kiss me. On the mouth. I ain't never been kissed like that. [*zero puts his arms about her and presses his lips to hers. A long embrace. At last they separate and sit side by side in silence*] [*Putting her hands to her cheeks*] So that's what it's like. I didn't know it could be like that. I didn't know anythin' could be like that.

ZERO. [*fondling her hand*] Your cheeks are red. They're all red. And your eyes are shinin'.

DAISY. I never seen your eyes shinin' like that before.

DAISY. [*holding up her hand*] Listen—do you hear it? Do you hear the music?

ZERO. No, I don't hear nothin'!

DAISY. Yeh—music. Listen an' you'll hear it. [*They are both silent for a moment*]

ZERO. [*excitedly*] Yeh! I hear it! He said there was music, but I didn't hear it till just now.

DAISY. Ain't it grand?

ZERO. Swell! Say, do you know what?

DAISY. What?

ZERO. It makes me feel like dancin'.

DAISY. Yeh? Me, too.

ZERO. [*springing to his feet*] Come on! Let's dance! [*He seizes her hands and tries to pull her up*]

DAISY. [*resisting laughingly*] I can't dance. I ain't danced in twenty years.

ZERO. That's nothin'. I am't, neither. Come on! I feel just like a kid! [*He pulls her to her feet and seizes her about the waist*]

DAISY. Wait a minute! Wait till I fix my skirt. [*She turns back her skirts and pins them above the ankles*] [*ZERO seizes her about the waist. They dance clumsily but with gay abandon. DAISY's hair becomes loosened and tumbles over her shoulders. She lends herself more and more to the spirit of the dance. But ZERO soon begins to tire and dances with less and less zest*]

ZERO. [*stopping at last, panting for breath*] Wait a minute! I'm all winded [*He releases DAISY, but before he can turn away, she throws her arms about him and presses her lips to his*] Wait a minute! Let me get my wind! [*He limps to the tree and seats himself under it, gasping for breath. DAISY looks after him, her spirits rather dampened*] Whew! I sure am winded! I ain't used to dancin'. [*He takes off his collar and tie and opens the neckband of his shirt. DAISY sits under the tree near him, looking at him longingly. But he is busy catching his breath*] Gee, my heart's goin' a mile a minute.

DAISY. Why don't you lay down an' rest? You could put your head on my lap

ZERO. That ain't a bad idea. [*He stretches out, his head in DAISY's lap*]

DAISY. [*fondling his hair*] It was swell, wasn't it?

ZERO. Yeh. But you gotta be used to it.

DAISY. Just imagine if we could stay here all the time—you an' me together—wouldn't it be swell?

ZERO. Yeh. But there ain't a chance.

DAISY. Won't they let us stay?

ZERO. No. This place is only for the good ones.

DAISY. Well, we ain't so bad, are we?

ZERO. Go on! Me a murderer an' you com-mittin' suicide. Anyway, they wouldn't stand for this—the way we been goin' on.

DAISY. I don't see why.

ZERO. You don't! You know it ain't right. Ain't I got a wife?

DAISY. Not any more you ain't. When you're dead that ends it. Don't they always say "until death do us part"?

ZERO. Well, maybe you're right about that, but they wouldn't stand for us here

DAISY. It would be swell—the two of us to gether—we could make up for all them years.

ZERO. Yeh, I wish we could.

DAISY. We sure were fools. But I don't care. I've got you now. [*She kisses his forehead and cheeks and mouth*]

ZERO. I'm sure crazy about you. I never saw you lookin' so pretty before, with your cheeks all red. An' your hair hangin' down. You got swell hair. [*He fondles and kisses her hair*]

DAISY. [*ecstatically*] We got each other now, ain't we?

ZERO. Yeh, I'm crazy about you. Daisy! That's a pretty name. It's a flower, ain't it? Well --that's what you are—just a flower.

DAISY. [*happily*] We can always be together now, can't we?

ZERO. As long as they'll let us. I sure am crazy about you. [*Suddenly he sits upright*]

25 Watch your step!

DAISY. [*alarmed*] What's the matter?

ZERO. [*nervously*] He's comin' back.

DAISY. Oh, is that all? Well, what about it?

30 ZERO. You don't want him to see us layin' around like this, do you?

DAISY. I don't care if he does.

ZERO. Well, you oughta care. You don't want him to think you ain't a refined girl, do you? He's an awful moral bird, he is.

35 DAISY. I don't care nothin' about him. I don't care nothin' about anybody but you.

ZERO. Sure, I know. But we don't want people talkin' about us. You better fix your hair an' pull down your skirts. [*DAISY complies rather sadly. They are both silent as SHRDLU enters*] [*With feigned nonchalance*] Well, you got back all right, didn't you?

SHRDLU. I hope I haven't returned too soon.

40 ZERO. No, that's all right. We were just havin' a little talk. You know—about business an' things.

DAISY. [*boldly*] We was wishin' we could stay here all the time.

SHRDLU. You may if you like.

50 ZERO AND DAISY. [*in astonishment*] What!

SHRDLU. Yes. Any one who likes may remain—

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ZERO. But I thought you were tellin' me—

SHRDLU. Just as I told you, only the most favored do remain. But any one may.

ZERO. I don't get it. There's a catch in it somewheres.

DAISY. It doesn't matter as long as we can stay.

ZERO. [to SHRDLU] We were thinkin' about gettin' married, see?

SHRDLU. You may or not, just as you like.

ZERO. You don't mean to say we could stay if we didn't, do you?

SHRDLU. Yes. They don't care.

ZERO. An' there's some here that ain't married?

SHRDLU. Yes.

ZERO. [to DAISY] I don't know about this place, at that. They must be kind of a mixed crowd.

DAISY. It don't matter, so long as we got each other.

ZERO. Yeh, I know, but you don't want to mix with people that ain't respectable.

DAISY. [to SHRDLU] Can we get married right away? I guess there must be a lot of ministers here, ain't there?

SHRDLU. Not as many as I had hoped to find. The two who seem most beloved are Dean Swift and the Abbé Rabelais.⁵ They are both much admired for some indecent tales which they have written.

ZERO. [shocked] What! Ministers writin' smutty stories! Say, what kind of a dump is this, anyway?

SHRDLU. [despairingly] I don't know, Mr. Zero. All these people here are so strange, so unlike the good people I've known. They seem to think of nothing but enjoyment or of wasting their time in profitless occupations. Some paint pictures from morning until night, or carve blocks of stone. Others write songs or put

words together, day in and day out. Still others do nothing but lie under the trees and look at the sky. There are men who spend all their time reading books and women who think only of adorning themselves. And for ever they are telling stories and laughing and singing and drinking and dancing. There are drunkards, thieves, vagabonds, blasphemers, adulterers. There is one—

ZERO. That's enough. I heard enough. [He seats himself and begins putting on his shoes]

DAISY. [anxiously] What are you goin' to do?

ZERO. I'm goin' to beat it, that's what I'm goin' to do.

DAISY. You said you liked it here.

ZERO. [looking at her in amazement] Liked it! Say, you don't mean to say you want to stay here, do you, with a lot of rummies an' loafers an' bums?

DAISY. We don't have to bother with them. We can just sit here together an' look at the flowers an' listen to the music.

SHRDLU. [eagerly] Music! Did you hear music?

DAISY. Sure. Don't you hear it?

SHRDLU. No, they say it never stops. But I've never heard it.

ZERO. [listening] I thought I heard it before but I don't hear nothin' now. I guess I must 'a' been dreamin'. [Looking about] What's the quickest way out of this place?

DAISY. [pleadingly] Won't you stay just a little longer?

ZERO. Didn't yer hear me say I'm goin'? Good-bye, Miss Devore. I'm goin' to beat it. [He limps off at the right. DAISY follows him slowly]

DAISY. [to SHRDLU] I won't ever see him again.

SHRDLU. Are you goin' to stay here?

DAISY. It don't make no difference now. Without him I might as well be alive. [She goes off right. SHRDLU watches her a moment, then sighs and, seating himself under the tree, buries his head on his arm. Curtain falls.]

SCENE VII.

SCENE—Before the curtain rises the clicking of an adding machine is heard. The curtain rises upon an office similar in appearance to that in Scene II except that there is a door in the back

⁵ Jonathan Swift (1667-1745), author of *Gulliver's Travels*, and François Rabelais (1494?-1553), author of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. Both works contain vulgar passages and satirize mankind; the managers of the Elysian Fields, however, prefer to overlook the vulgarity in favor of the fact that both authors may have written as they did to "needle" man into improving himself, and thus both really loved man in the best humanistic manner. Or, again, Swift and Rabelais may have been admitted simply because they created laughter and enjoyment.

wall through which can be seen a glimpse of the corridor outside. In the middle of the room ZERO is seated completely absorbed in the operation of an adding machine. He presses the keys and pulls the lever with mechanical precision. He still wears his full-dress suit but he has added to it sleeve protectors and a green eye shade. A strip of white paper-tape flows steadily from the machine as ZERO operates. The room is filled with this tape—streamers, festoons, billows of it everywhere. It covers the floor and the furniture, it climbs the walls and chokes the doorways. A few moments later, LIEUTENANT CHARLES and JOE enter at the left. LIEUTENANT CHARLES is middle-aged and inclined to corpulence. He has an air of world-weariness. He is bare-footed, wears a Panama hat, and is dressed in bright red tights which are a very bad fit—too tight in some places, badly wrinkled in others. JOE is a youth with a smutty face dressed in dirty blue overalls.

CHARLES. [after contemplating ZERO for a few moments] All right, Zero, cease firing.

ZERO. [looking up, surprised] Whaddja say? 25

CHARLES. I said stop punching that machine.

ZERO. [bewildered] Stop? [He goes on working mechanically]

CHARLES. [impatiently] Yes. Can't you stop? Here, Joe, give me a hand. He can't stop. [JOE 30 and CHARLES each take one of ZERO's arms and with enormous effort detach him from the machine. He resists passively—mere inertia. Finally they succeed and swing him around on his stool. CHARLES and JOE mop their fore- 35 heads]

ZERO. [querulously] What's the idea? Can't you lemme alone?

CHARLES. [ignoring the question] How long have you been here? 40

ZERO. Jes' twenty-five years. Three hundred months, ninety-one hundred thirty-one days, one hundred thirty-six thousand—

CHARLES. [impatiently] That'll do! That'll do!

ZERO. [proudly] I ain't missed a day, not an hour, not a minute. Look at all I got done. [He points to the maze of paper]

CHARLES. It's time to quit.

ZERO. Quit? Whaddye mean quit? I ain't 50 goin' to quit!

CHARLES. You've got to.

ZERO. What for? What do I have to quit for?

CHARLES. It's time for you to go back.

ZERO. Go back where? Whaddya talkin' about?

CHARLES. Back to earth, you dub. Where do you think?

ZERO. Aw, go on, Cap, who are you kiddin'?

CHARLES. I'm not kiddin' anybody. And don't call me Cap. I'm a lieutenant.

ZERO. All right, Lieutenant, all right. But what's this you're tryin' to tell me about goin' back?

CHARLES. Your time's up. I'm telling you. You must be pretty thick. How many times do you want to be told a thing?

ZERO. This is the first time I heard about goin' back. Nobody ever said nothin' to me about it before.

CHARLES. You didn't think you were going to stay here for ever, did you? 20

ZERO. Sure. Why not? I did my bit, didn't I? Forty-five years of it. Twenty-five years in the store. Then the boss canned me and I knocked him cold. I guess you ain't heard about that—

CHARLES. [interrupting] I know all about that. But what's that got to do with it?

ZERO. Well, I done my bit, didn't I? That oughta let me out.

CHARLES. [jeeringly] So you think you're all through, do you?

ZERO. Sure, I do. I did the best I could while I was there and then I passed out. And now I'm sittin' pretty here.

CHARLES. You've got a fine idea of the way they run things, you have. Do you think they're going to all the trouble of making a soul just to use it once?

ZERO. Once is often enough, it seems to me.

CHARLES. It seems to you, does it? Well, who are you? And what do you know about it? Why, man, they use a soul over and over again—over and over until it's worn out.

ZERO. Nobody ever told me.

CHARLES. So you thought you were all through, did you? Well, that's a hot one, that is.

ZERO. [sullenly] How was I to know?

CHARLES. Use your brains! Where would we put them all! We're crowded enough as it is. Why, this place is nothing but a kind of repair and service station—a sort of cosmic laundry, you might say. We get the souls in here by the

bushelful. Then we get busy and clean them up. And you ought to see some of them. The muck and slime. Phoo! And as full of holes as a flour-sifter. But we fix them up. We disinfect them and give them a kerosene rub and mend the holes and back they go—practically as good as new.

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ZERO. [*offended*] Me? You mean to say I'm gettin' worse all the time?

CHARLES. [*nodding*] Yes. A little worse each time.

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ZERO. Rub it in is right! Seems to me I got a pretty healthy kick comin'. I ain't had a square deal! Hard work! That's all I've ever had!

CHARLES. [*callously*] What else were you ever good for?

ZERO. Well, that ain't the point. The point is I'm through! I had enough! Let 'em find somebody else to do the dirty work. I'm sick of bein' the goat! I quit right here and now! [*He glares about defiantly. There is a thunderclap and a bright flash of lightning. Screaming*] Ooh! What's that? [*He clings to CHARLES*]

CHARLES. It's all right. Nobody's going to hurt you. It's just their way of telling you that they don't like you to talk that way. Pull yourself together and calm down. You can't change the rules—nobody can—they've got it all fixed. It's a rotten system—but what are you going to do about it?

ZERO. Why can't they stop pickin' on me? I'm satisfied here—doin' my day's work. I don't want to go back.

CHARLES. You've got to, I tell you. There's no way out of it.

ZERO. What chance have I got—at my age? Who'll give me a job?

CHARLES. You big boob, you don't think you're going back the way you are, do you?

ZERO. Sure, how then?

CHARLES. Why, you've got to start all over zero. All over?

CHARLES. [*nodding*] You'll be a baby again—a bald, red-faced little animal, and then you'll go through it all again. There'll be millions of others like you—all with their mouths open, squawking for food. And then when you get a little older you'll begin to learn things—and you'll learn all the wrong things and learn them all in the wrong way. You'll eat the wrong food and wear the wrong clothes and you'll live in swarming dens where there's no light and no air! You'll learn to be a liar and a bully and a braggart and a coward and a sneak. You'll learn to fear the sunlight and to hate beauty. By that time you'll be ready for school. There they'll tell you the truth about a great many things that you don't give a damn about and they'll tell you lies about all the things you ought to know—and about all the things you want to know they'll tell you nothing at all. When you get through you'll be equipped for your life-work. You'll be ready to take a job.

ZERO. [*eagerly*] What'll my job be? Another adding machine?

CHARLES. Yes. But not one of these anti-

quoted adding machines. It will be a superb, super-hyper-adding machine, as far from this old piece of junk as you are from God. It will be something to make you sit up and take notice, that adding machine. It will be an adding machine which will be installed in a coal mine and which will record the individual output of each miner. As each miner down in the lower galleries takes up a shovelful of coal, the impact of his shovel will automatically set in motion a graphite pencil in your gallery. The pencil will make a mark in white upon a blackened, sensitised drum. Then your work comes in. With the great toe of your right foot you release a lever which focuses a violet ray on the drum. The ray playing upon and through the white mark, falls upon a selenium cell which in turn sets the keys of the adding apparatus in motion. In this way the individual output of each miner is recorded without any human effort except the slight pressure of the great toe of your right foot.

ZERO. [*in breathless, round-eyed wonder*] Say, that'll be some machine, won't it?

CHARLES. Some machine is right. It will be the culmination of human effort—the final triumph of the evolutionary process. For millions of years the nebulous gases swirled in space. For more millions of years the gases cooled and then through inconceivable ages they hardened into rocks. And then came life. Floating green things on the waters that covered the earth. More millions of years and a step upward—an animate organism in the ancient slime. And so on—step by step, down through the ages—a gam here, a gain there—the mollusc, the fish, the reptile, then mammal, man! And all so that you might sit in the gallery of a coal mine and operate the super-hyper-adding machine with the great toe of your right foot!

ZERO. Well, then—I ain't so bad, after all.

CHARLES. You're a failure, Zero, a failure. A waste product. A slave to a contraption of steel and iron. The animal's instincts, but not his strength and skill. The animal's appetites, but not his unashamed indulgence of them. True, you move and eat and digest and excrete and reproduce. But any microscopic organism can do as much. Well—time's up! Back you go—back to your sunless groove—the raw material of slums and wars—the ready prey of the first jingo or demagogue or political adventurer

bushelful. Then we get busy and clean them up. And you ought to see some of them. The muck and slime. Phoo! And as full of holes as a flour-sifter. But we fix them up. We disinfect them and give them a kerosene rub and mend the holes and back they go—practically as good as new.

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G L O S S A R Y

ACADEMIC DRAMA: a term applied to plays imitating the ancient classics and to original plays produced in Renaissance England by schools and universities. These plays were instrumental in transmitting classical influence to the professional theater.

ALLEGORY: in drama, a story in which the characters and action present a moral, political, or religious meaning beyond the obvious narrative.

ANTAGONIST: a character who opposes the protagonist (*q.v.*) in a play.

ASIDE: term applied to an old convention which allowed an actor to speak directly to the audience supposedly without being heard by other actors on stage.

CATASTROPHE: usually the death or destruction of the major figures in a tragedy, near the end, but after the climax.

CATHARSIS: the purging of audience emotions by vicarious experience. The term is generally applied to classic drama, the witnessing of which gave the beholder a cleansing of fear and pity, leaving him as spent as if he had actually suffered real-life tragedy.

CHRONICLE PLAY: a history play (Renaissance England) with emphasis on royal careers and spectacle.

CLIMAX: the point in a play where the knot of plot is untied, where action falls off because major issues are settled; loose ends remain, perhaps, and catastrophe may yet occur, but the high point has been reached.

CLOSET DRAMA: drama to be read in private, not intended for performance.

COINCIDENCE: chance meetings, the arrival of a check just before eviction, and so on. An over-use or implausible use of coincidence weakens or wrecks a play, even if life occasionally offers similar happenings.

COMEDY OF HUMORS: a term applied to Jonsonian comedy which had characters distinguished by a dominating trait or "humor" in the old sense. Their names usually indicated their personalities (Volpone equals fox, and so on). Restoration comedy and later writers like Sheridan adapted the technique.

COMEDY OF MANNERS: in one sense, comedy of wit set in high social circles.

CONFLICT: the tangle of opposing forces producing the central interest in a play; it may concern one character against another, against his inner self, against society, and so on.

CONVENTIONS: devices used in presenting a play which the audience, as the traditional thing to do, must accept—the use of asides, soliloquies, scenery, masks, etc.; the term also applies to set styles of writing in period pieces.

DENOUEMENT: the untying of the knot of plot, sometimes the climax, generally the explanation of unsettled details; occasionally referred to as "falling action."

DEUS EX MACHINA (dē'əs əks mək'ə-nə): literally "god out of the machine" from a classical device of having a god or gods descend to earth to settle the outcome of a difficult dramatic situation, hence today an arbitrary or unmotivated way of resolving the plot—the long-lost uncle, affluent, returns at the crucial moment to save the family from the poorhouse.

DOMESTIC TRAGEDY: a play which concerns the private lives of ordinary people, as contrasted with classical tragedy, which dealt with nobility and great issues.

DRAMATIC IRONY: a term used to fit a situation in which matters turn out contrary to normal expectations of cause and effect; the phrase is used particularly when the audience, knowing facts unknown to a stage character, reads a meaning into his lines which he cannot intend.

EXCITING FORCE: the force which begins to establish a conflict in a play, following a certain amount of scene-setting and preliminary information.

FALLING ACTION: that part of a play which follows the climax, gives minor conclusions, tapers off to the actual termination.

FARCE: in modern times, exaggerated comedy aiming to produce laughter without too much concern for probability, taste, depth of characterization, etc.

FIVE-ACT FORMULA: a term applied to the custom of writing plays always in five acts, in imitation

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PROMINENT SUBTYPES
OF POETRY

The following list contains titles of only those poems in this volume which fit into the more prominent subtypes of poetry. All such grouping is necessarily somewhat inexact, actually, some poems have such distinct narrative and lyric qualities in combination that they cannot be rigidly classified in these major divisions. Furthermore, poems may be grouped according to meter-and-rhyme schemes, subject matter, purpose, or tone. The following table, however, may prove useful in focusing attention upon specific forms, ideas, and moods.

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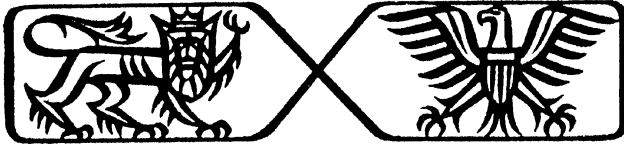
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VOLUME II

PART III THE ESSAY

THE ESSAY

Regarded as one of the significant forms of literature, the essay is associated with many of the greatest names in English letters and with matchless examples of prose style. John Milton (see I, 87 and II, 21) wrote prose with his left hand, so he said, but his *Arcopagtica*, an argumentative essay published in 1644, is the world's most eloquent plea for a free press. Not less eloquent, in its quiet way, is Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici* (1643), a long personal essay on the religion of a doctor. Like Milton's argument, it illustrates English prose in some of its most exalted and beautiful moments. And Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal" (1729) reveals, in its savage irony, the power of the essay to pillory man's cruelty to man.

Before Swift wrote his burning satire the essay had already lent itself to still other purposes: character portrayal, for one, as in the sketches by Thomas Overbury and John Earle, and literary criticism, as in the prose of John Dryden. Brief though the form usually is, the essay bulks large in English and American literature—this not only because of the countless uses to which it has been put but also because of the many writers who have employed it as a mode of expression. Indeed, the fame of any number of writers—Richard Steele and Joseph Addison, for example, or Charles Lamb and Ralph Waldo Emerson—rests almost wholly on their essays. Francis Bacon, too, is remembered chiefly for his essays, major figure though he is in the domain of philosophical thought.

DEFINITION AND TYPES OF THE ESSAY

The foregoing statement gives some indication of the importance of the essay and of the varied ends it has been made to serve. It assumes, moreover, that the essay is a recognizable kind of writing, having characteristics which set it off from other literary forms. To discover those characteristics would be to define the essay. But though numerous attempts

have been made to say exactly what this type of literature is, none of them has been entirely successful—hardly more so, in fact, than the countless attempts to define poetry. When Edwin Arlington Robinson said that poetry is at once unmistakable and undefinable he might well have extended his observation to include the essay. For the essay, generally speaking, is unmistakable even though not exactly definable. It is seen to be a brief prose composition, often expository and given up to reflection on life and ideas.

But to speak of the essay as a prose composition may convey the impression that it is prosaic, and therefore dull and academic. It may at times be rather prosaic, especially when it is formal, but at its best it is never dull. And not infrequently it is poetic. One need only recall De Quincey, Carlyle, Emerson, and Morley to realize that the essay may draw upon certain basic resources of poetry, such as rhythm, figurativeness, and emotion. Emerson is probably a better poet as an essayist than he is as a poet (see I, 290). And to match the poetic quality of Thomas Browne's prose, or that of Jeremy Taylor's, one may have to turn to the great poets themselves.

Nor is it wise to stress heavily the expository nature of the essay. For the essay in its less formal moods often makes use of narration, as does Addison's "The Vision of Mirza," Hazlitt's "The Fight," or White's "Walden." One thinks, too, of Goldsmith's "Beau Tibbs at Home" and Lamb's "A Dissertation upon Roast Pig." John Galsworthy's "Quality" is sometimes called an essay, sometimes a short story. Obviously, if the essay takes a narrative turn, it is likely to employ dialogue and description. Many essays, indeed, may be called descriptive rather than expository. Stevenson's essays in *An Inland Voyage* are examples, as are certain descriptive pages in Thoreau's *Walden*. The essay may, then—depending on its purpose at the moment—employ exposition, description, or narration.

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That formal essays are mainly, or even purely, expository must, however, be remembered. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* might be regarded as an enormous collection of such essays, and the writings of men like John Stuart Mill, Thomas Huxley, and William James are prevailingly expository.

The essay is said to be identifiable by its brevity, and to be thus distinguishable from the treatise or the monograph. But the term *brevity* must be used here in a relative sense, for the essay varies greatly in length. The essays of Ben Jonson or those of Bacon are often little more than paragraphs; the essays of Overbury and Earle are hardly less fragmentary. But in the writings of Carlyle, Macaulay, and Emerson one finds essays that cover page upon page of solid prose. Emerson's "Self-Reliance" is over ten thousand words long; Macaulay's essay on Milton is twice that length. Bacon's "Of Studies," on the other hand, contains barely more than five hundred words.

The most marked characteristic of the essay is its tendency toward reflection; hence it may be called the literature of thought as distinct, say, from that of emotion, or, again, as distinct from the literature of action. The latter distinction is especially valid, as a comparison of the essay manner with the method of the short story will serve to illustrate. In point of brevity the essay resembles the short story, but the resemblance is likely to end there. For though the essay may, on occasion, employ narrative, it does not ordinarily present ideas in story form—in terms, that is, of character and incident. It may be thought of as a thinking about ideas rather than an acting out of ideas. Thus an essay might concern itself with the idea of revenge, defining the idea and then considering the several motives that actuate avengers. In one of his essays Bacon calls revenge "a kind of wild justice." But given the same idea, a short story, such as Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado" (see II, 430), presents it through the characters and acts of a Montresor and a Fortunato. The essay thinks about, or reflects upon, revenge; the short story acts it out.

A classification of essays—if one may venture to classify them—alone indicates how difficult the essay is to define. An attempt to divide essays according to subject matter results in immediate confusion, for the subjects of the essay

are legion. The thirty-three essays in Hazlitt's *Table Talk* treat such diverse topics as Indian jugglers, Milton's sonnets, and the fear of death. And in his *Last Essays of Elia* Lamb ranges from humorous comments on poor relations to the sanity of genius and on to the confessions of a drunkard. Nor are modern essayists less versatile, treating, as they do, subjects like spectacles, the naming of streets, Shakespeare's birthday, and smoking as a fine art. In *The Uses of Diversity* G. K. Chesterton considers the domesticity of detectives, historical novels, and pigs as pets.

Hardly more successful in classifying essays is the attempt to group them in accordance with broad fields of interest: politics, history, nature, philosophy, travel, science, and so on. To list essays, again, as informative, didactic, reflective, and personal is not less confusing. For here the divisions overlap. Bacon's essays may be called didactic. They may also be regarded as reflective or, some of them, even as personal. It should be clear, then, that attempts to break down the essay into various types and subtypes are successful only as they demonstrate the great flexibility of this literary genre, both in content and in purpose.

Essays may, however, be divided rather logically into two broad classes, informal and formal. And this division is perhaps the most acceptable, since it draws attention to questions of manner and purpose, especially manner. The informal essay, with its colloquial, chatty style, its friendly air, suggests confidential talk, even confession. It suggests relaxation and entertainment, too, and the laughter that comes of taking the world not too seriously. That this type of essay is sometimes called the genial, the familiar, or the intimate essay is an indication of its nature. It is often spoken of, moreover, as the personal essay. For even more so than lyric poetry, the informal essay is autobiographical, reflecting as it does the peculiar notions, whims, and prejudices of the author, and not unseldom recording his personal experiences. The best portrait we have of Charles Lamb is that drawn in his own essays.

Usually written in the first person, the familiar essay is unrestrained in its use of the pronoun "I," as in the essays of Montaigne, Lamb, and Hazlitt, or as in those of such modern writers as Max Beerbohm, Christopher Mor-

ley, and Aldous Huxley. "Yesterday," says Beerbohm, in one of his essays, "I found in a cupboard an old, small, battered portmanteau which, by the initials on it, I recognized as my own." Beerbohm might have been speaking of his essays, which, like his portmanteau, bear throughout, as it were, his own initials. In beginning one of his essays Aldous Huxley says that he never goes anywhere "without a plentiful supply of optical glass. A pair of spectacles for reading, a pair for long range, with a couple of monocles in reserve." And in his writings—his fiction as well as his essays—Huxley views the world through his own spectacles (not always rose-colored), as must every man, if he views the world at all.

But the formal essay is another matter, preoccupied not so much with the author himself, as with his ideas. Not that the informal or genial essay fails to deal with ideas, but it deals with them more subjectively than does the formal essay. Moreover, it is likely to be less dignified or sober in tone, and may enliven its theme with wit and humor, or a playful kind of irreverence; whereas the formal essay treats its subject with the utmost respect and seriousness. The purpose of the formal essay may be to explain, and by means of explanation to instruct the reader. Thus an essay by John Dewey endeavors to explain the nature of thought, one by Bertrand Russell, the value of a scientific training. Or the aim of the formal essay may be persuasion, an effort to bring the reader around to the author's point of view. Certain Victorian essayists—Carlyle, Ruskin, and Arnold, for example—were out to make their ideas prevail. And in an effort to make them prevail they used all their powers of instruction and persuasion. Read me, agree with me, follow me, or suffer spiritual death. Thus they exhorted and warned.

The informal essay may likewise, of course, be explanatory, didactic, and persuasive, but it achieves its ends without seeming to do so. Apparently innocent of serious intent, it reveals, on the surface at least, little or no concern for the reader's salvation, spiritual or otherwise. "Thus, gentle Reader," says Montaigne, "my selfe am the groundworke of my booke. it is then no reason thou shouldst employ thy time about so frivolous and vaine a Subject. Therefore farewell." But Montaigne, for all his air of

unconcern, is more likely to redeem the reader from his boorishness, the vulgarian from his low tastes, than could a score of less genial essayists. "I resolve, if you like not my writings," says Robert Burton, "go read something else." How engaging such indifference is, and how well calculated to attract readers, even such a one as the somber-minded Samuel Johnson. For Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, a huge personal essay, was the only book that could get Johnson "out of bed two hours sooner than he wished to rise." Gloomy though his subject is, Burton is vastly entertaining as well as instructive. Charles Lamb may also be said to offer instruction in an amiable, diverting fashion, and, too, Robert Louis Stevenson (see also II, 437). Better work, indeed, might be done in the world as a result of reading Stevenson on idling than of studying Carlyle on labor. A lesson is to be learned, too, from Max Beerbohm's "An Infamous Brigade" or from Stephen Leacock's "Homer and Humbug."

The formal, lecturing type of essay is not, of course, to be disparaged. And it is doubtless true that men like Carlyle, Ruskin, and Arnold (see II, 143) did increase the moral stature of their generation. But battlers that they were, they divided their readers into armed camps over differences of opinion. Unlike Thomas Browne, with his wise tolerance, they regarded men as either friends or foes. "I could never divide myself from any man," says Browne, "upon the difference of an opinion, or be angry with his judgment for not agreeing with me in that from which perhaps within a few days I should dissent myself."

Formal essays are not always, to be sure, designed to persuade. As has already been said, they may be prevailingly or purely expository and have in mind merely to convey information, clarify ideas, or make definitions, this without any intention of altering the reader's convictions. Among essays of this kind are those critical studies that attempt to explain the nature of poetry or of comedy, or the meaning of terms like *realistic* and *romantic*. Thus Newman, in one of his essays (II, 122), defines the term *literature*. The formal essay may, it is true, reflect the bias of the writer, but its purpose is not revelation of the author's personality.

The familiar essay may be rambling or digressive; whereas the formal essay keeps its

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main objective well to the fore and is characterized by a definite structure. The structure, broadly speaking, may be that of question and answer. Thus in his essay on Shakespeare—in the excerpt, that is, given in this volume—Dr. Johnson raises two general questions. What, he asks, are Shakespeare's "peculiarities of excellence"? What are his faults? Johnson's essay is an answer to those questions. In his study of the literature of knowledge and the literature of power De Quincey endeavors to show by definition and illustration that literature may be divided into two great classes. The general structure of his essay is, then, that of a comparison of these two divisions of literature.

But whether it is formal or informal in manner, whether it aims to instruct, persuade, or entertain, the essay has long since won for itself an important place among literary types. Since Bacon's day major writers have used it, in one way or another, to clarify or to defend their views, to record their impressions of life, and, best of all perhaps, to portray themselves.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ESSAY IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA

As has already been indicated, the essay appears in the writings of many outstanding literary figures. Its history as a literary form in English letters begins with Bacon. Taking all knowledge as his province, Bacon contributed to philosophic thought as the author of *The Advancement of Learning* and *Novum Organum*, but it is as the author of a number of essays, published in three groups during his lifetime, that he is still widely read and quoted. The first group, issued in 1597, contained only ten essays. The second group, or edition (1612), contained thirty-eight. The third edition, published in 1625, contained fifty-eight. Intended as they were to "come home to men's business and bosoms," Bacon's essays are memorable for their aphoristic style and their practical, worldly wisdom. And although Bacon could hardly have realized it, his "meditations" established the essay as a new and important genre in English letters. The essays of Montaigne, the French writer, had already been published, of course, before those of Bacon, but Bacon is the first English essayist of importance.

The essays of Ben Jonson, Bacon's great contemporary, did not appear until 1640, some

fourteen years after Bacon's death. Marked by a colloquial style and by the honesty and forthrightness of their author, they were published under the general title *Timber, or Discoveries Made upon Men and Matter*. Some of them are brief studies in literary criticism and are impressive for their common sense and sound judgment. But based as they are on jottings from Jonson's daily readings, and drawing heavily as they do upon classical authors, chiefly Latin, Jonson's essays have not the same claim to originality as Bacon's. That the English essay was already in the way, however, of becoming a traditional literary form is evidenced by the work of the character writers Overbury and Earle, whose essays appeared rather early in the seventeenth century, and by the moral essays, or "resolves," of Owen Felltham.

Writing later in the seventeenth century than Bacon and Jonson (see I, 212), Abraham Cowley (1618–1667), like his great predecessors, did not make the essay his chief concern as a writer. Considered the most important poet of his day, Cowley was at times little better than a skillful versifier, if even that. Fortunately, however, he wrote a number of "discourses," charming for their grace and simplicity. And as the author of reflections on such topics as solitude, greatness, and himself, he can be read with pleasure even today. In his essay on greatness he confesses to a love of littleness: "A little convenient estate, a little cheerful house, a little company, and a very little feast." Cowley's words, with their familiar tone, anticipate the personal manner of Steele and Addison. Or, better, they look forward to Charles Lamb and reveal Cowley as one of the first English essayists to write in the intimate vein.

Before Cowley's death, in 1667, John Dryden, England's first major literary critic, began the writing of his critical studies. But a number of Dryden's essays appeared as prefaces to his plays, and were not, so to speak, independent pieces of writing. Still, the essay as it was written in seventeenth-century literature served a number of purposes, among them didacticism, as in the "civil and moral" counsels of Bacon; character portrayal or analysis, as in the "characters" of Overbury and Earle; self-revelation, as in Browne's *Religio Medici* and Cowley's "discourses"; and literary criticism, as in the prose of Jonson and Dryden (see also I, 238).

The essay became more conscious of its powers, however, in the next century, the eighteenth, for it then found a rather large and receptive public, chiefly because of the growth of journalism. It was early in that century, too, that two famous "literary partners," Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, discovered in the essay their happiest mode of expression. Contributing their essays to periodicals—the most successful of which were the *Tatler* and the *Spectator*—both men wrote with an avowed purpose, that of ridiculing the lesser vices of society. "The general purpose of this paper," wrote Steele in the first number of the *Tatler*, "is to expose the false arts of life, . . . and to recommend a general simplicity in our dress, our discourse, and our behaviour." And in the tenth issue of the *Spectator* Addison said that he desired to recover his readers "out of that desperate state of vice and folly into which the age is fallen." Whether Addison and Steele were highly successful as reformers of society may be a question, but that they popularized the essay cannot be denied. In their hands it became the dominant prose form of the Age of Queen Anne. It gives us, moreover, an authentic and lively picture of that age. Other periodical essayists of Addison's day were Swift and Pope (see I, 101).

Later in the eighteenth century Samuel Johnson tried to revive, or continue, the vogue of the periodical essay through his writings for the *Rambler*, the *Adventurer*, and the *Idler*. But his hand was somewhat heavy for that kind of writing, his temperament too grave. Lacking the geniality of Steele and the urbanity of Addison, he was didactic and dictatorial. "Addison writes," said Boswell, Johnson's biographer (see II, 295), "with the ease of a gentleman. His readers fancy that a wise and accomplished companion is talking to them. . . . Johnson writes like a teacher. He dictates to his readers as from an academical chair." Still, it was in the essay, after all, that Johnson did his most important work—this in his *Lives of the English Poets* (1779–1781), a body of essays combining biography and literary criticism, and in the writing of which Johnson used a rather familiar or conversational style.

But to discover in Johnson's day the light manner of the genial essay one must turn from the great literary dictator to his lowly, half-

vagabond friend, Oliver Goldsmith (see II, 52). In the words of Goldsmith, Johnson made little fishes talk like great whales; and Goldsmith, in turn, was said to write like an angel and talk like Poor Poll. Whether or not, in his essays, Goldsmith wrote like an angel, he did write with a winsomeness and grace hardly possible for Johnson. Certain of his contributions to the *Bee*, a short-lived periodical, and his "letters" in *The Citizen of the World*, where Beau Tibbs appears, place him among the best familiar essayists in the language.

It was in the nineteenth century, however, rather than the eighteenth, that the essay showed its remarkable flexibility as a form of writing and illustrated its varied uses. Among those uses were self-portraiture, as in the essays of Lamb, Hazlitt, and De Quincey; social and literary criticism, as in the writings of Carlyle and Arnold; the exposition and defense of scientific thought, as in the works of Thomas Huxley; and the expression of ideas broadly philosophical, as in the essays of Emerson. In forms other than the essay Lamb had little success. In the essay, however—the personal essay, that is—he is without a peer in English letters. And one who has not read Elia has yet to know the most lovable of writers and has still to appreciate the essay as a means of self-revelation. "What he designs," says Walter Pater, in his essay on Lamb, "is to give you himself, to acquaint you with his likeness." That Lamb had to earn his living as a clerk in the East India House meant that writing was for him little more than an avocation. But with Hazlitt, his nearest rival in the essay, it was a vocation. Hence the quantity of Hazlitt's work is greater than that of Lamb's, and Hazlitt employed the essay for a wider variety of purposes. In the personal essay alone, however, as illustrated by "My First Acquaintance with the Poets" and "On Going a Journey," he is hardly inferior to Lamb himself.

After the death of Hazlitt in 1830 and of Lamb four years later, the familiar essay suffered a decline, except as it appeared in the later writings of De Quincey, say, or in certain of Thackeray's books. But Thackeray was thought of chiefly as a novelist, and the genial essay was largely replaced by the more formal, more purposive essay of men like Carlyle, Ruskin, Arnold, and Thomas Huxley. From the es-

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say as a rostrum Carlyle preached his two main doctrines, that of the great man and that of work. John Ruskin, too, had his message, or messages, ethical like Carlyle's. He taught, among other things, the need of moral sincerity in art. Matthew Arnold (see II, 143), another "major prophet" of the Victorian era, was both poet and essayist, but it was mainly as essayist that he made himself felt in his own day. No less zealously than Carlyle and Ruskin, he preached a gospel, that of culture. By culture he meant "beauty and intelligence," which are to be found in the "study of perfection." Only in his quest for perfection—discoverable, thought Arnold, in the Greek way of life—could man regain those spiritual values that were being destroyed by faith in machinery and material goods.

But Arnold's pessimism about his times was countered by the optimism of Thomas Huxley (see II, 152), in whom the essay had a writer of remarkable skill and intelligence. Opposed to Arnold's view that too great faith in science and machinery was stifling the spirit of man, Huxley championed science as man's most dependable, though not necessarily his only, guide to a better life. Another Victorian optimist, one whose literary gifts surpass even those of Huxley, was Thomas Babington Macaulay. Arnold called Macaulay "the great apostle of the Philistines," the chief spokesman, that is, for the smug, middle-class Englishman and his belief in material progress. However shallow Macaulay's optimism may have been, his writing, whether in his great history or in his essays, is unequalled in the Victorian Age for those qualities that make a style readable: lucidity, force, and picturesqueness.

The preoccupation of the Victorians with serious matters, their berating society for its vulgarity or exhorting it to improve its morals, and their preaching at it in the thunderous tones of a Carlyle, deprived the essay of an opportunity to be companionable, lightsome, and tolerant. And so with writers like Carlyle, Ruskin, and Arnold the essay lost much of its intimacy, ease, and geniality. Those qualities are present, it is true, as has already been pointed out, in certain of Thackeray's essays. They are present, too, in

The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table (1858), by Oliver Wendell Holmes, but Holmes was an American, and Thackeray died in 1863. The essays of Emerson, although somewhat personal, are too much taken up with ideas and with teaching to warrant their being classed as familiar essays. Henry David Thoreau, Emerson's disciple, is a better example of the informal essayist. But, again, Emerson and Thoreau (see II, 112) were Americans, and the latter lived only a few years beyond the middle of the nineteenth century. As for Washington Irving, another American, his *Sketch-Book* (1819–1820) was published while Lamb and Hazlitt were still living. So in English literature it was not until well along in the second half of the century that the familiar essay, as written by Robert Louis Stevenson, reappeared as an important literary form. Whether or not the example of Stevenson caused a revival of interest in the personal essay, it is true that since his day—he died in 1894—English and American writers have been prolific in this form of writing.

Among twentieth-century essayists of importance are Edward V. Lucas, a disciple of Lamb, as well as his biographer; Alice Meynell, called the perfect essayist; Max Beerbohm, perhaps the wittiest and most sophisticated of modern essayists, and G. K. Chesterton, master of paradox and author of many books, whose reputation will probably rest on his essays. Other essayists of note are Aldous Huxley, whom Somerset Maugham ranks with Hazlitt; Stephen Leacock, since Mark Twain (see II, 339) the most delightful humorist to write in English; and Henry L. Mencken, one of the most original and provocative writers in modern American literature. Younger writers of the essay are Irwin Edman and E. B. White, both Americans.

In neither England nor America has the personal essay been vigorously cultivated in quite recent years. Still, the vitality of the essay, whether formal or informal, is great, and it continues to be, as from the days of Bacon, both popular and rewarding reading. And the formal essay, now more likely to be called an article, is the most widely printed single form of writing in America.

FRANCIS BACON

1561–1626

The foremost thinker of a remarkable age, that of the Elizabethans, Francis Bacon has rightly been called a modern mind. For through his insistence that experimentation is the true approach to knowledge he cleared the way for the advancement of modern science. His philosophical works, said Macaulay, "moved the intellects which have moved the world." To the general reader, however, Bacon is known as an essayist, the first one of importance in English letters. In what is probably his best-known essay he says that some books are to be tasted, others swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested. Packed with thought as they are, Bacon's essays might be regarded as "wisdom books" in miniature. No one of them, at any rate, is merely to be tasted or swallowed. As "counsels, civil and moral," they are sage guides to conduct, shrewd admonitions addressed to men in their practical pursuits. Their view of life is realistic, almost cynical at times, certainly not idealistic. We are greatly indebted, thought Bacon, "to Machiavel and others, that write what men do and not what they ought to do." And so Bacon's essays—called by Blake "good advice for Satan's kingdom"—are bits of worldly wisdom from a man who was worldly wise. There is wisdom or common sense in Bacon's style, too, for his manner is clear, terse, and often epigrammatic. The words Ben Jonson used to characterize Bacon as an orator might be used to describe him as an essayist: "No man ever spake more neatly, more pressly, more weightily; or suffered less emptiness, less idleness, in what he uttered."

OF TRUTH

What is truth? said jesting Pilate;¹ and would not stay for an answer. Certainly there be that delight in giddiness, and count it a bondage to fix a belief; affecting free-will in thinking, as well as in acting. And though the sects of phi-

losophers of that kind² be gone, yet there remain certain discoursing³ wits which are of the same veins, though there be not so much blood in them as was in those of the ancients. But it is not only the difficulty and labor which men take in finding out of truth; nor again that when it is found it imposeth upon men's thoughts; that doth bring lies in favor; but a natural though corrupt love of the lie itself. One of the later school⁴ of the Grecians examineth the matter and is at a stand to think what should be in it, that men should love lies, where neither they make for pleasure, as with poets, nor for advantage, as with the merchant, but for the lie's sake. But I cannot tell; this same truth is a naked and open day-light, that doth not show the masks and mummeries and triumphs of the world, half so stately and daintily as candle-lights. Truth may perhaps come to the price of a pearl, that showeth best by day; but it will not rise to the price of a diamond or carbuncle, that showeth best in varied lights. A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure. Doth any man doubt, that if there were taken out of men's minds vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations as one would, and the like, but it would leave the minds of a number of men poor shrunken things, full of melancholy and indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves? One of the fathers,⁵ in great severity, called poesy *vinum darmonum*,⁶ because it filleth the imagination; and yet it is but with the shadow of a lie. But it is not the lie that passeth through the mind, but the lie that sinketh in and setteth in it, that doth the hurt; such as we spake of before. But howsoever these things are thus in men's depraved judgments and affections, yet truth, which only

¹ See John 18:38.

² The skeptics, who believed that truth is relative, knowledge uncertain.

³ rambling.

⁴ Lucian, a Greek satirist of the second century.

⁵ St. Augustine (354–430).

⁶ devil's wine.

doth judge itself, teacheth that the inquiry of truth, which is the love-making or wooing of it, the knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it, and the belief of truth, which is the enjoying of it, is the sovereign good of human nature. The first creature of God, in the works of the days, was the light of the sense; the last was the light of reason; and his sabbath work ever since is the illumination of his Spirit. First he breathed light upon the face of the matter or chaos; then he breathed light into the face of man; and still he breatheth and inspireth light into the face of his chosen. The poet⁷ that beautified the sect⁸ that was otherwise inferior to the rest, saith yet excellently well: *It is a pleasure to stand upon the shore and to see ships tossed upon the sea; a pleasure to stand in the window of a castle and to see a battle and the adventures thereof below: but no pleasure is comparable to the standing upon the vantage ground of truth* (a hill not to be commanded, and where the air is always clear and serene), *and to see the errors and wanderings and mists and tempests in the vale below; so⁹ always that this prospect be with pity, and not with swelling or pride.* Certainly, it is heaven upon earth, to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in providence, and turn upon the poles of truth.

To pass from theological and philosophical truth to the truth of civil business; it will be acknowledged even by those that practise it not, that clear and round¹⁰ dealing is the honor of man's nature; and that mixture of falsehood is like alloy in coin of gold and silver, which may make the metal work the better, but it embaseth it. For these winding and crooked courses are the goings of the serpent; which goeth basely upon the belly, and not upon the feet. There is no vice that doth so cover a man with shame as to be found false and perfidious. And therefore Montaigne¹¹ saith prettily, when he inquired the reason why the word of the lie should be such a disgrace and such an odious charge. Saith he, *If it be well weighed, to say that a man lieth, is as much to say, as that he is brave towards God and a coward towards men.*

For a lie faces God, and shrinks from man. Surely the wickedness of falsehood and breach of faith cannot possibly be so highly expressed, as in that it shall be the last peal to call the judgments of God upon the generations of men; it being foretold that when Christ cometh, *he shall not find faith upon the earth.*¹²

OF GREAT PLACE

Men in great place are thrice servants: servants of the sovereign or state; servants of fame; and servants of business. So as they have no freedom; neither in their persons, nor in their actions, nor in their times. It is a strange desire, to seek power and to lose liberty: or to seek power over others and to lose power over a man's self. The rising unto place is laborious; and by pains men come to greater pains; and it is sometimes base; and by indignities men come to dignities. The standing is slippery, and the regress is either a downfall, or at least an eclipse, which is a melancholy thing. *Cum non sis qui fueris, non esse cur velis vivere.*¹ Nay, retire men cannot when they would, neither will they when it were reason; but are impatient of privateness, even in age and sickness, which require the shadow; like old townsmen, that will be still sitting at their street door, though thereby they offer age to scorn. Certainly great persons had need to borrow other men's opinions, to think themselves happy; for if they judge by their own feeling, they cannot find it: but if they think with themselves what other men think of them, and that other men would fain be as they are, then they are happy as it were by report; when perhaps they find the contrary within. For they are the first that find their own griefs, though they be the last that find their own faults. Certainly men in great fortunes are strangers to themselves, and while they are in the puzzle of business they have no time to tend their health either of body or mind. *Illi mors gravis incubat, qui notus nimis omnibus, ignotus moritur sibi.*² In place there is license to do good and evil; whereof the lat-

⁷ Lucretius (96?-55 B.C.), Roman poet, author of *On the Nature of Things*.

⁸ The Epicureans.

⁹ provided.

¹⁰ straightforward.

¹¹ French essayist (1533-1592).

¹² Luke 18:8.

¹ Since you are no longer what you were, there is no reason why you should wish to go on living.

² Unhappy the fate of the man who is all too well known to others, but ends his days a stranger to himself.

ter is a curse: for in evil the best condition is not to will; the second, not to can.³ But power to do good is the true and lawful end of aspiring. For good thoughts (though God accept them) yet towards men are little better than good dreams, except they be put in act; and that cannot be without power and place, as the vantage and commanding ground. Merit and good works is the end of man's motion; and conscience⁴ of the same is the accomplishment of man's rest. For if a man can be partaker of God's theatre, he shall likewise be partaker of God's rest. *Et conversus Deus, ut aspiceret opera quæ fecerunt manus sur, vidit quod omnia essent bona nimis,*⁵ and then the sabbath. In the discharge of thy place set before thee the best examples, for imitation is a globe of precepts. And after a time set before thee thine own example; and examine thyself strictly whether thou didst not best at first. Neglect not also the examples of those that have carried themselves ill in the same place; not to set off thyself by taxing their memory, but to direct thyself what to avoid. Reform therefore, without bravery or scandal of former times and persons; but yet set it down to thyself as well to create good precedents as to follow them. Reduce things to the first institution, and observe wherein and how they have degenerate; but yet ask counsel of both times; of the ancient time, what is best, and of the latter time, what is fittest. Seek to make thy course regular, that men may know beforehand what they may expect; but be not too positive and peremptory; and express thyself well when thou digressest from thy rule. Preserve the right of thy place; but stir not questions of jurisdiction; and rather assume thy right in silence and *de facto*,⁶ than voice it with claims and challenges. Preserve likewise the rights of inferior places; and think it more honor to direct in chief than to be busy in all. Embrace and invite helps and advices touching the execution of thy place; and do not drive away such as bring thee information, as meddlers; but accept of them in good part. The vices of authority are chiefly four: delays, corruption, roughness, and facility.⁷ For delays: give easy access; keep times appointed; go

through with that which is in hand, and interlace not business but of necessity. For corruption: do not only bind thine own hands or thy servants' hands from taking, but bind the hands of suitors also from offering. For integrity used doth the one; but integrity professed, and with a manifest detestation of bribery, doth the other. And avoid not only the fault, but the suspicion. Whosoever is found variable, and changeth manifestly without manifest cause, giveth suspicion of corruption. Therefore always when thou changeest thine opinion or course, profess it plainly, and declare it, together with the reasons that move thee to change; and do not think to steal⁸ it. A servant or a favorite, if he be inward, and no other apparent cause of esteem, is commonly thought but a by-way to close⁹ corruption. For roughness: it is a needless cause of discontent: severity breedeth fear, but roughness breedeth hate. Even reproofs from authority ought to be grave, and not taunting. As for facility: it is worse than bribery. For bribes come but now and then, but if importunity or idle respects lead a man, he shall never be without. As Solomon saith, *To respect persons is not good; for such a man will transgress for a piece of bread.*¹⁰ It is most true that was anciently spoken, *A place sheweth the man.* And it sheweth some to the better, and some to the worse. *Omnium consensu capax imperii, nisi imperasset,*¹¹ saith Tacitus of Galba; but of Vespasian he saith, *Solus imperantium, Vespasianus mutatus in melius;*¹² though the one was meant of sufficiency,¹³ the other of manners and affection. It is an assured sign of a worthy and generous spirit, whom honor amends. For honor is, or should be, the place of virtue; and as in nature things move violently to their place and calmly in their place, so virtue in ambition is violent, in authority settled and calm. All rising to great place is by a winding stair; and if there be factions, it is good to side a man's self whilst he is in the rising, and to balance himself when he is placed. Use the memory of thy predecessor fairly and tenderly; for if thou dost not, it is

³ know.⁴ consciousness.⁵ Turning back to look upon the works his hands had made, God saw that they were all good.⁶ as a matter of course. ⁷ lack of firmness.⁸ hide.⁹ secret.¹⁰ Proverbs 28:21.¹¹ One all men would have thought an able ruler, if he had never been emperor.¹² Vespasian was the only emperor who changed for the better.¹³ ability.

a debt will sure be paid when thou art gone. If thou have colleagues, respect them, and rather call them when they look not for it, than exclude them when they have reason to look to be called. Be not too sensible or too remembering of thy place in conversation and private answers to suitors; but let it rather be said, *When he sits in place he is another man.*

OF STUDIES

Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment and disposition of business. For expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one; but the general counsels, and the plots and marshalling of affairs, come best from those that are learned. To spend too much time in studies is sloth; to use them too much for ornament, is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules, is the humor of a scholar. They perfect nature, and are perfected by experience: for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need pruning,¹ by study; and studies themselves do give forth directions too much at large,² except they be bounded in by experience. Crafty men condemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them, and above them, won by observation. Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously;³ and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments, and the meaner sort of books; else distilled books are like common distilled waters, flashy⁴ things. Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man. And therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he

confer little, he had need have a present wit; and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know that⁵ he doth not. Histories make men wise; poets witty; the mathematics subtle; natural philosophy deep; moral grave; logic and rhetoric able to contend. *Abeunt studia in mores.*⁶ Nay, there is no stond⁷ or impediment in the wit but may be wrought out by fit studies; like as diseases of the body may have appropriate exercises. Bowling is good for the stone and reins;⁸ shooting for the lungs and breast; gentle walking for the stomach; riding for the head; and the like. So if a man's wit be wandering, let him study the mathematics; for in demonstrations, if his wit be called away never so little, he must begin again. If his wit be not apt to distinguish or find differences, let him study the Schoolmen; for they are *cymini sectores*.⁹ If he be not apt to beat over matters, and to call up one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study the lawyers' cases. So every defect of the mind may have a special receipt.¹⁰

OF ADVERSITY

It was an high speech of Seneca¹ (after the manner of the Stoics), that the good things which belong to prosperity are to be wished; but the good things that belong to adversity are to be admired.² *Bona rerum secundarum optabilia; adversarum mirabilia.* Certainly if miracles be the command over nature, they appear most in adversity. It is yet a higher speech of his than the other (much too high for a heathen). It is true greatness to have in one the frailty of a man, and the security of a God: *Vere magnum habere fragilitatem hominis, securitatem Dei.* This would have done better in poesy, where transcendences are more allowed. And the poets indeed have been busy with it; for it is in effect the thing which is figured in that strange fiction of the ancient poets, which seemeth not to be without mystery; nay, and to have some approach to the state of a Christian; that Hercules, when he went to unbind Prometheus (by whom human nature is repre-

⁵ what.⁶ Studies develop into habits.⁷ hindrance.⁸ kidneys.⁹ hair-splitters.¹⁰ prescribed remedy.¹ Roman Stoic philosopher (4 B.C.-65 A.D.).² wondered at.¹ pruning, cultivating.² without reference to experience or practice.³ carelessly.⁴ tasteless, insipid.

sented), sailed the length of the great ocean in an earthen pot or pitcher; lively describing Christian resolution, that saileth in the frail bark of the flesh through the waves of the world. But to speak in a mean.³ The virtue of prosperity is temperance;⁴ the virtue of adversity is fortitude; which in morals is the more heroical virtue. Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament; adversity is the blessing of the New; which carrieth the greater benediction, 10 and the clearer revelation of God's favor. Yet even in the Old Testament, if you listen to David's harp,⁵ you shall hear as many hearse-like airs as carols; and the pencil of the Holy Ghost hath labored more in describing the afflictions of Job than the felicities of Solomon. Prosperity is not without many fears and distastes; and adversity is not without comforts and hopes. We see in needle-works and embroidery, it is more pleasing to have a lively 20 work upon a sad and solemn ground than to have a dark and melancholy work upon a light-some ground: judge therefore of the pleasure of the heart by the pleasure of the eye. Certainly virtue is like precious odors, most fragrant when they are incensed or crushed: for prosperity doth best discover vice, but adversity doth best discover virtue.

OF MARRIAGE AND SINGLE LIFE

He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune, for they are impediments to great enterprises, either of virtue or mischief. 35 Certainly the best works, and of greatest merit for the public, have proceeded from the unmarried or childless men; which both in affection and means have married and endowed the public. Yet it were great reason that those that have children should have greatest care of future times; unto which they know they must transmit their dearest pledges. Some there are, who though they lead a single life, yet their thoughts do end with themselves, and account 45 future times impertinences. Nay, there are some other that account wife and children but as bills of charges. Nay more, there are some foolish rich covetous men, that take a pride in having no children, because they may be 50

thought so much the richer. For perhaps they have heard some talk, *Such an one is a great rich man*, and another except to it, *Yea, but he hath a great charge of children*, as if it were an abatement to his riches. But the most ordinary cause of a single life is liberty, especially in certain self-pleasing and humorous¹ minds, which are so sensible of every restraint, as they will go near to think their girdles and garters to be bonds and shackles. Unmarried men are best friends, best masters, best servants, but not always best subjects; for they are light to run away, and almost all fugitives are of that condition. A single life doth well with churchmen, for charity will hardly water the ground where it must first fill a pool. It is indifferent for judges and magistrates, for if they be facile and corrupt, you shall have a servant five times worse than a wife. For soldiers, I find the generals commonly in their hortatives put men in mind of their wives and children, and I think the despising of marriage amongst the Turks maketh the vulgar soldier more base. Certainly wife and children are a kind of discipline of humanity; and single men, though they may be many times more charitable, because their means are less exhaust, yet, on the other side, they are more cruel and hardhearted (good to make severe inquisitors), because their tenderness is not so oft called upon. Grave natures, led by custom, and therefore constant, are commonly loving husbands, as was said of Ulysses, *rectulam suam proutulit immortalitati*.² Chaste women are often proud and froward, as presuming upon the merit of their chastity. It is one of the best bonds both of chastity and obedience in the wife, if she think her husband wise, which she will never do if she find him jealous. Wives are young men's mistresses; companions for middle age; and old men's nurses. So as a man may have a quarrel³ to marry when he will. But yet he⁴ was reputed one of the wise men, that made answer to the question, when a man should marry—*A young man not yet, an elder man not at all*. It is often seen that bad husbands have very good wives; whether it be that it raiseth the price of their

¹ whimsical, capricious.

² He preferred his aged wife [Penelope] to immortality [with the goddess Calypso].

³ excuse, reason.

⁴ Thales, Greek philosopher (640–546 B.C.).

³ directly, plainly.

⁴ moderation.

⁵ The Psalms.

THE ESSAY · ROBERT BURTON

husband's kindness when it comes; or that the wives take a pride in their patience. But this never fails, if the bad husbands were of their own choosing, against their friends' consent; for then they will be sure to make good their own folly.

ROBERT BURTON 1577-1640

No book has a more misleading title than Robert Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy (1621). Intended as a serious study of various kinds of melancholy, with their symptoms and cures, the work became far more than that and reveals its author as a spectator of human life in its entirety. It has been called a world of literature in itself, and Burton's forthright comments on mankind—comments at times sardonic, nearly always droll—are both profound and diverting. The Anatomy was among those folios Lamb styled his "midnight darlings," and Byron found the book, with its medley of classical anecdotes, both amusing and instructive. No twenty other volumes that he knew of in the English language were as useful, he thought, for the improvement of one's literary conversation. The following selection is from the fore part of the Anatomy, the section entitled "Democritus Junior to the Reader." It should be read in connection with other examples of prose satire in this volume (see the note on Swift, II, 31). Democritus Junior is Burton's pseudonym.

WHY DEMOCRITUS LAUGHED

When Hippocrates¹ was now come to Abdera, the people of the city came flocking about him, some weeping, some entreating of him that he would do his best. After some little repast, he went to see Democritus,² the people following him, whom he found, as before, in his garden in the suburbs all alone, "sitting upon a stone under a plane tree, without hose or shoes, with a book on his knees, cutting up several beasts, and busy at his study." The multitude stood gazing round about to see the congress. Hippocrates, after a little pause, saluted him by

his name, whom he resaluted, ashamed almost that he could not call him likewise by his or that he had forgot it. Hippocrates demanded of him what he was doing. He told him that he was "busy in cutting up several beasts to find out the cause of madness and melancholy."

Hippocrates commended his work, admiring his happiness and leisure. And why, quoth Democritus, have not you that leisure? Because,

replied Hippocrates, domestical affairs hinder, necessary to be done, for ourselves, neighbors, friends; expenses, diseases, frailties and mortalities which happen; wife, children, servants, and such businesses that deprive us of our time. At this speech Democritus profusely laughed, his friends and the people standing by, weeping in the meantime and lamenting his madness. Hippocrates asked the reason why he laughed. He told him at the vanity and fopperies of the time, to see men so empty of all virtuous actions to hunt so far after gold, having no end of ambition; to take such infinite pains for a little glory and to be favored of men; to make such deep mines into the earth for gold, and many times to find nothing, with loss of their lives and fortunes. Some to love dogs, others horses, some to desire to be obeyed in many provinces, and yet themselves will know no obedience. Some to love their wives dearly at first, and after a while to forsake and hate them, begetting children with much care and cost for their education, yet when they grow to man's estate to despise, neglect, and leave them naked to the world's mercy. Do not these behaviors express their intolerable folly? When men live in peace, they covet war, detesting quietness, deposing kings and advancing others in their stead, murdering some men to beget children of their wives. How many strange humors³ are in men! When they are poor and needy, they seek riches; and when they have them, they do not enjoy them but hide them under ground or else wastefully spend them. O wise Hippocrates! I laugh at such things being done, but much more when no good comes of them and when they are done to so ill purpose. There is no truth or justice found amongst them, for they daily plead one against another, the son against the father and the mother, brother against brother, kindred and friends of the same qual-

¹ Greek physician (460-357 B.C.).

² Greek philosopher (460?-362? B.C.); called the laughing philosopher.

³ whims, moods.

ity; and all this for riches whereof after death they cannot be possessors. And yet notwithstanding they will defame and kill one another, commit all unlawful actions, contemning God and men, friends and country. They make great account of many senseless things, esteeming them as a great part of their treasure, statues, pictures, and such like movables, dear bought and so cunningly wrought as nothing but speech wanteth in them; and yet they hate living persons speaking to them. Others affect difficult things; if they dwell on firm land, they will remove to an island and thence to land again, being no way constant to their desires. They commend courage and strength in wars, and let themselves be conquered by lust and avarice; they are, in brief, as disordered in their minds as Thersites⁴ was in his body. And now methinks, O most worthy Hippocrates, you should not reprehend my laughing, perceiving so many fooleries in men; for no man will mock his own folly, but that which he seeth in a second, and so they justly mock one another. The drunkard calls him a glutton whom he knows to be sober. Many men love the sea, others husbandry; briefly, they cannot agree in their own trades and professions, much less in their lives and actions.

When Hippocrates heard these words so readily uttered without premeditation to declare the world's vanity, full of ridiculous contrariety, he made answer that necessity compelled men to many such actions and divers wills ensuing from divine permission, that we might not be idle, being nothing so odious to them as sloth and negligence. Besides, men cannot foresee future events in this uncertainty of human affairs; they would not marry, if they could foretell the causes of their dislike and separation; or parents, if they knew the hour of their children's death, so tenderly provide for them; or an husbandman sow if he thought there would be no increase; or a merchant adventure to sea if he foresaw shipwreck; or be a magistrate if presently to be deposed. Alas! worthy Democritus, every man hopes the best, and to that end he doth it, and therefore no such cause or ridiculous occasion of laughter.

Democritus hearing this poor excuse laughed

again aloud, perceiving he wholly mistook him and did not well understand what he had said concerning perturbations and tranquility of the mind. Insomuch that if men would govern their actions by discretion and providence, they would not declare themselves fools as now they do and he should have no cause of laughter, but, quoth he, they swell in this life as if they were immortal and demi-gods, for want of understanding. It were enough to make them wise if they would but consider the mutability of this world and how it wheels about, nothing being firm and sure. He that is now above, tomorrow is beneath; he that sat on this side to-day, tomorrow is hurled on the other. And not considering these matters they fall into many inconveniences and troubles, coveting things of no profit and thirsting after them, tumbling headlong into many calamities. So that if men would attempt no more than what they can bear they should lead contented lives and learning to know themselves would limit their ambition; they would perceive then that nature hath enough without seeking such superfluities and unprofitable things which bring nothing with them but grief and molestation. As a fat body is more subject to diseases so are rich men to absurdities and fooleries, to many casualties and cross inconveniences. There are many that take no heed what happeneth to others by bad conversation and therefore overthrow themselves in the same manner through their own fault, not foreseeing dangers manifest. These are things—O more than mad! quoth he—that give me matter of laughter, by suffering the pains of your impieties, as your avarice, envy, malice, enormous villainies, mutinies, insatiable desires, conspiracies, and other incurable vices; besides, your dissimulation and hypocrisy, bearing deadly hatred one to the other, and yet shadowing it with a good face, flying out into all filthy lusts and transgressions of all laws both of nature and civility. Many things which they have left off, after a while they fall to again, husbandry, navigation; and leave again, fickle and inconstant as they are. When they are young, they would be old, and old, young. Princes commend a private life, private men itch after honor. A magistrate commends a quiet life, a quiet man would be in his office and obeyed as he is. And what is the cause of all this but that they know not themselves.

⁴ a character in Homer's *Iliad*, deformed in body and ugly in disposition.

Some delight to destroy, one to build, another to spoil one country to enrich another and himself. In all these things they are like children, in whom is no judgment or counsel, and resemble beasts, saving that beasts are better than they, as being contented with nature. When shall you see a lion hide gold in the ground or a bull contend for a better pasture! When a boar is thirsty, he drinks what will serve him and no more; and when his belly is full, he ceaseth to eat. But men are immoderate in both; as in lust they covet carnal copulation at set times; men always, ruining thereby the health of their bodies. And doth it not deserve laughter to see an amorous fool torment himself for a wench, weep, howl for a misshapen slut, a dowdy sometimes, that might have his choice of the finest beauties? Is there any remedy for this in physic?⁵ I do anatomize and cut up these poor beasts to see these distempers, vanities, and follies; yet such proof were better made on man's body, if my kind nature would endure it. Who from the hour of his birth is most miserable, weak, and sickly; when he sucks he is guided by others, when he is grown great practiseth unhappiness and is sturdy, and when old, a child again and repenteth him of his life past. And here being interrupted by one that brought books, he fell to it again that all were mad, careless, stupid. To prove my former speeches look into courts or private houses. Judges give judgment according to their own advantage, doing manifest wrong to poor innocents to please others. Notaries alter sentences and for money lose their deeds. Some make false moneys, others counterfeit false weights. Some abuse their parents, yea, corrupt their own sisters, others make long libels and pasquils, defaming men of good life and extol such as are lewd and vicious. Some rob one, some another; magistrates make laws against thieves and are the veriest thieves themselves. Some kill themselves, others despair, not obtaining their desires. Some dance, sing, laugh, feast and banquet, whilst others sigh, languish, mourn and lament, having neither meat, drink, nor clothes. Some prank up⁶ their bodies and have their minds full of execrable vices. Some trot about to bear false witness and say anything for money; and though judges know of it,

yet for a bribe they wink at it and suffer false contracts to prevail against equity. Women are all day a-dressing to pleasure other men abroad and go like sluts at home, not caring to please their own husbands whom they should. Seeing men are so fickle, so sottish,⁷ so intemperate, why should not I laugh at those to whom folly seems wisdom, will not be cured, and perceive it not!

It grew late, Hippocrates left him; and no sooner was he come away but all the citizens came about flocking to know how he liked him. He told them in brief that notwithstanding those small neglects of his attire, body, diet, the world had not a wiser, a more learned, a more honest man and they were very much deceived to say that he was mad.

Thus Democritus esteemed of the world in his time, and this was the cause of his laughter. And good cause he had.

*Olim iure quidem, nunc plus, Democrite, ride;
Quin rides? vita hæc nunc magis ridicula est.*

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Good cause he had, but now much more,
This life of ours is more ridiculous
Than that of his or long before.

JOHN EARLE

1601?–1665

John Earle, Anglican bishop, shares with Joseph Hall and Sir Thomas Overbury the chief credit for establishing in the seventeenth century a literary genre known as the character essay. A "character," as the character essay is sometimes called, may be defined as a brief sketch of a typical person, such as a courtier, a scholar, or a young preacher. It is a generalized rather than an individualized portrait, and to its composite nature it owes both its strength and its weakness—its strength in that it leaves little or nothing out, its weakness in that it tends toward caricature. The character writers of the seventeenth century found their model in the Characters of Theophrastus, an ancient Greek philosopher, and they anticipated the character studies made by Addison and Steele in the eighteenth century, Addison's "Ned Softly, the Poet," for example, or his "Tom Folio, the Ped-

⁵ medicine.⁶ dress showily.⁷ foolish, stupid.

ant." Entitled *Microcosmography*, or a Piece of the World Discovered, Earle's "character" book was published in 1628. For other character studies in this volume see Addison's "On Waste of Time" (II, 41), Steele's "The Talkative Man" (II, 44), Goldsmith's "Beau Tibbs at Home" (II, 54), Lamb's "Poor Relations" (II, 56), Newman's "Definition of a Gentleman" (II, 127), and Thackeray's "Snobs and Marriage" (II, 138)

A YOUNG GENTLEMAN OF THE UNIVERSITY

Is one that comes there to wear a gown, and to say hereafter, he has been at the university. His father sent him thither because he heard there were the best fencing and dancing schools; from these he has his education, from his tutor the oversight. The first element of his knowledge is to be shown the colleges, and initiated in a tavern by the way, which hereafter he will learn of himself. The two marks of his seniority is the bare velvet of his gown, and his proficiency at tennis, where when he can once play a set, he is a freshman no more. His study has commonly handsome shelves, his books neat silk strings, which he shows to his father's man, and is loth to untie or take down for fear of misplacing. Upon foul days for recreation he retires thither, and looks over the pretty book his tutor reads to him, which is commonly some short history, or a piece of Euphormio;¹ for which his tutor gives him money to spend next day. His main loitering is at the library, where he studies arms and books of honor,² and turns a gentleman critic in pedigrees. Of all things he endures not to be mistaken for a scholar, and hates a black suit though it be made of satin. His companion is ordinarily some stale fellow, that has been notorious for an angle to gold hatbands,³ whom he admires at first, afterwards scorns. If he have spirit or wit he may light of better company, and may learn some flashes of wit, which may do him knight's service in the country hereafter. But he is now gone to the inns-of-court, where he studies to forget what he learned before, his acquaintance and the fashion.

¹ John Barclay (1582-1621), Scottish writer, author of *Argenis*, a political and historical romance.

² books of noble pedigrees.

³ a toady to noblemen, who wore caps with gold tassels.

A VULGAR-SPIRITED MAN

Is one of the herd of the world. One that follows merely the common cry, and makes it louder by one. A man that loves none but who are publicly affected, and he will not be wiser than the rest of the town. That never owns a friend after an ill name, or some general imputation, though he knows it most unworthy. That opposes to reason, "thus men say," and "thus most do," and "thus the world goes," and thinks this enough to pose¹ the other. That worships men in place, and those only; and thinks all a great man speaks, oracles. Much taken with my lord's jest, and repeats you it all to a syllable. One that justifies nothing out of fashion, nor any opinion out of the applauded way. That thinks certainly all Spaniards and Jesuits very villains and is still cursing the Pope and Spmolà.² One that thinks the gravest cassock the best scholar and the best clothes the finest man. That is taken only with broad and obscene wit, and hisses anything too deep for him. That cries Chaucer for his money above all our English poets, because the voice³ has gone so, and he has read none. That is much ravished with such a nobleman's courtesy, and would venture his life for him, because he put off his hat. One that is foremost still to kiss the king's hand, and cries "God bless his Majesty!" loudest. That rails on all men condemned and out of favor, and the first that says "Away with the traitors!"—yet struck with much ruth at executions, and for pity to see a man die, could kill the hangman. That comes to London to see it, and the pretty things in it, and, the chief cause of his journey, the bears. That measures the happiness of the kingdom by the cheapness of corn, and conceives no harm of state but ill trading. Within this compass, too, come those that are too much wedged into the world, and have no lifting thoughts above those things; that call to thrive well, to do well; and preferment only the grace of God. That aim all studies at this mark, and show you poor scholars as an example to take heed by. That think the prison and want, a judgment for some sin; and never like well hereafter of a jail-bird. That know no other content but

¹ offset, outweigh.

² Spanish general (1569-1630).

³ general opinion.

Some delight to destroy, one to build, another to spoil one country to enrich another and himself. In all these things they are like children, in whom is no judgment or counsel, and resemble beasts, saving that beasts are better than they, as being contented with nature. When shall you see a lion hide gold in the ground or a bull contend for a better pasture! When a boar is thirsty, he drinks what will serve him and no more; and when his belly is full, he ceaseth to eat. But men are immoderate in both; as in lust they covet carnal copulation at set times; men always, ruining thereby the health of their bodies. And doth it not deserve laughter to see an amorous fool torment himself for a wench, weep, howl for a misshapen slut, a dowdy sometimes, that might have his choice of the finest beauties? Is there any remedy for this in physic?⁵ I do anatomize and cut up these poor beasts to see these distempers, vanities, and follies; yet such proof were better made on man's body, if my kind nature would endure it. Who from the hour of his birth is most miserable, weak, and sickly; when he sucks he is guided by others, when he is grown great practiseth unhappiness and is sturdy, and when old, a child again and repenteth him of his life past. And here being interrupted by one that brought books, he fell to it again that all were mad, careless, stupid. To prove my former speeches look into courts or private houses. Judges give judgment according to their own advantage, doing manifest wrong to poor innocents to please others. Notaries alter sentences and for money lose their deeds. Some make false moneys, others counterfeit false weights. Some abuse their parents, yea, corrupt their own sisters, others make long libels and pasquils, defaming men of good life and extol such as are lewd and vicious. Some rob one, some another; magistrates make laws against thieves and are the veriest thieves themselves. Some kill themselves, others despair, not obtaining their desires. Some dance, sing, laugh, feast and banquet, whilst others sigh, languish, mourn and lament, having neither meat, drink, nor clothes. Some prank up⁶ their bodies and have their minds full of execrable vices. Some trot about to bear false witness and say anything for money; and though judges know of it,

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⁵ medicine.⁶ dress showily.⁷ foolish, stupid.

their follies. But as in casting account, three or four men together come short in account of one man placed by himself below them: so neither are a troop of these ignorant Doradoes,⁴ of that true esteem and value, as many a forlorn person, whose condition doth place them below their feet. Let us speak like politicians,⁵ there is a nobility without heraldry, a natural dignity, whereby one man is ranked with another; another filed before him, according to the quality of his desert, and pre-eminence of his good parts: though the corruption of these times, and the bias of present practice wheel another way. Thus it was in the first and primitive commonwealths, and is yet in the integrity and cradle of well-ordered polities, till corruption getteth ground, ruder desires laboring after that which wiser generations condemn every one having a liberty to amass and heap up riches, and they a license or faculty to do or purchase anything. . . .

To do no injury, nor take none, was a principle, which to my former years, and impatient affections, seemed to contain enough of morality; but my more settled years, and christian constitution, have fallen upon severer resolutions. I can hold there is no such thing as injury; that if there be, there is no such injury as revenge, and no such revenge as the contempt of an injury; that to hate another, is to malign himself; that the truest way to love another, is to despise ourselves. I were unjust unto mine own conscience, if I should say I am at variance with anything like myself. I find there are many pieces in this one fabric of man; this frame is raised upon a mass of antipathies. I am one methinks, but as the world; wherein notwithstanding there are a swarm of distinct essences, and in them another world of contrarieties; we carry private and domestic enemies within, public and more hostile adversaries without. The devil, that did but buffet St. Paul, plays methinks at sharp with me. Let me be nothing, if within the compass of myself I do not find the battle of Lepanto,⁶ passion against reason, reason against faith, faith against the devil, and my conscience against all. There is another man within me, that's angry

with me, rebukes, commands, and dastards' me. I have no conscience of marble, to resist the hammer of more heavy offenses; nor yet so soft and waxen, as to take the impression of each single peccadillo or scape of infirmity: I am of a strange belief, that it is as easy to be forgiven some sins, as to commit some others. For my original sin, I hold it to be washed away in my baptism; for my actual transgressions, I compute and reckon with God but from my last repentance, sacrament, or general absolution; and therefore am not terrified with the sins or madness of my youth. I thank the goodness of God, I have no sins that want a name. I am not singular in offenses; my transgressions are epidemical,⁷ and from the common breath of our corruption. For there are certain tempers of body, which, matched with a humorous depravity of mind, do hatch and produce viti-
osities, whose newness and monstrosity of nature admits no name. . . . For the heavens are not only fruitful in new and unheard-of stars, the earth in plants and animals; but men's minds also in villainy and vices. Now the dullness of my reason, and the vulgarity of my disposition, never prompted my invention, nor solicited my affection unto any of those. Yet even those common and quotidian infirmities that so necessarily attend me, and do seem to be my very nature, have so dejected me, so broken the estimation that I should have otherwise of myself, that I repute myself the most abjectest piece of mortality. Divines prescribe a fit of sorrow to repentance; there goes indignation, anger, sorrow, hatred, into mine: passions of a contrary nature, which neither seem to suit with this action, nor my proper constitution. It is no breach of charity to ourselves, to be at variance with our vices; nor to abhor that part of us, which is an enemy to the ground of charity, our God; wherein we do but imitate our great selves, the world, whose divided antipathies and contrary faces do yet carry a charitable regard unto the whole by their particular discords, preserving the common harmony, and keeping in fetters those powers, whose rebellions once masters might be the ruin of all.

I thank God, amongst those millions of vices

⁴ rich men (literally, goldfish).

⁵ statesmen.

⁶ naval battle between the Christians and the Turks, 1571.

⁷ intimidates.

⁸ common to everyone

I do inherit and hold from Adam, I have escaped one, and that a mortal enemy to charity, the first and [father-sin], not only of man, but of the devil, pride; a vice whose name is comprehended in a monosyllable, but in its nature not circumscribed with a world. I have escaped it in a condition that can hardly avoid it. Those petty acquisitions and reputed perfections that advance and elevate the conceits of other men add no feathers unto mine. I have seen a grammarian tower and plume himself over a single line in Horace, and show more pride in the construction of one ode, than the author in the composure of the whole book. For my own part, besides the jargon and *patois* of several provinces, I understand no less than six languages; yet I protest I have no higher conceit of myself, than had our fathers before the confusion of Babel,⁹ when there was but one language in the world, and none to boast himself either linguist or critic. I have not only seen several countries, beheld the nature of their climes, the chorography of their provinces, topography of their cities, but understood their several laws, customs and policies; yet cannot all this persuade the dulness of my spirit unto such an opinion of myself, as I behold in nimble and conceited heads, that never looked a degree beyond their nests. I know the names, and somewhat more, of all the constellations in my horizon; yet I have seen a prating mariner, that could only name the pointers¹⁰ and the north star, out-talk me, and conceit himself a whole sphere above me. I know most of the plants of my country, and of those about me; yet methinks I do not know so many as when I did but know a hundred, and had scarcely ever simplified¹¹ further than Cheapside.¹² For indeed, heads of capacity, and such as are not full with a handful, or easy measure of knowledge, think they know nothing, till they know all; which being impossible, they fall upon the opinion of Socrates, and only know they know not anything.

I cannot think that Homer pined away upon the riddle of the fisherman, or that Aristotle, who understood the uncertainty of knowledge, and confessed so often the reason of man too weak for the works of nature, did ever drown

himself upon the flux and reflux of Euripus.¹³ We do but learn to-day, what our better advanced judgments will unteach to-morrow: and Aristotle doth not instruct us, as Plato did him; that is, to confute himself. I have run through all sorts, yet find no rest in any: though our first studies and junior endeavors may style us Peripatetics, Stoics, or Academics, yet I perceive the wisest heads prove, at last, almost all sceptics, and stand like Janus¹⁴ in the field of knowledge. I have therefore one common and authentic philosophy I learned in the schools, whereby I discourse and satisfy the reason of other men; another more reserved, and drawn from experience, whereby I content mine own. Solomon, that complained of ignorance in the height of knowledge, hath not only humbled my conceits, but discouraged my endeavors. There is yet another conceit that hath sometimes made me shut my books, which tells me it is a vanity to waste our days in the blind pursuit of knowledge; it is but attending a little longer, and we shall enjoy that by instinct and infusion, which we endeavor at here by labor and inquisition. It is better to sit down in a modest ignorance; and rest contented with the natural blessing of our own reasons, than buy the uncertain knowledge of this life, with sweat and vexation, which death gives every fool gratis, and is an accessory of our glorification.

I was never yet once, and commend their resolutions who never marry twice: not that I disallow¹⁵ of second marriage; as neither in all cases of polygamy, which considering some times, and the unequal number of both sexes, may be also necessary. The whole world was made for man, but the twelfth part of man for woman: man is the whole world, and the breath of God; woman the rib, and crooked piece of man. . . . I speak not in prejudice, nor am averse from that sweet sex, but naturally amorous of all that is beautiful; I can look a whole day with delight upon a handsome picture, though it be but of a horse. It is my temper, and I like it the better, to affect all harmony; and sure there is music even in the beauty, and the silent note which Cupid strikes, far sweeter than the sound of an instrument.

¹³ a strait separating the mainland of Greece from the island Euboea.

¹⁴ Roman deity with two opposite faces.

¹⁵ disapprove.

⁹ See Genesis 11:1-9. ¹⁰ The Dipper.

¹¹ collected herbs or simples.

¹² a London market.

For there is a music wherever there is a harmony, order or proportion; and thus far we may maintain the music of the spheres: for those well-ordered motions, and regular paces, though they give no sound unto the ear, yet to the understanding they strike a note most full of harmony. Whosoever is harmonically composed, delights in harmony; which makes me much distrust the symmetry of those heads which declaim against all church-music. For myself, not only from my obedience, but my particular genius, I do embrace it: for even that vulgar and tavern-music, which makes one man merry, another mad, strikes in me a deep fit of devotion, and a profound contemplation of the first composer. There is something in it of divinity more than the ear discovers: it is a hieroglyphical and shadowed lesson of the whole world, and creatures of God, such a melody to the ear, as the whole world well understood, would afford the understanding. In brief, it is a sensible fit of that harmony, which intellectually sounds in the ears of God. I will not say with Plato, the soul is a harmony, but harmonical, and hath its nearest sympathy unto music: thus some whose temper of body agrees, and humors the constitution of their souls, are born poets, though indeed all are naturally inclined unto rhythm. . . . I feel not in me those sordid and unchristian desires of my profession; I do not secretly implore and wish for plagues, rejoice at famines, revolve ephemerides¹⁶ and almanacs, in expectation of malignant aspects, fatal conjunctions and eclipses: I rejoice not at unwholesome springs, nor unseasonable winters; my prayer goes with the husbandman's; I desire everything in its proper season, that neither men nor the times be put out of temper. Let me be sick myself, if sometimes the malady of my patient be not a disease unto me; I desire rather to cure his infirmities than my own necessities: where I do him no good, methinks it is scarce honest gain; though I confess 't is but the worthy salary of our well-intended endeavors.

I am not only ashamed, but heartily sorry, that besides death, there are diseases incurable; yet not for my own sake, or that they be beyond my art, but for the general cause and sake of humanity, whose common cause I apprehend as mine own. And to speak more generally,

those three noble professions which all civil commonwealths do honor are raised upon the fall of Adam, and are not exempt from their infirmities; there are not only diseases incurable in physic, but cases indissoluble in laws, vices incorrigible in divinity. If general councils may err, I do not see why particular courts should be infallible; their perfectest rules are raised upon the erroneous reasons of man, and the laws of one do but condemn the rules of another, as Aristotle oft-times the opinions of his predecessors, because, though agreeable to reason, yet were not consonant to his own rules, and logic of his proper principles. Again, to speak nothing of the sin against the Holy Ghost, whose cure not only, but whose nature is unknown, I can cure the gout or stone in some, sooner than divinity pride or avarice in others. I can cure vices by physic, when they remain incurable by divinity; and shall obey my pills, when they condemn their precepts. I boast nothing, but plainly say, we all labor against our own cure; for death is the cure of all diseases. There is no catholicon or universal remedy I know but this, which though nauseous to queasy stomachs, yet to prepared appetites is nectar, and a pleasant potion of immortality.

JOHN MILTON
1608-1674

In its championship of intellectual liberty the voice of John Milton found its most eloquent and lasting utterance in Areopagitica (1644). As an argument for a free press this prose masterpiece has never been equaled, nor is it likely to be. It was occasioned by a Parliamentary order that placed heavy restraints on the publication of books. Milton violated the order himself in publishing, without license, his pamphlets on divorce, arguments for domestic liberty; he attacked the order in Areopagitica. The profound reasoning of the essay defies successful refutation. "I wrote my 'Areopagitica,'" said Milton, "in order to deliver the press from the restraints with which it was encumbered; that the power of determining what was true and what was false, what ought to be published and what suppressed, might no longer be entrusted to a few illiterate and illiberal individuals." Although Milton is, at times, a prose writer of the

¹⁶ astrological tables.

first rank, he did his most important work in poetry (see I, 87). His *Paradise Lost* is one of the world's major epics. The following excerpt from *Areopagitica* may be read profitably with Mill's essay on liberty (II, 131).

FROM *Areopagitica*

I deny not, but that it is of greatest concernment in the Church and Commonwealth, to have a vigilant eye how books demean themselves as well as men; and thereafter to confine, imprison, and do sharpest on them as malefactors. For books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are; nay, they do preserve as in a vial the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. I know they are as lively, and as vigorously productive, as those fabulous dragon's teeth,¹ and being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men. And yet, on the other hand, unless wariness be used, as good almost kill a man as kill a good book: who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were in the eye.² Many a man lives a burden to the earth; but a good book is the precious life-blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life. 'Tis true, no age can restore a life, whereof perhaps there is no great loss; and revolutions of ages do not oft recover the loss of a rejected truth, for the want of which whole nations fare the worse. We should be wary therefore what persecution we raise against the living labors of public men, how we spill that seasoned life of man, preserved and stored up in books; since we see a kind of homicide may be thus committed, sometimes a martyrdom, and if it extend to the whole impression, a kind of massacre, whereof the execution ends not in the slaying of an elemental life, but strikes at that ethereal and fifth essence, the breath of reason itself, slays an immortality rather than a life. . . .

Seeing, therefore, that those books, and those

in great abundance which are likeliest to taint both life and doctrine, cannot be suppressed without the fall of learning, and of all ability in disputation, and that these books of either sort
5 are most and soonest catching to the learned, from whom to the common people whatever is heretical or dissolute may quickly be conveyed, and that evil manners are as perfectly learnt without books a thousand other ways which
10 cannot be stopped, and evil doctrine not with books can propagate, except a teacher guide, which he might also do without writing, and so beyond prohibiting, I am not unable to unfold how this cautious³ enterprise of licensing can
15 be exempted from the number of vain and impossible attempts. And he who were pleasantly disposed could not well avoid to liken it to the exploit of that gallant man who thought to pound up the crows by shutting his park
20 gate.

Besides another inconvenience, if learned men be the first receivers out of books and disseminators both of vice and error, how shall the licensers themselves be confided in, unless we
25 can confer upon them, or they assume to themselves above all others in the land, the grace of infallibility and uncorruptedness? And again if it be true, that a wise man, like a good refiner, can gather gold out of the drossiest volume, and that a fool will be a fool with the best book,
30 yea, or without book; there is no reason that we should deprive a wise man of any advantage to his wisdom, while we seek to restrain from a fool that which being restrained will be no hindrance to his folly. For if there should be so much exactness always used to keep that from him which is unfit for his reading, we should in the judgment of Aristotle not only, but of Solomon⁴ and of our Savior,⁵ not vouchsafe him
40 good precepts, and by consequence not willingly admit him to good books; as being certain that a wise man will make better use of an idle pamphlet than a fool will do of sacred Scripture. . . .

If we think to regulate printing, thereby to rectify manners, we must regulate all recreations and pastimes, all that is delightful to man.

¹ A reference to the story of Jason, who sowed the teeth of the Colchian dragon, following which armed men sprang up. See Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

² Reason appears to be thought of here as God's image within the pupil of the eye.

³ deceitful.

⁴ Proverbs 26:5, "Answer a fool according to his folly."

⁵ Matthew 7:6, "Cast not your pearls before swine."

No music must be heard, no song be set or sung, but what is grave and Doric.⁶ There must be licensing dancers, that no gesture, motion, or deportment be taught our youth but what by their allowance shall be thought honest; for such Plato was provided of; it will ask more than the work of twenty licensers to examine all the lutes, violins, and the guitars in every house; they must not be suffered to prattle as they do, but must be licensed what they may say. And who shall silence all the airs and madrigals that whisper softness in chambers? The windows also, and the balconies must be thought on; there are shrewd⁷ books with dangerous frontispieces set to sale; who shall prohibit them, shall twenty licensers? The villages also must have their visitors to inquire what lectures the bagpipe and the rebeck⁸ reads even to the ballatry, and the gamut of every municipal fiddler, for these are the countryman's Arcadias, and his Monte Mayors.⁹ Next, what more national corruption, for which England hears ill¹⁰ abroad, than household gluttony: who shall be the rectors of our daily rioting? And what shall be done to inhibit the multitudes that frequent those houses where drunkenness is sold and harbored? Our garments also should be referred to the licensing of some more sober workmasters to see them cut into a less wanton garb. Who shall regulate all the mixed conversation of our youth, male and female together, as is the fashion of this country; who shall still appoint what shall be discoursed, what presumed, and no further? Lastly, who shall forbid and separate all idle resort, all evil company? These things will be, and must be; but how they shall be least hurtful, how least enticing, herein consists the grave and governing wisdom of a state. To sequester out of the world into Atlantic and Utopian¹¹ politics, which never can be drawn into use, will not mend our condition; but to ordain wisely as in

this world of evil, in the midst whereof God hath placed us unavoidably. Nor is it Plato's licensing of books will do this, which necessarily pulls along with it so many other kinds of licensing, as will make us all both ridiculous and weary, and yet frustrate; but those unwritten, or at least unconstraining laws of virtuous education, religious and civil nurture, which Plato there mentions as the bonds and ligaments of the commonwealth, the pillars and the sustainers of every written statute, these they be which will bear chief sway in such matters as these, when all licensing will be easily eluded. Impunity and remissness, for certain, are the bane of a commonwealth, but here the great art lies, to discern in what the law is to bid restraint and punishment, and in what things persuasion only is to work.

If every action which is good or evil in man at ripe years were to be under pittance, and prescription, and compulsion, what were virtue but a name, what praise could be then due to well-doing, what gramercy¹² to be sober, just, or continent? Many there be that complain of divine providence for suffering Adam to transgress; foolish tongues! when God gave him reason, he gave him freedom to choose, for reason is but choosing; he had been else a mere artificial Adam, such an Adam as he is in the motions.¹³ We ourselves esteem not of that obedience, or love, or gift, which is of force. God therefore left him free, set before him a provoking¹⁴ object, ever almost in his eyes; herein consisted his merit, herein the right of his reward, the praise of his abstinence. Wherefore did he create passions within us, pleasures round about us, but that these rightly tempered are the very ingredients of virtue?

They are not skilful considerers of human things who imagine to remove sin by removing the matter of sin; for, besides that it is a huge heap increasing under the very act of diminishing, though some part of it may for a time be withdrawn from some persons, it cannot from all, in such a universal thing as books are; and when this is done, yet the sin remains entire. Though ye take from a covetous man all his treasure, he has yet one jewel left, ye cannot bereave him of his covetousness. Banish all ob-

⁶ Music of a martial character, in contrast to the Lydian mode, soft and voluptuous, and the Phrygian mode, lively and loud.

⁷ mischievous.

⁸ An early musical instrument.

⁹ Reference to Jorge de Montemayor (1521–1561), Portuguese poet, author of a popular prose pastoral.

¹⁰ is ill spoken of.

¹¹ Reference to Plato's island of Atlantis and Sir Thomas More's Utopia.

¹² thanks.

¹³ puppet shows.

¹⁴ enticing.

jects of lust, shut up all youth into the severest discipline that can be exercised in any hermitage, ye cannot make them chaste that came not thither so: such great care and wisdom is required to the right managing of this point. Suppose we could expel sin by this means; look how much we thus expel of sin, so much we expel of virtue: for the matter of them both is the same; remove that, and ye remove them both alike. This justifies the high providence of God, who, though he commands us temperance, justice, continence, yet pours out before us, even to a profuseness, all desirable things, and gives us minds that can wander beyond all limit and satiety. Why should we then affect a rigor contrary to the manner of God and of nature, by abridging or scanting those means, which books freely permitted are, both to the trial of virtue, and the exercise of truth? It would be better done, to learn that the law must needs be frivolous, which goes to restrain things, uncertainly and yet equally working to good, and to evil. And were I the chooser, a dram of well doing should be preferred before many times as much the forcible hindrance of evil doing. For God sure esteems the growth and completing of one virtuous person, more than the restraint of ten vicious. . . .

ABRAHAM COWLEY
1618–1667

*Had Abraham Cowley written less poetry and more prose his reputation today would be greater than it is. In his own day he was regarded as England's foremost poet, but his fame suffered a rapid decline and his poems, with some few exceptions, are now seen for what they are—imitative, artificial, and shallow. Speaking of Cowley's love lyrics, Dr. Johnson said they might have been "written for penance by a hermit, or for hire by a philosophical rhymist who had only heard of another sex." But in Cowley's prose one finds those qualities his poetry so often lacks—simplicity, naturalness, and a certain depth. His personal essays are among the first of their kind in English, and bear comparison with those of Lamb and Hazlitt. They were published in 1688 under the title *Several Discourses by way of Essays, in Verse and Prose*.*

THE DANGERS OF AN HONEST MAN IN MUCH COMPANY

If twenty thousand naked Americans were not able to resist the assaults of but twenty well-armed Spaniards, I see little possibility for one honest man to defend himself against twenty thousand knaves who are all furnished *cap-a-pie* with the defensive arms of worldly prudence, and the offensive, too, of craft and malice. He will find no less odds than this against him, if he have much to do in human affairs. The only advice, therefore, which I can give him is to be sure not to venture his person any longer in the open campaign, to retreat and entrench himself, to stop up all avenues, and draw up all bridges against so numerous an enemy.

The truth of it is that a man in much business must either make himself a knave, or else the world will make him a fool; and, if the injury went no farther than the being laughed at, a wise man would content himself with the revenge of retaliation; but the case is much worse, for these civil cannibals, too, as well as the wild ones, not only dance about such a taken stranger, but at last devour him. A sober man cannot get too soon out of drunken company, though they be never so kind and merry among themselves; it is not unpleasant only, but dangerous, to him.

Do ye wonder that a virtuous man should love to be alone? It is hard for him to be otherwise; he is so when he is among ten thousand. Neither is the solitude so uncomfortable to be alone without any other creature, as it is to be alone in the midst of wild beasts. Man is to man all kind of beasts: a fawning dog, a roaring lion, a thieving fox, a robbing wolf, a dissembling crocodile, a treacherous decoy, and a rapacious vulture. The civilest, methinks, of all nations are those whom we account the most barbarous; there is some moderation and good nature in the *Toupinambaltians*,¹ who eat no men but their enemies, whilst we learned and polite and Christian Europeans, like so many pikes and sharks, prey upon everything that we can swallow. It is the great boast of eloquence and philosophy that they first congregated men dispersed, united them into societies, and built

¹an ancient tribe of Brazilian savages.

up the houses and the walls of cities. I wish they could unravel all they had woven, that we might have our woods and our innocence again instead of our castles and our policies. They have assembled many thousands of scattered people into one body. 'Tis true, they have done so. They have brought them together into cities to cozen, and into armies to murder, one another; they found them hunters and fishers of wild creatures, they have made them hunters and fishers of their brethren; they boast to have reduced them to a state of peace, when the truth is, they have only taught them an art of war, they have framed, I must confess, wholesome laws for the restraint of vice, but they raised first that devil which now they conjure and cannot bind, though there were before no punishments for wickedness, yet there was less committed, because there were no rewards for it.

But the men who praise philosophy from this topic are much deceived, let oratory answer for itself, the tinkling perhaps of that may unite a swarm, it never was the work of philosophy to assemble multitudes, but to regulate only, and govern them when they were assembled, to make the best of an evil, and bring them, as much as is possible, to unity again. Avarice and ambition only were the first builders of towns and founders of empire. They said, "Go to, let us build us a city and a tower whose top may reach unto Heaven, and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth."² What was the beginning of Rome, the metropolis of the world? What was it but a concourse of thieves and a sanctuary of criminals? It was justly named by the augury of no less than twelve vultures, and the founder cemented his walls with the blood of his brother. Not unlike to this was the beginning even of the first town,³ too, in the world, and such is the original sin of most cities: their actual increase daily with their age and growth; the more people, the more wicked all of them; every one brings in his part to inflame the contagion, which becomes at last so universal and so strong that no precepts can be sufficient preservatives, nor anything secure our safety but flight from among the infected.

We ought, in the choice of a situation, to regard above all things the healthfulness of the place, and the healthfulness of it for the mind rather than for the body. But suppose (which is hardly to be supposed) we had antidote enough against this poison, nay, suppose farther, we were always and at all pieces armed and provided both against the assaults of hostility and the munes of treachery, it will yet be but an uncomfortable life to be ever in alarms, though we were compassed round with fire to defend ourselves from wild beasts, the lodging would be unpleasant, because we must always be obliged to watch that fire, and to fear no less the defects of our guard than the diligences of our enemy. The sum of this is, that a virtuous man is in danger to be trod upon and destroyed in the crowd of his contraries, nay, which is worse, to be changed and corrupted by them, and that 'tis impossible to escape both these inconveniences without so much caution as will take away the whole quiet, that is, the happiness, of his life.

Ye see, then, what he may lose, but, I pray, what can he get there?

Quid Romae faciam? Mentiri nescio.⁴

What should a man of truth and honesty do at Rome? He can neither understand nor speak the language of the place; a naked man may swim in the sea, but 'tis not the way to catch fish there; they are likelier to devour him than he them, if he bring no nets and use no deceits. I think, therefore, it was wise and friendly advice which Martial⁵ gave to Fabian when he met him newly arrived at Rome:

Honest and poor, faithful in word and thought;
What has thee, Fabian, to the city brought?
Thou neither the buffoon nor bawd canst play,
Nor with false whispers th' innocent betray;
Nor corrupt wives, nor from rich beldames get
A living by thy industry and sweat,
Nor with vain promises and projects cheat,
Nor bribe or flatter any of the great.
But you're a man of learning, prudent, just;
A man of courage, firm, and fit for trust.
Why, you may stay, and live unenvied here;
But (faith) go back, and keep you where you were.

⁴ What shall I do in Rome? I don't know how to lie.

⁵ Latin epigrammatist (40?–102?).

² See the story of the Tower of Babel, Genesis 11.

³ Enoch, Cain's city. See Genesis 4:17.

Nay, if nothing of all this were in the case, yet the very sight of uncleanness is loathsome to the cleanly; the sight of folly and impiety, vexatious to the wise and pious.

Lucretius,⁶ by his favor, though a good poet, was but an ill-natured man when he said, "It was delightful to see other men in a great storm." And no less ill-natured should I think Democritus, who laughed at all the world, but that he retired himself so much out of it, that we may perceive he took no great pleasure in that kind of mirth. I have been drawn twice or thrice by company to go to Bedlam,⁷ and have seen others very much delighted with the fantastical extravagancy of so many various mad-
nesses; which upon me wrought so contrary an effect that I always returned, not only melancholy, but even sick with the sight. My comparison there was perhaps too tender, for I meet a thousand madmen abroad without any perturbation, though to weigh the matter justly, the total loss of reason is less deplorable than the total depravation of it. An exact judge of human blessings, of riches, honors, beauty, even of wit itself, should pity the abuse of them
more than the want.

Briefly, though a wise man could pass never so securely through the great roads of human life, yet he will meet perpetually with so many objects and occasions of compassion, grief,
shame, anger, hatred, indignation, and all passions but envy (for he will find nothing to deserve that) that he had better strike into some private path; nay, go so far, if he could, out of the common way, *ut nec facta audiat Pelopidarum*, that he might not so much as hear of the actions of the sons of Adam. But whither shall we fly then? Into the deserts, like the ancient hermits?

—*Qua terra patet, fera regnat Erinnyis,
In factus iurasse putcs.*⁸

One would think that all mankind had bound themselves by an oath to do all the wickedness they can, that they had all (as the Scripture
speaks) "sold themselves to sin." The difference only is, that some are a little more crafty (and but a little, God knows) in making of the bar-

gain. I thought, when I went first to dwell in the country, that without doubt I should have met there with the simplicity of the old poetical golden age; I thought to have found no inhabitants there but such as the shepherds of Sir Philip Sidney in Arcadia, or of Monsieur d'Urfé⁹ upon the banks of Lignon, and began to consider with myself which way I might recommend no less to posterity the happiness and innocence of the men of Chertsea. But to confess the truth, I perceived quickly by infallible demonstrations that I was still in Old England, and not in Arcadia or La Forrest; that, if I could not content myself with anything less than exact fidelity in human conversation, I had almost as good go back and seek for it in the court, or the Exchange, or Westminster Hall. I ask again then, whither shall we fly, or what shall we do? The world may so come in a man's way that he cannot choose but salute it; he must heed, though, not to go a-whoring after it. If by any lawful vocation or just necessity men happen to be married to it, I can only give them St. Paul's advice: "Brethren, the time is short; it remains that they that have wives be as though they had none. But I would that all men were even as I myself."¹⁰

In all cases they must be sure that they do *mundum ducere*, and not *mundo nubere*.¹¹ They must retain the superiority and headship over it. Happy are they, who can get out of the sight of this deceitful beauty that they may not be led so much as into temptation, who have not only quitted the metropolis, but can abstain from ever seeing the next market town of their country.

JOHN LOCKE
1632–1704

Probably the greatest figure in English philosophy, John Locke owes his fame as a thinker chiefly to one work, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding. In this treatise Locke attempts to trace the origin of ideas and to show

⁹ Honoré d'Urfé (1587–1625), author of *L'Astrée*, a romance.

¹⁰ I Corinthians 7:29.

¹¹ marry the world, and not get married to the world (i.e., keep the world subordinate to oneself, as a man does his wife).

⁶ Roman poet (95?–55 B.C.).

⁷ Bethlehem, a London hospital for the insane.

⁸ Throughout the earth a dreadful frenzy reigns; mankind, I think, has sworn allegiance to crime.

the limits of the understanding. Opposed to the doctrine of innate ideas, he contends that knowledge comes only from experience. Each of us is born, that is, with a tabula rasa or blank-page mind, upon which are to be written ideas gained from the world about us. John Stuart Mill regarded Locke as the "unquestioned founder of the analytic philosophy of mind." In addition to his purely philosophical studies Locke wrote works on government, education, and religion. The essay included in this book is from Of the Conduct of the Understanding, published after Locke's death.

EXERCISE AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE UNDERSTANDING

Introduction. The last resort a man has recourse to in the conduct of himself is his understanding, for though we distinguish the faculties of the mind, and give the supreme command to the will as to an agent, yet the truth is, the man who is the agent determines himself to this or that voluntary action upon some precedent knowledge, or appearance of knowledge, in the understanding. No man ever sets himself about anything but upon some view or other, which serves him for a reason for what he does; and whatsoever faculties he employs, the understanding, with such light as it has, well- or ill-informed, constantly leads; and by that light, true or false, all his operative powers are directed. The will itself, how absolute and uncontrollable soever it may be thought, never fails in its obedience to the dictates of the understanding. Temples have their sacred images, and we see what influence they have always had over a great part of mankind. But, in truth, the ideas and images in men's minds are the invisible powers that constantly govern them, and to these they all universally pay a ready submission. It is, therefore, of the highest concernment that great care should be taken of the understanding, to conduct it right in the search of knowledge and in the judgments it makes. . . .

*Parts.*¹ There is, it is visible, great variety in men's understandings, and their natural constitutions put so wide a difference between some men, in this respect, that art and industry

would never be able to master; and their very natures seem to want a foundation to raise on it that which other men easily attain unto. Amongst men of equal education there is great inequality of parts. And the woods of America, as well as the schools of Athens, produce men of several abilities in the same kind. Though this be so, yet I imagine most men come very short of what they might attain unto, in their several degrees, by a neglect of their understandings. A few rules of logic are thought sufficient, in this case, for those who pretend to the highest improvement, whereas I think there are a great many natural defects in the understanding, capable of amendment, which are overlooked and wholly neglected. And it is easy to perceive that men are guilty of a great many faults in the exercise and improvement of this faculty of the mind, which hinder them in their progress and keep them in ignorance and error all their lives.

Reasoning. Besides the want of determined ideas and of sagacity, and exercise in finding out, and laying in order intermediate ideas, there are three miscarriages that men are guilty of in reference to their reason, whereby this faculty is hindered in them from that service it might do and was designed for. And he that reflects upon the actions and discourses of mankind will find their defects in this kind very frequent and very observable.

The first is of those who seldom reason at all, but do and think according to the example of others, whether parents, neighbors, ministers, or who else they are pleased to make choice of to have an implicit faith in, for the saving of themselves the pains and trouble of thinking and examining for themselves.

The second is of those who put passion in the place of reason, and, being resolved that shall govern their actions and arguments, neither use their own nor hearken to other people's reason any farther than it suits their humor, interest, or party; and these, one may observe, commonly content themselves with words which have no distinct ideas to them, though in other matters, that they come with an unbiassed indifferency to, they want not abilities to talk and hear reason, where they have no secret inclination that hinders them from being intractable to it.

The third sort is of those who readily and sin-

¹ talents or abilities.

cerely follow reason, but, for want of having that which one may call large, sound, round-about sense, have not a full view of all that relates to the question and may be of moment to decide it. We are all short-sighted and very often see but one side of the matter; our views are not extended to all that has a connection with it. From this defect I think no man is free. We see but in part, and we know but in part, and therefore it is no wonder we conclude not right from our partial views. This might instruct the proudest esteemer of his own parts how useful it is to talk and consult with others, even such as come short of him in capacity, quickness, and penetration; for, since no one sees all, and we generally have different prospects of the same thing according to our different, as I may say, positions to it, it is not incongruous to think, nor beneath any man to try, whether another may not have notions of things which have escaped him, and which his reason would make use of if they came into his mind. The faculty of reasoning seldom or never deceives those who trust to it; its consequences from what it builds on are evident and certain; but that which it oftenest, if not only, misleads us in, is that the principles from which we bottom our reasoning, are but a part—something is left out, which should go into the reckoning to make it just and exact. Here we may imagine a vast and almost infinite advantage that angels and separate spirits may have over us, who, in their several degrees of elevation above us, may be endowed with more comprehensive faculties; and some of them, perhaps, having perfect and exact views of all finite things that come under their consideration, can, as it were, in the twinkling of an eye collect together all their scattered and almost boundless relations. A mind so furnished, what reason has it to acquiesce in the certainty of its conclusions!

In this we may see the reason why some men of study and thought, that reason right and are lovers of truth, do make no great advances in their discoveries of it. Error and truth are uncertainly blended in their minds; their decisions are lame and defective, and they are very often mistaken in their judgments. The reason whereof is, they converse but with one sort of men, they read but one sort of books, they will not come in the hearing but of one sort of no-

tions. The truth is, they canton out² to themselves a little Goshen³ in the intellectual world, where light shines and, as they conclude, day blesses them; but the rest of that vast expansum 5 they give up to night and darkness, and so avoid coming near it. They have a pretty traffic with known correspondents in some little creek; within that they confine themselves, and are dexterous managers enough of the wares and 10 products of that corner, with which they content themselves, but will not venture out into the great ocean of knowledge to survey the riches that nature hath stored other parts with, no less genuine, no less solid, no less useful, 15 than what has fallen to their lot in the admired plenty and sufficiency of their own little spot, which to them contains whatsoever is good in the universe. Those who live thus mewed up within their own contracted territories, and will 20 not look abroad beyond the boundaries that chance, conceit, or laziness has set to their inquiries, but live separate from the notions, discourses, and attainments of the rest of mankind, may not amiss be represented by the inhabitants of the Marian islands,⁴ who, being separated by a large tract of sea from all communion with the habitable parts of the earth, thought themselves the only people of the world. And though the straitness of the conveniences of life amongst them had never 30 reached so far as to the use of fire till the Spaniards, not many years since, in their voyages from Acapulco⁵ to Manila, brought it amongst them, yet, in the want and ignorance of almost all things, they looked upon themselves, even after that the Spaniards had brought amongst them the notice of variety of nations, abounding in sciences, arts, and conveniences of life, of which they knew nothing— 40 they looked upon themselves, I say, as the happiest and wisest people of the universe. But, for all that, nobody, I think, will imagine them deep naturalists or solid metaphysicians; nobody will deem the quickest-sighted amongst them to have very enlarged views in ethics or politics; nor can any one allow the most cap-

² canton out: divide into districts or cantons.

³ the land of plenty assigned to the Israelites in Egypt.

⁴ a group of islands in the Pacific Ocean, to the east of the Philippines.

⁵ a seaport on the west coast of Mexico.

able amongst them to be advanced so far in his understanding as to have any other knowledge but of the few little things of his and the neighboring islands within his commerce, but far enough from that comprehensive enlargement of mind which adorns a soul devoted to truth, assisted with letters, and a free generation of the several views and sentiments of thinking men of all sides. Let not men, therefore, that would have a sight of what every one pretends to be desirous to have a sight of, truth in its full extent, narrow and blind their own prospect. Let not men think there is no truth but in the sciences that they study or books that they read. To prejudge other men's notions before we have looked into them, is not to show them darkness, but to put out our own eyes. "Try all things, hold fast that which is good,"⁶ is a divine rule, coming from the Father of light and truth; and it is hard to know what other way men can come at truth, to lay hold of it, if they do not dig and search for it as for gold and hid treasure. But he that does so must have much earth and rubbish before he gets the pure metal; sand, and pebbles, and dross usually he blends with it; but the gold is nevertheless gold, and will enrich the man that employs his pains to seek and separate it. Neither is there any danger he should be deceived by the mixture. Every man carries about him a touchstone, if he will make use of it, to distinguish substantial gold from superficial glitterings, truth from appearances. And, indeed, the use and benefit of this touchstone, which is natural reason, is spoiled and lost only by assumed prejudices, overweening presumption, and narrowing our minds. The want of exercising it, in the full extent of things intelligible, is that which weakens and extinguishes this noble faculty in us. Trace it, and see whether it be not so. The day-laborer in a country village has commonly but a small pittance of knowledge, because his ideas and notions have been confined to the narrow bounds of a poor conversation and employment; the low mechanic of a country town does somewhat outdo him; porters and cobblers of great cities surpass him. A country gentleman who, leaving Latin and learning in the university, removes thence to his mansion house and associates with neighbors

of the same strain, who relish nothing but hunting and a bottle, with those alone he spends his time, with those alone he converses, and can away with no company whose discourse goes beyond what claret and dissoluteness inspire—such a patriot, formed in this happy way of improvement, cannot fail, as we see, to give notable decisions upon the bench, at quarter-sessions, and eminent proofs of his skill in politics, when the strength of his purse and party have advanced him to a more conspicuous station. To such a one, truly, an ordinary collee-house gleaner of the city is an arrant statesman, and as much superior to, as a man conversant about Whitehall and the court is to an ordinary shopkeeper. To carry this a little farther, here is one muffled up in the zeal and infallibility of his own sect, and will not touch a book or enter into debate with a person that will question any of those things which to him are sacred. Another surveys our differences in religion with an equitable and fair indifference, and so finds, probably, that none of them are in every thing unexceptionable. These divisions and systems were made by men, and carry the mark of fallible on them; and in those whom he differs from, and, till he opened his eyes, had a general prejudice against, he meets with more to be said for a great many things than before he was aware of or could have imagined. Which of these two, now, is most likely to judge right in our religious controversies, and to be most stored with truth, the mark all pretend to aim at? All these men that I have instanced in, thus unequally furnished with truth and advanced in knowledge, I suppose of equal natural parts; all the odds between them has been the different scope that has been given to their understandings to range in, for the gathering up of information and furnishing of their heads with ideas and notions and observations whereon to employ their mind and form their understandings.

It will possibly be objected, "Who is sufficient for all this?" I answer, more than can be imagined. Every one knows what his proper business is and what, according to the character he makes of himself, the world may justly expect of him; and, to answer that, he will find he will have time and opportunity enough to furnish himself, if he will not deprive himself by a narrowness of spirit of those helps that are

⁶ 1 Thessalonians 5:21.

at hand. I do not say, to be a good geographer that a man should visit every mountain, river, promontory, and creek upon the face of the earth, view the buildings, and survey the land everywhere, as if he were going to make a purchase; but yet every one must allow that he shall know a country better, that makes often sallies into it, and traverses up and down, than he that, like a mill horse, goes still round in the same track, or keeps within the narrow bounds of a field or two that delight him. He that will inquire out the best books in every science, and inform himself of the most material authors of the several sects of philosophy and religion, will not find it an infinite work to acquaint himself with the sentiments of mankind concerning the most weighty and comprehensive subjects. Let him exercise the freedom of his reason and understanding in such a latitude as this, and his mind will be strengthened, his capacity enlarged, his faculties improved; and the light, which the remote and scattered parts of truth will give to one another, will so assist his judgment that he will seldom be widely out or miss giving proof of a clear head and a comprehensive knowledge. At least, this is the only way I know to give the understanding its due improvement to the full extent of its capacity, and to distinguish the two most different things I know in the world, a logical chicaner from a man of reason. Only he, that would thus give the mind its flight and send abroad his inquiries into all parts after truth, must be sure to settle in his head determined ideas of all that he employs his thoughts about, and never fail to judge himself, and judge unbiassedly, of all that he received from others, either in their writings or discourses. Reverence or prejudice must not be suffered to give beauty or deformity to any of their opinions.

Of practice and habits. We are born with faculties and powers capable almost of anything, such at least as would carry us farther than can easily be imagined; but it is only the exercise of those powers which gives us ability and skill in anything and leads us towards perfection.

A middle-aged plowman will scarce ever be brought to the carriage and language of a gentleman, though his body be as well proportioned and his joints as supple and his natural parts not any way inferior. The legs of a danc-

ing-master and the fingers of a musician fall, as it were, naturally, without thought or pains, into regular and admirable motions. Bid them change their parts, and they will in vain endeavor to produce like motions in the members not used to them, and it will require length of time and long practice to attain but some degrees of a like ability. What incredible and astonishing actions do we find ropedancers and tumblers bring their bodies to! Not but that sundry in almost all manual arts are as wonderful, but I name those which the world takes notice of for such, because on that very account they give money to see them. All these admired motions beyond the reach and almost conception of unpracticed spectators, are nothing but the mere effects of use and industry in men whose bodies have nothing peculiar in them from those of the amazed lookers-on.

As it is in the body, so it is in the mind; practice makes it what it is, and most, even, of those excellencies which are looked on as natural endowments will be found, when examined into more narrowly, to be the product of exercise, and to be raised to that pitch only by repeated actions. Some men are remarked for pleasantness in raillery; others for apologues and apposite diverting stories. This is apt to be taken for the effect of pure nature, and that the rather because it is not got by rules; and those who excel in either of them never purposely set themselves to the study of it as an art to be learnt. But yet it is true that at first some lucky hit, which took with somebody and gained him commendation, encouraged him to try again, inclined his thoughts and endeavors that way, till at last he insensibly got a facility in it without perceiving how; and that is attributed wholly to nature which was much more the effect of use and practice. I do not deny that natural disposition may often give the first rise to it, but that never carries a man far without use and exercise; and it is practice alone that brings the powers of the mind, as well as those of the body, to their perfection. Many a good poetic vein is buried under a trade and never produces anything for want of improvement. We see the ways of discourse and reasoning are very different, even concerning the same matter, at court and in the university. And he that will go but from Westminster Hall to the Exchange will find a different genius and turn in

their ways of talking; and yet one cannot think that all whose lot fell in the city were born with different parts from those who were bred at the university or inns of court.

To what purpose all this but to show that the difference, so observable in men's understandings and parts, does not arise so much from their natural faculties as acquired habits. He would be laughed at that should go about to make a fine dancer out of a country hedger⁷ at past fifty. And he will not have much better success, who shall endeavor, at that age, to make a man reason well or speak handsomely, who has never been used to it, though you should lay before him a collection of all the best precepts of logic or oratory. Nobody is made anything by hearing of rules or laying them up in his memory; practice must settle the habit of doing without reflecting on the rule; and you may as well hope to make a good painter or musician extempore by a lecture and instruction in the arts of music and painting as a coherent thinker or a strict reasoner by a set of rules showing him wherein right reasoning consists.

JONATHAN SWIFT 1667-1745

Jonathan Swift, the greatest English satirist in an age of satire, said that he wrote "to vex the world, not to divert it." But in *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), his masterpiece, he both vexed and diverted the world. The book stands even today as a withering indictment of man's folly and as a story so entertaining that it ranks with tales like *Robinson Crusoe* and *Treasure Island*. There is little to divert the reader, however, in "A Modest Proposal" (1729). An example of sardonic irony, the satire was occasioned by the cruel indifference of the English to the miseries of the Irish peasantry. In comparing the satire of Addison with that of Swift, Thackeray calls Swift "a literary Jeffries," [sic] and speaks of Addison's "kind court," where "only minor cases were tried." There is a certain truth, genially expressed, in the comparison. For in Swift's court, major cases, rather than minor, were tried. But unlike Judge Jeffreys of the "Bloody As-

ses," Swift passed sentence in the interest of just causes. As a satirist he has been called undictive, savage, and terrifying, and mankind still shrinks from his ferocious mockery, but when all is said and done, Swift was what he called himself, "a determined vindicator of human freedom." As an illustration of prose satire "A Modest Proposal" should be compared with other satirical writings in this volume, among them Burton's "Why Democritus Laughed" (II, 14), Earle's "A Vulgar-Spirited Man" (II, 17), the essays by Addison and Steele (II, 38 ff.), Thackeray's "Snobs and Marriage" (II, 138), and Leacock's "Homer and Humbug" (II, 222). "The King of Brobdingnag and the English Government" is from the second part of *Gulliver's Travels*.

A MODEST PROPOSAL

FOR PREVENTING THE CHILDREN OF POOR PEOPLE IN IRELAND FROM BEING A BURDEN TO THEIR PARENTS OR COUNTRY, AND FOR MAKING THEM BENEFICIAL TO THE PUBLIC

It is a melancholy object to those who walk through this great town¹ or travel in the country, when they see the streets, the roads, and cabin doors, crowded with beggars of the female sex, followed by three, four, or six children, all in rags and importuning every passenger for an alms. These mothers, instead of being able to work for their honest livelihood, are forced to employ all their time in strolling to beg sustenance for their helpless infants: who as they grow up either turn thieves for want of work, or leave their dear native country to fight for the pretender in Spain, or sell themselves to the Barbadoes.

I think it is agreed by all parties that this prodigious number of children in the arms, or on the backs, or at the heels of their mothers, and frequently of their fathers, is in the present deplorable state of the kingdom a very great additional grievance; and, therefore, whoever could find out a fair, cheap, and easy method of making these children sound, useful members of the commonwealth, would deserve so well of the public as to have his statue set up for a preserver of the nation.

But my intention is very far from being con-

⁷ a maker or mender of hedges.

¹ Dublin.

fined to provide only for the children of professed beggars; it is of a much greater extent, and shall take in the whole number of infants at a certain age who are born of parents in effect as little able to support them as those who demand our charity in the streets.

As to my own part, having turned my thoughts for many years upon this important subject, and maturely weighed the several schemes of other projectors, I have always found them grossly mistaken in the computation. It is true, a child just dropped from its dam may be supported by her milk for a solar year, with little other nourishment; at most not above the value of 2s., which the mother may certainly get, or the value in scraps, by her lawful occupation of begging; and it is exactly at one year old that I propose to provide for them in such a manner as instead of being a charge upon their parents or the parish, or wanting food and raiment for the rest of their lives, they shall on the contrary contribute to the feeding, and partly to the clothing, of many thousands.

There is likewise another great advantage in my scheme, that it will prevent those voluntary abortions, and that horrid practice of women murdering their bastard children, alas! too frequent among us! sacrificing the poor innocent babes I doubt more to avoid the expense than the shame, which would move tears and pity in the most savage and inhuman breast.

The number of souls in this kingdom being usually reckoned one million and a half, of these I calculate there may be about two hundred thousand couples whose wives are breeders; from which number I subtract thirty thousand couples who are able to maintain their own children, although I apprehend there cannot be so many, under the present distresses of the kingdom; but this being granted, there will remain an hundred and seventy thousand breeders. I again subtract fifty thousand for those women who miscarry, or whose children die by accident or disease within the year. There only remains one hundred and twenty thousand children of poor parents annually born. The question therefore is, how this number shall be reared and provided for, which, as I have already said, under the present situation of affairs, is utterly impossible by all the methods hitherto proposed. For we can neither em-

ploy them in handicraft or agriculture; we neither build houses (I mean in the country) nor cultivate land: they can very seldom pick up a livelihood by stealing, till they arrive at six years old, except where they are of towardly parts, although I confess they learn the rudiments much earlier, during which time, they can however be properly looked upon only as probationers, as I have been informed by a principal gentleman in the county of Cavan, who protested to me that he never knew above one or two instances under the age of six, even in a part of the kingdom so renowned for the quickest proficiency in that art.

I am assured by our merchants, that a boy or a girl before twelve years old is no salable commodity; and even when they come to this age they will not yield above three pounds, or three pounds and a half-a-crown at most on the exchange, which cannot turn to account either to the parents or kingdom, the charge of nutriment and rags having been at least four times that value.

I shall now therefore humbly propose my own thoughts, which I hope will not be liable to the least objection.

I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child well nursed is at a year old a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled; and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a fricassee or a ragout.

I do therefore humbly offer it to public consideration that of the hundred and twenty thousand children already computed, twenty thousand may be reserved for breed, whereof only one-fourth part to be males; which is more than we allow to sheep, black cattle or swine; and my reason is, that these children are seldom the fruits of marriage, a circumstance not much regarded by our savages, therefore one male will be sufficient to serve four females. That the remaining hundred thousand may, at a year old, be offered in the sale to the persons of quality and fortune through the kingdom; always advising the mother to let them suck plentifully in the last month, so as to render them plump and fat for a good table. A child will make two dishes at an entertainment for friends; and when the family dines alone, the fore or hind quarter will make a reasonable

dish, and seasoned with a little pepper or salt will be very good boiled on the fourth day, especially in winter.

I have reckoned upon a medium that a child just born will weigh 12 pounds, and in a solar year, if tolerably nursed, increaseth to 28 pounds.

I grant this food will be somewhat dear, and therefore very proper for landlords, who, as they have already devoured most of the parents, seem to have the best title to the children.

Infant's flesh will be in season throughout the year, but more plentiful in March, and a little before and after, for we are told by a grave author, an eminent French physician, that fish being a prolific diet, there are more children born in Roman Catholic countries about nine months after Lent than at any other season; therefore, reckoning a year after Lent, the markets will be more glutted than usual, because the number of popish infants is at least three to one in this kingdom, and therefore it will have one other collateral advantage, by lessening the number of papists among us.

I have already computed the charge of nursing a beggar's child (in which list I reckon all cottagers, laborers, and four-fifths of the farmers) to be about two shillings per annum, rags included; and I believe no gentleman would repine to give ten shillings for the carcass of a good fat child, which, as I have said, will make four dishes of excellent nutritive meat, when he hath only some particular friend or his own family to dine with him. Thus the squire will learn to be a good landlord, and grow popular among his tenants; the mother will have eight shillings net profit, and be fit for work till she produces another child.

Those who are more thrifty (as I must confess the times require) may flay the carcass: the skin of which artificially dressed will make admirable gloves for ladies, and summer boots for fine gentlemen.

As to our city of Dublin, shambles may be appointed for this purpose in the most convenient parts of it, and butchers we may be assured will not be wanting; although I rather recommend buying the children alive than dressing them hot from the knife as we do roasting pigs.

A very worthy person, a true lover of his country, and whose virtues I highly esteem,

was lately pleased in discoursing on this matter to offer a refinement upon my scheme. He said that many gentlemen of this kingdom, having of late destroyed their deer, he conceived that the want of venison might be well supplied by the bodies of young lads and maidens, not exceeding fourteen years of age nor under twelve; so great a number of both sexes in every country being now ready to starve for want of work and service, and these to be disposed of by their parents, if alive, or otherwise by their nearest relations. But with due deference to so excellent a friend and so deserving a patriot, I cannot be altogether in his sentiments, for as to the males, my American acquaintance assured me, from frequent experience, that their flesh was generally tough and lean, like that of our school-boys by continual exercise, and their taste disagreeable, and to fatten them would not answer the charge. Then as to the females, it would, I think, with humble submission be a loss to the public, because they soon would become breeders themselves, and besides, it is not improbable that some scrupulous people might be apt to censure such a practice (although indeed very unjustly), as a little bordering upon cruelty, which, I confess, hath always been with me the strongest objection against any project, however so well intended.

But in order to justify my friend, he confessed that this expedient was put into his head by the famous Psalmanazar,² a native of the island Formosa, who came from thence to London above twenty years ago, and in conversation told my friend, that in his country when any young person happened to be put to death, the executioner sold the carcass to persons of quality as a prime dainty; and that in his time the body of a plump girl of fifteen, who was crucified for an attempt to poison the emperor, was sold to his imperial majesty's prime minister of state, and other great mandarins of the court, in joints from the gibbet, at four hundred crowns. Neither indeed can I deny, that if the same use were made of several plump young girls in this town, who without one single groat to their fortunes cannot stir abroad without a chair, and appear at playhouse and as-

² George Psalmanazar (1679?-1763), French literary impostor, author of a work on Formosa, an island off the coast of China.

semblies in foreign fineries which they never will pay for, the kingdom would not be the worse.

Some persons of a desponding spirit are in great concern about that vast number of poor people, who are aged, diseased, or maimed, and I have been desired to employ my thoughts what course may be taken to ease the nation of so grievous an encumbrance. But I am not in the least pain upon that matter because it is very well known that they are every day dying and rotting by cold and famine, and filth and vermin, as fast as can be reasonably expected. And as to the young laborers, they are now in as hopeful a condition; they cannot get work, and consequently pine away for want of nourishment, to a degree that if at any time they are accidentally hired to common labor, they have not strength to perform it; and thus the country and themselves are happily delivered from the evils to come.

I have too long digressed, and therefore shall return to my subject. I think the advantages by the proposal which I have made are obvious and many, as well as of the highest importance.

For first, as I have already observed, it would greatly lessen the number of papists, with whom we are yearly overrun, being the principal breeders of the nation as well as our most dangerous enemies; and who stay at home on purpose with a design to deliver the kingdom to the pretender, hoping to take their advantage by the absence of so many good protestants, who have chosen rather to leave their country than stay at home and pay tithes against their conscience to an episcopal curate.

Secondly, The poorer tenants will have something valuable of their own, which by law may be made liable to distress and help to pay their landlord's rent, their corn and cattle being already seized, and money a thing unknown.

Thirdly, Whereas the maintenance of an hundred thousand children, from two years old and upward, cannot be computed at less than ten shillings a-piece per annum, the nation's stock will be thereby increased fifty thousand pounds per annum, beside the profit of a new dish introduced to the tables of all gentlemen of fortune in the kingdom who have any refinement in taste. And the money will circulate among ourselves; the goods being entirely of

our own growth and manufacture.

Fourthly, The constant breeders, beside the gain of eight shillings sterling per annum by the sale of their children, will be rid of the charge of maintaining them after the first year.

Fifthly, This food would likewise bring great custom to taverns; where the vintners will certainly be so prudent as to procure the best receipts for dressing it to perfection, and consequently have their houses frequented by all the fine gentlemen, who justly value themselves upon their knowledge in good eating; and a skilful cook, who understands how to oblige his guests, will contrive to make it as expensive as they please.

Sixthly, This would be a great inducement to marriage, which all wise nations have either encouraged by rewards or enforced by laws and penalties. It would increase the care and tenderness of mothers toward their children, when they were sure of a settlement for life to the poor babes, provided in some sort by the public, to their annual profit instead of expense. We should see an honest emulation among the married women, which of them could bring the fattest child to the market. Men would become as fond of their wives during the time of their pregnancy as they are now of their mares in foal, their cows in calf, their sows when they are ready to farrow; nor offer to beat or kick them (as is too frequent a practice) for fear of a miscarriage.

Many other advantages might be enumerated. For instance, the addition of some thousand carcasses in our exportation of barreled beef, the propagation of swine's flesh, and improvement in the art of making good bacon, so much wanted among us by the great destruction of pigs, too frequent at our tables; which are no way comparable in taste or magnificence to a well-grown, fat, yearling child, which roasted whole will make a considerable figure at a lord mayor's feast or any other public entertainment. But this and many others I omit, being studious of brevity.

Supposing that one thousand families in this city would be constant customers for infants' flesh, beside others who might have it at merry-meetings, particularly weddings and christenings, I compute that Dublin would take off annually about twenty thousand carcasses; and

the rest of the kingdom (where probably they will be sold somewhat cheaper) the remaining eighty thousand.

I can think of no one objection that will possibly be raised against this proposal, unless it should be urged that the number of people will be thereby much lessened in the kingdom. This I freely own, and was indeed one principal design in offering it to the world. I desire the reader will observe, that I calculate my remedy for this one individual kingdom of Ireland and for no other that ever was, is, or I think ever can be upon earth. Therefore let no man talk to me of other expedients: of taxing our absentees at five shillings a pound, of using neither clothes nor household furniture except what is of our own growth and manufacture; of utterly rejecting the materials and instruments that promote foreign luxury; of curing the expensiveness of pride, vanity, idleness, and gaming in our women; of introducing a vein of parsimony, prudence, and temperance; of learning to love our country, wherein we differ even from LAPLANDERS and the inhabitants of TOPINAMBOO;³ of quitting our animosities and factions, nor act any longer like the Jews, who were murdering one another at the very moment their city was taken; of being a little cautious not to sell our country and conscience for nothing, of teaching landlords to have at least one degree of mercy toward their tenants; lastly, of putting a spirit of honesty, industry, and skill into our shopkeepers; who, if a resolution could now be taken to buy only our native goods, would immediately unite to cheat and exact upon us in the price, the measure, and the goodness, nor could ever yet be brought to make one fair proposal of just dealing, though often and earnestly invited to it.

Therefore I repeat, let no man talk to me of these and the like expedients, till he hath at least some glimpse of hope that there will be ever some hearty and sincere attempt to put them in practice.

But as to myself, having been wearied out for many years with offering vain, idle, visionary thoughts, and at length utterly despairing of success I fortunately fell upon this proposal; which, as it is wholly new, so it hath something solid and real, of no expense and little trouble,

full in our own power, and whereby we can incur no danger in disobliging ENGLAND. For this kind of commodity will not bear exportation, the flesh being of too tender a consistence to admit a long continuance in salt, although perhaps I could name a country which would be glad to eat up our whole nation without it.

After all, I am not so violently bent upon my own opinion as to reject any offer proposed by wise men, which shall be found equally innocent, cheap, easy, and effectual. But before something of that kind shall be advanced in contradiction to my scheme, and offering a better, I desire the author or authors will be pleased maturely to consider two points. First, as things now stand, how they will be able to find food and raiment for an hundred thousand useless mouths and backs. And secondly, there being a round million of creatures in human figure throughout this kingdom, whose whole subsistence put into a common stock would leave them in debt two millions of pounds sterling, adding those who are beggars by profession to the bulk of farmers, cottagers, and laborers, with their wives and children who are beggars in effect: I desire those politicians who dislike my overture, and may perhaps be so bold as to attempt an answer, that they will first ask the parents of these mortals, whether they would not at this day think it a great happiness to have been sold for food at a year old in the manner I prescribe, and thereby have avoided such a perpetual scene of misfortunes as they have since gone through by the oppression of landlords, the impossibility of paying rent without money or trade, the want of common sustenance, with neither house nor clothes to cover them from the inclemencies of the weather, and the most inevitable prospect of entailing the like or greater miseries upon their breed for ever.

I profess, in the sincerity of my heart, that I have not the least personal interest in endeavoring to promote this necessary work, having no other motive than the public good of my country, by advancing our trade, providing for infants, relieving the poor, and giving some pleasure to the rich. I have no children by which I can propose to get a single penny; the youngest being nine years old, and my wife past child-bearing.

³ a district of Brazil.

THE KING OF BROBDINGNAG AND
THE ENGLISH GOVERNMENT

The King, who, as I before observed, was a Prince of excellent understanding, would frequently order that I should be brought in my box and set upon the table in his closet. He would then command me to bring one of my chairs out of the box, and sit down within three yards distance upon the top of the cabinet, which brought me almost to a level with his face. In this manner I had several conversations with him. I one day took the freedom to tell his Majesty that the contempt he discovered towards Europe and the rest of the world did not seem answerable to those excellent qualities of the mind he was master of. That reason did not extend itself with the bulk of the body. On the contrary, we observed in our country that the tallest persons were usually least provided with it. That among other animals, bees and ants had the reputation of more industry, art, and sagacity than many of the larger kinds; and that, as inconsiderable as he took me to be, I hoped I might live to do his Majesty some signal service. The King heard me with attention, and began to conceive a much better opinion of me than he had ever before. He desired I would give him as exact an account of the government of England as I possibly could, because, as fond as Princes commonly are of their own customs (for so he conjectured of other monarchs by my former discourses), he should be glad to hear of anything that might deserve imitation.

Imagine with thyself, courteous reader, how often I then wished for the tongue of Demosthenes or Cicero, that might have enabled me to celebrate the praise of my own dear native country in a style equal to its merits and felicity.

I began my discourse by informing his Majesty that our dominions consisted of two islands, which composed three mighty kingdoms under one Sovereign, besides our plantations in America. I dwelt long upon the fertility of our soil and the temperature of our climate. I then spoke at large upon the constitution of an English Parliament, partly made up of an illustrious body called the House of Peers, persons of the noblest blood and of the most ancient and ample patrimonies. I described that

extraordinary care always taken of their education in arts and arms, to qualify them for being counsellors born to the King and kingdom; to have a share in the legislature; to be members of the highest Court of Judicature, from whence there could be no appeal; and to be champions always ready for the defence of their Prince and country, by their valour, conduct, and fidelity. That these were the ornament and bulwark of the kingdom, worthy followers of their most renowned ancestors, whose honour had been the reward of their virtue, from which their posterity were never once known to degenerate. To these were joined several holy persons, as part of that assembly, under the title of Bishops, whose peculiar business it is to take care of religion, and of those who instruct the people therein. These were searched and sought out through the whole nation by the Prince and his wisest counsellors, among such of the priesthood as were most deservedly distinguished by the sanctity of their lives and the depth of their erudition, who were indeed the spiritual fathers of the clergy and the people.

That the other part of the Parliament consisted of an assembly called the House of Commons, who were all principal gentlemen, freely picked and culled out by the people themselves, for their great abilities and love of their country, to represent the wisdom of the whole nation. And these two bodies make up the most august assembly in Europe, to whom, in conjunction with the Prince, the whole legislature is committed.

I then descended to the courts of justice, over which the judges, those venerable sages and interpreters of the law, presided, for determining the disputed rights and properties of men, as well as for the punishment of vice and protection of innocence. I mentioned the prudent management of our Treasury, the valour and achievements of our forces by sea and land. I computed the number of our people by reckoning how many millions there might be of each religious sect or political party among us. I did not omit even our sports and pastimes, or any other particular which I thought might redound to the honour of my country. And I finished all with a brief historical account of affairs and events in England for about a hundred years past.

This conversation was not ended under five audiences, each of several hours, and the King heard the whole with great attention, frequently taking notes of what I spoke, as well as memorandums of all questions he intended to ask me.

When I had put an end to these long discourses, his Majesty, in a sixth audience, consulting his notes, proposed many doubts, queries, and objections upon every article. He asked what methods were used to cultivate the minds and bodies of our young nobility, and in what kind of business they commonly spent the first and teachable part of their lives. What course was taken to supply that assembly when any noble family became extinct. What qualifications were necessary in those who are to be created new lords: whether the humour of the Prince, a sum of money to a Court lady or a Prime Minister, or a design of strengthening a party opposite to the public interest, ever happened to be motives in those advancements. What share of knowledge these lords had in the laws of their country, and how they came by it, so as to enable them to decide the properties of their fellow-subjects in the last resort. Whether they were always so free from avarice, partialities, or want that a bribe, or some other sinister view, could have no place among them. Whether these holy lords I spoke of were always promoted to that rank upon account of their knowledge in religious matters and the sanctity of their lives, had never been compliers with the times while they were common priests, or slavish prostitute chaplains to some nobleman, whose opinions they continued servilely to follow after they were admitted into that assembly.

He then desired to know what arts were practised in electing those whom I called commoners: whether a stranger with a strong purse might not influence the vulgar voters to choose him before their own landlord, or the most considerable gentleman in the neighbourhood. How it came to pass that people were so violently bent upon getting into this assembly, which I allowed to be a great trouble and expense, often to the ruin of their families, without any salary or pension, because this appeared such an exalted strain of virtue and public spirit that his Majesty seemed to doubt it might possibly not be always sincere; and he desired to know whether such zealous gentle-

men could have any views of refunding themselves for the charges and trouble they were at by sacrificing the public good to the designs of a weak and vicious Prince in conjunction with a corrupted Ministry. He multiplied his questions, and sifted me thoroughly upon every part of this head, proposing numberless inquiries and objections, which I think it not prudent or convenient to repeat.

Upon what I said in relation to our courts of justice, his Majesty desired to be satisfied in several points, and this I was the better able to do, having been formerly almost rumbled by a long suit in the Chancery, which was decreed for me with costs. He asked what time was usually spent in determining between right and wrong, and what degree of expense. Whether advocates and orators had liberty to plead in causes manifestly known to be unjust, vexatious, or oppressive. Whether party in religion or politics were observed to be of any weight in the scale of justice. Whether those pleading orators were persons educated in the general knowledge of equity, or only in provincial, national, and other local customs. Whether they or their judges had any part in penning those laws which they assumed the liberty of interpreting and glossing upon at their pleasure. Whether they had ever at different times pleaded for and against the same cause, and cited precedents to prove contrary opinions. Whether they were a rich or a poor corporation. Whether they received any pecuniary reward for pleading or delivering their opinions. And particularly whether they were ever admitted as members in the lower Senate.

He fell next upon the management of our Treasury, and said he thought my memory had failed me because I computed our taxes at about five or six millions a year, and when I came to mention the issues, he found they sometimes amounted to more than double; for the notes he had taken were very particular in this point, because he hoped, as he told me, that the knowledge of our conduct might be useful to him, and he could not be deceived in his calculations. But if what I told him were true, he was still at a loss how a kingdom could run out of its estate like a private person. He asked me who were our creditors, and where we should find money to pay them. He wondered to hear me talk of such chargeable

and extensive wars; that certainly we must be a quarrelsome people, or live among very bad neighbours, and that our Generals must needs be richer than our Kings. He asked what business we had out of our own islands, unless upon the score of trade or treaty, or to defend the coasts with our fleet. Above all, he was amazed to hear me talk of a mercenary standing army in the midst of peace, and among a free people. He said, if we were governed by our own consent in the persons of our representatives, he could not imagine of whom we were afraid or against whom we were to fight, and would hear my opinion whether a private man's house might not better be defended by himself, his children, and family than by half a dozen rascals picked up at a venture in the streets for small wages, who might get a hundred times more by cutting their throats.

He laughed at my odd kind of arithmetic (as he was pleased to call it) in reckoning the numbers of our people by a computation drawn from the several sects among us in religion and politics. He said he knew no reason why those who entertain opinions prejudicial to the public, should be obliged to change or should not be obliged to conceal them. And as it was tyranny in any government to require the first, so it was weakness not to enforce the second; for a man may be allowed to keep poisons in his closet, but not to vend them about for cordials.

He observed that among the diversions of our nobility and gentry I had mentioned gambling. He desired to know at what age this entertainment was usually taken up, and when it was laid down; how much of their time it employed; whether it ever went so high as to affect their fortunes; whether mean, vicious people, by their dexterity in that art, might not arrive at great riches, and sometimes keep our very nobles in dependence, as well as habituate them to vile companions, wholly take them from the improvement of their minds, and force them, by the losses they have received, to learn and practise that infamous dexterity upon others.

He was perfectly astonished with the historical account I gave him of our affairs during the last century, protesting it was only a heap of conspiracies, rebellions, murders, massacres, revolutions, banishments, the very worse effects

that avarice, faction, hypocrisy, perfidiousness, cruelty, rage, madness, hatred, envy, lust, malice, or ambition could produce.

His Majesty in another audience was at the pains to recapitulate the sum of all I had spoken, compared the questions he made with the answers I had given; then, taking me into his hands and stroking me gently, delivered himself in these words, which I shall never forget, nor the manner he spoke them in: My little friend Grildrig,¹ you have made a most admirable panegyric upon your country; you have clearly proved that ignorance, idleness, and vice may be sometimes the only ingredients for qualifying a legislator; that laws are best explained, interpreted, and applied by those whose interest and abilities lie in perverting, confounding, and eluding them. I observe among you some lines of an institution which in its original might have been tolerable, but these half erased and the rest wholly blurred and blotted by corruptions. It does not appear from all you have said how any one virtue is required towards the procurement of any one station amongst you much less that men were ennobled on account of their virtue, that priests were advanced for their piety or learning, soldiers for their conduct or valour, judges for their integrity, senators for the love of their country, or counsellors for their wisdom. As for yourself (continued the King), who have spent the greatest part of your life in travelling, I am well disposed to hope you may hitherto have escaped many vices of your country. But by what I have gathered from your own relation, and the answers I have with much pain wringed and extorted from you, I cannot but conclude the bulk of your natives to be the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that Nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth.

JOSEPH ADDISON (1672-1719) and
RICHARD STEELE (1672-1729)

As contributors to the Tatler and the Spectator, their own periodicals, Joseph Addison and Richard Steele sought to reform the manners of

¹ The name given to Gulliver by the child who cared for him in Brobdingnag. According to Swift, the word means a very small person.

their day. By enlivening "morality with wit" and tempering "wit with morality," to use the words of Addison, they had in mind to recover their readers from "that desperate state of vice and folly into which the age" had fallen. But though their essays had a moral aim, Addison and Steele were anything but dour, long-faced preachers. Nor were they grim ironists or bitter satirists. Their method was to laugh at folly, caricature human foibles, and good-naturedly reprove their fellow Englishmen. They were men of the world themselves, and, as part of the public they addressed, were frequenters of the coffee houses where their papers were read. And the *Tatler* and the *Spectator* were so widely read that Addison and Steele may be said to have made the essay, for the first time in its history, a dominant literary form, a popular means of entertainment, and a vehicle for the dissemination of ideas, moral or otherwise. It is to be borne in mind, too, that the essays of Addison and Steele, published regularly as they were, represent an important stage in the history of journalism. As examples of satire the following essays should be read in connection with others in this volume (see the headnote on *Swift*, II, 31).

POPULAR SUPERSTITIONS¹

NO. 7, THURSDAY, MARCH 8, [1711]

*Somnia, terrores magicos, miracula, sagas,
Nocturnos lemures portentaque Thessala rides*²²

HORACE

Going yesterday to dine with an old acquaintance, I had the misfortune to find his whole family very much dejected. Upon asking him the occasion of it, he told me that his wife had dreamt a very strange dream the night before, which they were afraid portended some misfortune to themselves or to their children. At her coming into the room I observed a settled melancholy in her countenance, which I should have been troubled for, had I not heard from whence it proceeded. We were no sooner sat down but, after having looked upon me a little while, "My Dear," says she, turning to her

husband, "you may now see the stranger that was in the candle last night." Soon after this, as they began to talk of family affairs, a little boy at the lower end of the table told her that he was to go into join-hand³ on Thursday. "Thursday?" says she; "No, child, if it please God, you shall not begin upon Childermas-day,⁴ tell your writing-master that Friday will be soon enough." I was reflecting with myself on the oddness of her fancy, and wondering that anybody would establish it as a rule to lose a day in every week. In the midst of these my musings she desired me to reach her a little salt upon the point of my knife, which I did in such a trepidation and hurry of obedience that I let it drop by the way, at which she immediately startled, and said it fell towards her. Upon this I looked very blank, and, observing the concern of the whole table, began to consider myself, with some confusion, as a person that had brought a disaster upon the family. The lady, however, recovering herself after a little space, said to her husband with a sigh, "My Dear, misfortunes never come single." My friend, I found, acted but an underpart at his table, and, being a man of more good nature than understanding, thinks himself obliged to fall in with all the passions and humors of his yokefellow. "Do not you remember, child," says she, "that the pigeon house fell the very afternoon that our careless wench spilt the salt upon the table?" "Yes," says he, "my dear, and the next post brought us an account of the Battle of Almanza."⁵ The reader may guess at the figure I made, after having done all this mischief. I dispatched my dinner as soon as I could, with my usual taciturnity; when, to my utter confusion, the lady seeing me quitting my knife and fork, and laying them across one another upon my plate, desired me that I would humor her so far as to take them out of that figure, and place them side by side. What the absurdity was which I had committed I did not know, but I suppose there was some traditionary superstition in it, and, therefore, in obedience to the

³ the second class in handwriting⁴ Holy Innocents' Day, December 28, commemorating the massacre of the Innocents by Herod. The day on which it fell was thought to be unlucky throughout the following year.⁵ A battle in which the British and their allies were defeated by the French and Spanish, 1707.¹ By Addison, from the *Spectator*.² Dreams, magic terrors, miracles, witches, nocturnal ghosts, the black arts of Thessaly—do you dismiss them with a laugh?

THE ESSAY · JOSEPH ADDISON

lady of the house, I disposed of my knife and fork in two parallel lines, which is the figure I shall always lay them in for the future, though I do not know any reason for it.

It is not difficult for a man to see that a person has conceived an aversion to him. For my own part, I quickly found, by the lady's looks, that she regarded me as a very odd kind of fellow, with an unfortunate aspect; for which reason I took my leave immediately after dinner, and withdrew to my own lodgings. Upon my return home, I fell into a profound contemplation on the evils that attend these superstitious follies of mankind, how they subject us to imaginary afflictions and additional sorrows that do not properly come within our lot. As if the natural calamities of life were not sufficient for it, we turn the most indifferent circumstances into misfortunes, and suffer as much from trifling accidents as from real evils. I have known the shooting of a star spoil a night's rest, and have seen a man in love grow pale and lose his appetite upon the plucking of a merrythought.⁶ A screech owl at midnight has alarmed a family more than a band of robbers; nay, the voice of a cricket hath struck more terror than the roaring of a lion. There is nothing so inconsiderable which may not appear dreadful to an imagination that is filled with omens and prognostics.⁷ A rusty nail or a crooked pin shoot up into prodigies.

I remember I was once in a mixed assembly that was full of noise and mirth, when on a sudden an old woman unluckily observed there were thirteen of us in company. This remark struck a panic terror into several who were present, insomuch that one or two of the ladies were going to leave the room; but a friend of mine, taking notice that one of our female companions was big with child, affirmed there were fourteen in the room, and, that instead of portending one of the company should die, it plainly foretold one of them should be born. Had not my friend found out this expedient to break the omen, I question not but half the women in the company would have fallen sick that very night.

An old maid that is troubled with the vapors

produces infinite disturbances of this kind among her friends and neighbors. I know a maiden aunt of a great family who is one of these antiquated sibyls⁸ that forbodes and prophesies from one end of the year to the other. She is always seeing apparitions and hearing deathwatches,⁹ and was the other day almost frightened out of her wits by the great house dog that howled in the stable at a time when she lay ill of the toothache. Such an extravagant cast of mind engages multitudes of people not only in impertinent terrors but in supernumerary duties of life, and arises from that fear and ignorance which are natural to the soul of man. The horror with which we entertain the thoughts of death (or indeed of any future evil) and the uncertainty of its approach, fill a melancholy mind with innumerable apprehensions and suspicions, and consequently dispose it to the observation of such groundless prodigies and predictions. For as it is the chief concern of wise men to retrench the evils of life by the reasonings of philosophy, it is the employment of fools to multiply them by the sentiments of superstition.

For my own part, I should be very much troubled were I endowed with this divining quality, though it should inform me truly of everything that can befall me. I would not anticipate the relish of any happiness nor feel the weight of any misery before it actually arrives.

I know but one way of fortifying my soul against these gloomy presages and terrors of mind, and that is by securing to myself friendship and protection of that Being who disposes of events and governs futurity. He sees, at one view, the whole thread of my existence, not only that part of it which I have already passed through, but that which runs forward into all the depths of eternity. When I lay me down to sleep, I recommend myself to his care; when I awake, I give myself up to his direction. Amidst all the evils that threaten me I will look up to him for help, and question not but he will either avert them or turn them to my advantage. Though I know neither the time nor the manner of the death I am to die, I am not at all solicitous about it, because I am sure

⁶ a wishbone.

⁷ omens or signs indicating future events.

⁸ prophetesses.

⁹ small insects that presage death by the ticking sound they make.

that he knows them both, and that he will not fail to comfort and support me under them.

ON WASTE OF TIME¹

NO. 317, TUESDAY, MARCH 4, 1712

—*Fruges consumere nati.*HORACE, *Ep.* I. 11. 27*Born to drink and eat.*

CRUECH

Augustus, a few moments before his death, asked his friends who stood about him if they thought he had acted his part well, and upon receiving such an answer as was due to his extraordinary merit, "Let me then," says he, "go off the stage with your applause," using the expression with which the Roman actors made their exit at the conclusion of a dramatic piece. I could wish that men, while they are in health, would consider well the nature of the part they are engaged in, and what figure it will make in the minds of those they leave behind them, whether it was worth coming into the world for, whether it be suitable to a reasonable being, in short, whether it appears graceful in this life, or will turn to an advantage in the next. Let the sycophant, or buffoon, the satirist, or the good companion, consider with himself, when his body shall be laid in the grave, and his soul pass into another state of existence, how much it will redound to his praise to have it said of him that no man in England eat better, that he had an admirable talent at turning his friends into ridicule, that nobody outdid him at an ill-natured jest, or that he never went to bed before he had dispatched his third bottle. These are, however, very common funeral orations, and eulogiums on deceased persons who have acted among mankind with some figure and reputation.

But if we look into the bulk of our species, they are such as are not likely to be remembered a moment after their disappearance. They leave behind them no traces of their existence, but are forgotten as though they had never been. They are neither wanted by the

poor, regretted by the rich, nor celebrated by the learned. They are neither missed in the commonwealth, nor lamented by private persons. Their actions are of no significance to mankind, and might have been performed by creatures of much less dignity than those who are distinguished by the faculty of reason. An eminent French author speaks somewhere to the following purpose: I have often seen from my chamber window two noble creatures, both of them of an erect countenance, and endowed with reason. These two intellectual beings are employed, from morning to night, in rubbing two smooth stones one upon another: that is, as the vulgar phrase it, in polishing marble.

My friend, Sir Andrew Freepport, as we were sitting in the club last night, gave us an account of a sober citizen who died a few days since. This honest man, being of greater consequence in his own thoughts than in the eye of the world, had for some years past kept a journal of his life. Sir Andrew showed us one week of it. Since the occurrences set down in it mark out such a road of action as that I have been speaking of, I shall present my reader with a faithful copy of it, after having first informed him that the deceased person had in his youth been bred to trade, but finding himself not so well turned for business, he had for several years last past lived altogether upon a moderate annuity.

MONDAY, Eight o'clock. I put on my clothes and walked into the parlor.

Nine o'clock, ditto. Tied my knee strings, and washed my hands.

Hours ten, eleven, and twelve. Smoked three pipes of Virginia. Read the *Supplement* and *Daily Courant*. Things go ill in the north. Mr. Nisby's opinion thereupon.

One o'clock in the afternoon. Chid Ralph for mislaying my tobacco-box.

Two o'clock. Sat down to dinner. Mem. Too many plums and no suet.

From three to four. Took my afternoon's nap.

From four to six. Walked into the fields. Wind, S.S.E.

From six to ten. At the Club. Mr. Nisby's opinion about the peace.

Ten o'clock. Went to bed, slept sound.

TUESDAY, BEING HOLIDAY, Eight o'clock. Rose as usual.

¹ By Addison, from the *Spectator*.

Nine o'clock. Washed hands and face, shaved, put on my double soled shoes.

Ten, eleven, twelve. Took a walk to Islington.

One. Took a pot of Mother Cob's Mild.

Between two and three. Returned, dined on a knuckle of veal and bacon. Mem. Sprouts wanting.

Three. Nap as usual.

From four to six. Coffee-house. Read the news. A dish of twist. Grand Vizier strangled.

From six to ten. At the Club. Mr. Nisby's account of the Great Turk.

Ten. Dream of the Grand Vizier. Broken sleep.

WEDNESDAY, Eight o'clock. Tongue of my shoe-buckle broke. Hands, but not face.

Nine. Paid off the butcher's bill. Mem. To be allowed for the last leg of mutton.

Ten, eleven. At the coffee-house. More work in the north. Stranger in a black wig asked me how stocks went.

From twelve to one. Walked in the fields. Wind to the south.

From one to two. Smoked a pipe and a half.

Two. Dined as usual. Stomach good.

Three. Nap broke by the falling of a pewter-dish. Mem. Cook-maid in love, and grown careless.

From four to six. At the coffee-house. Advice from Smyrna, that the Grand Vizier was first of all strangled, and afterwards beheaded.

Six o'clock in the evening. Was half an hour in the club before anybody else came. Mr. Nisby of opinion that the Grand Vizier was not strangled the sixth instant.

Ten at night. Went to bed. Slept without waking till nine next morning.

THURSDAY, Nine o'clock. Stayed within till two o'clock for Sir Timothy, who did not bring me my annuity according to his promise.

Two in the afternoon. Sat down to dinner. Loss of appetite. Small beer sour. Beef over-corned.

Three. Could not take my nap.

Four and five. Gave Ralph a box on the ear. Turned off my cookmaid. Sent a message to Sir Timothy. Mem. I did not go to the club tonight. Went to bed at nine o'clock.

FRIDAY. Passed the morning in meditation upon Sir Timothy, who was with me a quarter before twelve.

Twelve o'clock. Bought a new head to my cane, and a tongue to my buckle. Drank a glass of purl to recover appetite.

Two and three. Dined, and slept well.

From four to six. Went to the coffee-house. Met Mr. Nisby there. Smoked several pipes. Mr. Nisby of opinion that laced coffee is bad for the head.

Six o'clock. At the club as steward. Sat late.

Twelve o'clock. Went to bed, dreamt that I drank small beer with the Grand Vizier.

SATURDAY. Waked at eleven, walked in the fields. Wind N.E.

Twelve. Caught in a shower.

One in the afternoon. Returned home, and dried myself.

Two. Mr. Nisby dined with me. First course marrow-bones. Second ox-cheek, with a bottle of Brook's and Hellier.

Three o'clock. Overslept myself.

Six. Went to the Club. Like to have fallen into a gutter. Grand Vizier certainly dead, etc.

I question not but the reader will be surprised to find the above-mentioned journalist taking so much care of a life that was filled with such inconsiderable actions and received so very small improvements; and yet, if we look into the behavior of many whom we daily converse with, we shall find that most of their hours are taken up in those three important articles of eating, drinking, and sleeping. I do not suppose that a man loses his time, who is not engaged in public affairs, or in an illustrious course of action. On the contrary, I believe our hours may very often be more profitably laid out in such transactions as make no figure in the world than in such as are apt to draw upon them the attention of mankind. One may become wiser and better by several methods of employing one's self in secrecy and silence, and do what is laudable without noise or ostentation. I would, however, recommend to every one of my readers the keeping a journal of their lives for one week, and setting down punctually their whole series of employments during that space of time. This kind of self-examination would give them a true state of themselves, and incline them to consider seriously what they are about. One day would rectify the omissions of another, and make a man weigh all those indifferent actions, which, though they are easily forgotten, must certainly be accounted for.

DUELING¹

NO. 25, TUESDAY, JUNE 7, 1709

*Quicquid agunt homines—
—nostri est farrago libelli.*

JUV. SAT. i. 85, 86

*Whate'er men do, or say, or think, or dream,
Our motley paper seizes for its theme.*

POPE

A letter from a young lady, written in the most passionate terms, wherein she laments the misfortune of a gentleman, her lover, who was lately wounded in a duel, has turned my thoughts to that subject, and inclined me to examine into the causes which precipitate men into so fatal a folly. And as it has been proposed to treat of subjects of gallantry in the article from hence,² and no one point in nature is more proper to be considered by the company who frequent this place than that of duels, it is worth our consideration to examine into this chimerical groundless humor, and to lay every other thought aside, till we have stripped it of all its false pretences to credit and reputation amongst men. But I must confess, when I consider what I am going about, and run over in my imagination all the endless crowd of men of honor who will be offended at such a discourse, I am undertaking, methinks, a work worthy an invulnerable hero in romance, rather than a private gentleman with a single rapier. But as I am pretty well acquainted by great opportunities with the nature of man, and know of a truth that all men fight against their will, the danger vanishes, and resolution rises upon this subject. For this reason I shall talk very freely on a custom which all men wish exploded, though no man has courage enough to resist it. But there is one unintelligible word, which I fear will extremely perplex my dissertation, and I confess to you I find very hard to explain, which is the term "satisfaction." An honest country gentleman had the misfortune to fall into company with two or three modern men of honor, where he happened to be very ill-treated; and one of the company, being conscious of his offense, sends a note to him in the morning, and tells

him he was ready to give him satisfaction. "This is fine doing," says the plain fellow. "Last night he sent me away cursedly out of humor, and this morning he fancies it would be a satisfaction to be run through the body."

As the matter at present stands, it is not to do handsome actions denominates a man of honor; it is enough if he dares to defend ill ones. Thus you often see a common sharper in competition with a gentleman of the first rank, though all mankind is convinced that a fighting gamester is only a pickpocket with the courage of a highwayman. One cannot with any patience reflect on the unaccountable jumble of persons and things in this town and nation, which occasions very frequently that a brave man falls by a hand below that of the common hangman, and yet his executioner escapes the clutches of the hangman for doing it. I shall therefore hereafter consider how the bravest men in other ages and nations have behaved themselves upon such incidents as we decide by combat, and show, from their practice, that this resentment neither has its foundation from true reason or solid fame, but is an imposture, made up of cowardice, falsehood, and want of understanding. For this work, a good history of quarrels would be very edifying to the public, and I apply myself to the town for particulars and circumstances within their knowledge, which may serve to embellish the dissertation with proper cuts. Most of the quarrels I have ever known have proceeded from some valiant coxcomb's persisting in the wrong, to defend some prevailing folly, and preserve himself from the ingenuity³ of owning a mistake.

By this means it is called "giving a man satisfaction" to urge your offense against him with your sword; which puts me in mind of Peter's order to the keeper in *The Tale of a Tub*:⁴ "If you neglect to do all this, damn you and your generation for ever; and so we bid you heartily farewell." If the contradiction in the very terms of one of our challenges were as well explained and turned into plain English, would it not run after this manner?

"Sir:

Your extraordinary behavior last night, and the liberty you were pleased to take with me, makes me this morning give you this, to tell

¹ By Steele, from the *Tatler*.

² White's *Chocolate House*, from which this number of the *Tatler* is dated.

³ ingenuousness.

⁴ a satire by Jonathan Swift.

you, because you are an ill-bred puppy, I will meet you in Hyde Park an hour hence; and because you want both breeding and humanity, I desire you would come with a pistol in your hand, on horseback, and endeavor to shoot me through the head, to teach you more manners. If you fail of doing me this pleasure, I shall say you are a rascal on every post in town. And so, sir, if you will not injure me more, I shall never forgive what you have done already. Pray, sir, do not fail of getting everything ready, and you will infinitely oblige, sir, your most obedient, humble servant, etc." . . .

THE TALKATIVE MAN¹

NO. 264, DECEMBER 16, 1710

*Favete linguis.*²

HORACE, *Od.* III, II, 2

. . . I look upon a tedious talker, or what is generally known by the name of a story-teller, to be much more insufferable than even a prolix writer. An author may be tossed out of your hand, and thrown aside when he grows dull and tiresome; but such liberties are so far from being allowed towards your orators in common conversation, that I have known a challenge sent a person for going out of the room abruptly, and leaving a man of honour in the midst of a dissertation. This evil is at present so very common and epidemical, that there is scarce a coffee-house in town that has not some speakers belonging to it, who utter their political essays, and draw parallels out of Baker's "Chronicle"³ to almost every part of her majesty's reign. It was said of two ancient authors, who had very different beauties in their style, "that if you took a word from one of them, you only spoiled his eloquence; but if you took a word from the other, you spoiled his sense." I have often applied the first part of this criticism to several of these coffee-house speakers whom I have at present in my thoughts, though the character that is given to the last of those authors, is what I would recommend to the imitation of my loving countrymen. But it is not only

public places of resort, but private clubs and conversations over a bottle, that are infested with this loquacious kind of animal, especially with that species which I comprehend under the name of a story-teller. I would earnestly desire these gentlemen to consider, that no point of wit or mirth at the end of a story can atone for the half hour that has been lost before they come at it. I would likewise lay it home to their serious consideration, whether they think that every man in the company has not a right to speak as well as themselves? and whether they do not think they are invading another man's property, when they engross the time which should be divided equally among the company to their own private use?

What makes this evil the much greater in conversation is, that these humdrum companions seldom endeavour to wind up their narrations into a point of mirth or instruction, which might make some amends for the tediousness of them; but think they have a right to tell anything that has happened within their memory. They look upon matter of fact to be a sufficient foundation for a story, and give us a long account of things, not because they are entertaining or surprising, but because they are true.

My ingenious kinsman, Mr. Humphry Wagstaff, used to say, "the life of man is too short for a story-teller."

Methusalem might be half an hour in telling what o'clock it was: but as for us postdiluvians, we ought to do everything in haste; and in our speeches, as well as actions, remember that our time is short. A man that talks for a quarter of an hour together in company, if I meet him frequently, takes up a great part of my span. A quarter of an hour may be reckoned the eight-and-fortieth part of a day, a day the three hundred and sixtieth part of a year, and a year the threescore and tenth part of life. By this moral arithmetic, supposing a man to be in the talking world one third part of the day, whoever gives another a quarter of an hour's hearing, makes him a sacrifice of more than the four hundred thousandth part of his conversable life.

I would establish but one great general rule to be observed in all conversation, which is this, "that men should not talk to please themselves, but those that hear them." This would make

¹ By Steele, from the *Tatler*.

² Spare speech, few words.

³ A history of England, 1641.

SAMUEL JOHNSON

1709–1784

them consider, whether what they speak be worth hearing, whether there be either wit or sense in what they are about to say, and, whether it be adapted to the time when, the place where, and the person to whom, it is spoken.

For the utter extirpation of these orators and story-tellers, which I look upon as very great pests of society, I have invented a watch which divides the minute into twelve parts, after the same manner that the ordinary watches are divided into hours, and will endeavour to get a patent,⁴ which shall oblige every club or company to provide themselves with one of these watches, that shall lie upon the table as an hour-glass is often placed near the pulpit, to measure out the length of a discourse.

I shall be willing to allow a man one round of my watch, that is, a whole minute, to speak in; but if he exceeds that time, it shall be lawful for any of the company to look upon the watch, or to call him down to order.

Provided, however, that if any one can make it appear he is tuned of threescore, he may take two, or, if he pleases, three rounds of the watch without giving offence. Provided, also, that this rule be not construed to extend to the fair sex, who shall still be at liberty to talk by the ordinary watch that is now in use. I would likewise earnestly recommend this little automaton, which may be easily carried in the pocket without any incumbrance, to all such as are troubled with this infirmity of speech, that upon pulling out their watches, they may have frequent occasion to consider what they are doing, and by that means cut the thread of the story short, and hurry to a conclusion. I shall only add, that this watch, with a paper of directions how to use it, is sold at Charles Lillie's.

I am afraid a Tatler will be thought a very improper paper to censure this humour of being talkative, but I would have my readers know that there is a great difference between *tattle* and *loquacity*, as I shall show at large in a following lucubration; it being my design to throw away a candle⁵ upon that subject, in order to explain the whole art of tattling in all its branches and subdivisions.

⁴ a royal order.

⁵ burn a candle in writing an essay.

One measure of a man's mind and character is the impression he makes on other men. By that test Samuel Johnson stood in his own day, and still stands, as a great literary personality. As dictator of the Literary Club he won the admiration of such men as Sir Joshua Reynolds, painter, Edmund Burke, statesman, and David Garrick, actor. "I acknowledge the highest obligations to him," said Reynolds. "He may be said to have formed my mind, and to have brushed from it a great deal of rubbish." And those of us who read Johnson today—and more of us should read him—experience that renovation of the mind that comes from association with a man who is ruggedly honest, free from cant, and possessed of a world of common sense. As a writer he is at his best in his *Lives of the English Poets* and in some of the essays he contributed to the *Idler*, a series founded and edited by Johnson, and published in the *Universal Chronicle*. Like the *Rambler*, also founded by Johnson, the *Idler* was a publication on the order of the *Spectator*. But Johnson seems to have talked better than he wrote, and, fortunately, we have a great deal of his talk as recorded by his biographer, James Boswell (see II, 295). The essay on Shakespeare is from Johnson's "Preface" to his edition of Shakespeare's plays, the essay on friendship, from the *Idler*. The latter essay may be compared with Emerson's essay on friendship (II, 101).

FROM *The Preface to Shakespeare*

The poet, of whose works I have undertaken the revision, may now begin to assume the dignity of an ancient and claim the privilege of established fame and prescriptive veneration. He has long outlived his century, the term commonly fixed as the test of literary merit. Whatever advantages he might once derive from personal allusions, local customs, or temporary opinions, have for many years been lost; and every topic of merriment or motive of sorrow which the modes of artificial life afforded him now only obscure the scenes which they once illuminated. The effects of favor and competition are at an end, the tradition of his friendships and his enmities has perished; his

works support no opinion with arguments nor supply any faction with invectives; they can neither indulge vanity nor gratify malignity, but are read without any other reason than the desire of pleasure, and are therefore praised only as pleasure is obtained; yet, thus unassisted by interest or passion, they have passed through variations of taste and changes of manners, and, as they devolved from one generation to another, have received new honors at every transmission.

But because human judgment, though it be gradually gaining upon certainty, never becomes infallible, and approbation, though long continued, may yet be only the approbation of prejudice or fashion, it is proper to inquire by what peculiarities of excellence Shakespeare has gained and kept the favor of his countrymen.

Nothing can please many, and please long, but just representations of general nature. Particular manners can be known to few, and therefore few only can judge how nearly they are copied. The irregular combinations of fanciful invention may delight awhile by that novelty of which the common satiety of life sends us all in quest, but the pleasures of sudden wonder are soon exhausted and the mind can only repose on the stability of truth.

Shakespeare is, above all writers, at least above all modern writers, the poet of nature, the poet that holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life. His characters are not modified by the customs of particular places, unpracticed by the rest of the world, by the peculiarities of studies or professions, which can operate but upon small numbers, or by the accidents of transient fashions or temporary opinions. They are the genuine progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply and observation will always find. His persons act and speak by the influence of those general passions and principles by which all minds are agitated and the whole system of life is continued in motion. In the writings of other poets a character is too often an individual; in those of Shakespeare it is commonly a species.

It is from this wide extension of design that so much instruction is derived. It is this which fills the plays of Shakespeare with practical axioms and domestic wisdom. It was said of Eu-

ripides¹ that every verse was a precept; and it may be said of Shakespeare that from his works may be collected a system of civil and economical prudence. Yet his real power is not shown in the splendor of particular passages, but by the progress of his fable and the tenor of his dialogue, and he that tries to recommend him by select quotations will succeed like the pedant in Hierocles² who, when he offered his house to sale, carried a brick in his pocket as a specimen.

It will not easily be imagined how much Shakespeare excels in accommodating his sentiments to real life but by comparing him with other authors. It was observed of the ancient schools of declamation that the more diligently they were frequented, the more was the student disqualified for the world, because he found nothing there which he should ever meet in any other place. The same remark may be applied to every stage but that of Shakespeare. The theater, when it is under any other direction, is peopled by such characters as were never seen, conversing in a language which was never heard upon topics which will never arise in the commerce of mankind. But the dialogue of this author is often so evidently determined by the incident which produces it, and is pursued with so much ease and simplicity, that it seems scarcely to claim the merit of fiction but to have been gleaned by diligent selection out of common conversation and common occurrences.

Upon every other stage the universal agent is love, by whose power all good and evil is distributed and every action quickened or retarded. To bring a lover, a lady, and a rival into the fable; to entangle them in contradictory obligations, perplex them with oppositions of interest, and harass them with violence of desires inconsistent with each other; to make them meet in rapture and part in agony; to fill their mouths with hyperbolic joy and outrageous sorrow; to distress them as nothing human ever was distressed; to deliver them as nothing human ever was delivered—is the business of a modern dramatist. For this, probability is violated, life is misrepresented, and language is depraved. But love is only one of many passions, and as it has no great influence upon

¹ Greek dramatic poet (480–406 B.C.).

² ancient philosopher (5th century A.D.) and compiler of jests.

the sum of life, it has little operation in the dramas of a poet who caught his ideas from the living world and exhibited only what he saw before him. He knew that any other passion, as it was regular or exorbitant, was a cause of happiness or calamity.

Characters thus ample and general were not easily discriminated and preserved, yet perhaps no poet ever kept his personages more distinct from each other. I will not say with Pope that every speech may be assigned to the proper speaker, because many speeches there are which have nothing characteristic; but, perhaps, though some may be equally adapted to every person, it will be difficult to find that any can be properly transferred from the present possessor to another claimant. The choice is right when there is reason for choice.

Other dramatists can only gain attention by hyperbolic or aggravated characters, by fabulous and unexampled excellence or depravity, as the writers of barbarous romances invigorated the reader by a giant and a dwarf, and he that should form his expectations of human affairs from the play, or from the tale, would be equally deceived. Shakespeare has no heroes; his scenes are occupied only by men who act and speak as the reader thinks that he should himself have spoken or acted on the same occasion; even where the agency is supernatural, the dialogue is level with life. Other writers disguise the most natural passions and most frequent incidents, so that he who contemplates them in the book will not know them in the world. Shakespeare approximates¹ the remote and familiarizes the wonderful; the event which he represents will not happen, but, if it were possible, its effects would probably be such as he has assigned; and it may be said that he has not only shown human nature as it acts in real exigences, but as it would be found in trials to which it cannot be exposed.

This therefore is the praise of Shakespeare, that his drama is the mirror of life, that he who has mazed his imagination in following the phantoms which other writers raise up before him may here be cured of his delirious ecstasies by reading human sentiments in human language, by scenes from which a hermit may estimate the transactions of the world and a confessor predict the progress of the passions.

¹ brings near.

His adherence to general nature has exposed him to the censure of critics who form their judgments upon narrower principles. Dennis⁴ and Rymer⁵ think his Romans not sufficiently Roman, and Voltaire censures his kings as not completely royal. Dennis is offended that Menenius, a senator of Rome, should play the buffoon, and Voltaire perhaps thinks decency violated when the Danish usurper is represented as a drunkard. But Shakespeare always makes nature predominate over accident, and, if he preserves the essential character, is not very careful of distinctions superinduced and adventitious. His story requires Romans or kings, but he thinks only on men. He knew that Rome, like every other city, had men of all dispositions, and, wanting a buffoon, he went into the senate-house for that which the senate-house would certainly have afforded him. He was inclined to show an usurper and a murderer not only odious, but despicable; he therefore added drunkenness to his other qualities, knowing that kings love wine like other men and that wine exerts its natural power upon kings. These are the petty cavils of petty minds, a poet overlooks the casual distinction of country and condition, as a painter, satisfied with the figure, neglects the drapery.

The censure which he has incurred by mixing comic and tragic scenes, as it extends to all his works, deserves more consideration. Let the fact be first stated and then examined.

Shakespeare's plays are not in the rigorous and critical sense either tragedies or comedies, but compositions of a distinct kind, exhibiting the real state of sublunary nature, which partakes of good and evil, joy and sorrow, mingled with endless variety of proportion and innumerable modes of combination; and expressing the course of the world, in which the loss of one is the gain of another; in which, at the same time, the reveler is hasting to his wine, and the mourner burying his friend; in which the malignity of one is sometimes defeated by the frolic of another; and many mischiefs and many benefits are done and hindered without design.

Out of this chaos of mingled purposes and

⁴ John Dennis (1657–1734); Johnson's reference is to Dennis's *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespeare*.

⁵ Thomas Rymer (1641–1713); the reference is to his *Short View of Tragedy*.

casualties the ancient poets, according to the laws which custom had prescribed, selected some the crimes of men and some their absurdities, some the momentous vicissitudes of life and some the lighter occurrences, some the terrors of distress and some the gaieties of prosperity. Thus rose the two modes of imitation known by the names of tragedy and comedy, compositions intended to promote different ends by contrary means, and considered as so little allied that I do not recollect among the Greeks or Romans a single writer who attempted both.

Shakespeare has united the powers of exciting laughter and sorrow not only in one mind but in one composition. Almost all his plays are divided between serious and ludicrous characters, and, in the successive evolutions of the design, sometimes produce seriousness and sorrow and sometimes levity and laughter.

That this is a practice contrary to the rules of criticism will be readily allowed, but there is always an appeal open from criticism to nature. The end of writing is to instruct; the end of poetry is to instruct by pleasing. That the mingled drama may convey all the instruction of tragedy or comedy cannot be denied, because it includes both in its alternations of exhibition, and approaches nearer than either to the appearance of life by showing how great machinations and slender designs may promote or obviate one another, and the high and the low co-operate in the general system by unavoidable concatenation.

It is objected that by this change of scenes the passions are interrupted in their progression and that the principal event, being not advanced by a due gradation of preparatory incidents, wants at last the power to move which constitutes the perfection of dramatic poetry. This reasoning is so specious that it is received as true even by those who in daily experience feel it to be false. The interchanges of mingled scenes seldom fail to produce the intended vicissitudes of passion. Fiction cannot move so much but that the attention may be easily transferred; and though it must be allowed that pleasing melancholy be sometimes interrupted by unwelcome levity, yet let it be considered likewise that melancholy is often not pleasing and that the disturbance of one man may be the relief of another, that different auditors

have different habitudes, and that, upon the whole, all pleasure consists in variety.

The players⁶ who in their edition divided our author's works into comedies, histories and tragedies, seem not to have distinguished the three kinds by any very exact or definite ideas.

An action which ended happily to the principal persons, however serious or distressful through its intermediate incidents, in their opinion constituted a comedy. This idea of a comedy continued long amongst us, and plays were written which, by changing the catastrophe, were tragedies today and comedies tomorrow.

Tragedy was not in those times a poem of more general dignity or elevation than comedy; it required only a calamitous conclusion, with which the common criticism of that age was satisfied, whatever lighter pleasure it afforded in its progress.

History was a series of actions with no other than chronological succession, independent on each other and without any tendency to introduce or regulate the conclusion. It is not always very nicely distinguished from tragedy. There is not much nearer approach to unity of action in the tragedy of *Antony and Cleopatra* than in the history of *Richard the Second*. But a history might be continued through many plays; as it had no plan, it had no limits.

Through all these denominations of the drama Shakespeare's mode of composition is the same: an interchange of seriousness and merriment, by which the mind is softened at one time and exhilarated at another. But whatever be his purpose, whether to gladden or depress, or to conduct the story without vehemence or emotion through tracts of easy and familiar dialogue, he never fails to attain his purpose; as he commands us, we laugh or mourn or sit silent with quiet expectation, in tranquility without indifference.

When Shakespeare's plan is understood, most of the criticisms of Rymer and Voltaire vanish away. The play of *Hamlet* is opened, without impropriety, by two sentinels; Iago bellows at Brabantio's window without injury to the scheme of the play, though in terms which a modern audience would not easily endure; the character of Polonius is seasonable

⁶ Henry Condell and John Heming, actors who edited the first folio of Shakespeare's plays, 1623.

and useful; and the grave-diggers themselves may be heard with applause.

Shakespeare engaged in dramatic poetry with the world open before him: the rules of the ancients were yet known to few, the public judgment was unformed, he had no example of such fame as might force him upon imitation, nor critics of such authority as might restrain his extravagance. He therefore indulged his natural disposition, and his disposition, as Rymer has remarked, led him to comedy. In tragedy he often writes, with great appearance of toil and study, what is written at last with little felicity, but in his comic scenes he seems to produce without labor what no labor can improve. In tragedy he is always struggling after some occasion to be comic, but in comedy he seems to repose or to luxuriate as in a mode of thinking congenial to his nature. In his tragic scenes there is always something wanting, but his comedy often surpasses expectation or desire. His comedy pleases by the thoughts and the language, and his tragedy for the greater part by incident and action. His tragedy seems to be skill, his comedy to be instinct.

The force of his comic scenes has suffered little diminution from the changes made by a century and a half, in manners or in words. As his personages act upon principles arising from genuine passion, very little modified by particular forms, their pleasures and vexations are communicable to all times and to all places, they are natural, and therefore durable, the adventitious peculiarities of personal habits are only superficial dyes, bright and pleasing for a little while, yet soon fading to a dim tint, without any remains of former luster, but the discriminations of true passion are the colors of nature, they pervade the whole mass and can only perish with the body that exhibits them. The accidental compositions of heterogeneous modes are dissolved by the chance which combined them, but the uniform simplicity of primitive qualities neither admits increase nor suffers decay. The sand heaped by one flood is scattered by another, but the rock always continues in its place. The stream of time, which is continually washing the dissoluble fabrics of other poets, passes without injury by the adamant of Shakespeare.

If there be, what I believe there is, in every nation a style which never becomes obsolete,

a certain mode of phraseology so consonant and congenial to the analogy and principles of its respective language as to remain unsettled and altered, this style is probably to be sought in the common intercourse of life among those who speak only to be understood, without ambition of elegance. The polite are always catching modish innovations, and the learned depart from established forms of speech in the hope of finding or making better, those who wish for distinction forsake the vulgar, when the vulgar is right, but there is a conversation above grossness and below refinement, where propriety resides, and where this poet seems to have gathered his comic dialogue. He is therefore more agreeable to the ears of the present age than any other author equally remote, and among his other excellencies deserves to be studied as one of the original masters of our language.

These observations are to be considered not as unexceptionably constant, but as containing general and predominant truth. Shakespeare's familiar dialogue is affirmed to be smooth and clear, yet not wholly without ruggedness or difficulty, as a country may be eminently fruitful, though it has spots unfit for cultivation. His characters are praised as natural, though their sentiments are sometimes forced and their actions improbable, as the earth upon the whole is spherical, though its surface is varied with protuberances and cavities.

Shakespeare with his excellencies has likewise faults, and faults sufficient to obscure and overwhelm any other merit.⁷ I shall show them in the proportion in which they appear to me, without envious malignity or superstitious veneration. No question can be more innocently discussed than a dead poet's pretensions to renown, and little regard is due to that bigotry which sets candor higher than truth.

His first defect is that to which may be imputed most of the evil in books or in men. He sacrifices virtue to convenience, and is so much more careful to please than to instruct that he seems to write without any moral purpose. From his writings indeed a system of social duty may be selected, for he that thinks reasonably must think morally; but his precepts and axioms drop casually from him; he makes no

⁷ the merit of any other writer.

just distribution of good or evil, nor is always careful to show in the virtuous a disapprobation of the wicked; he carries his persons indifferently through right and wrong, and at the close dismisses them without further care and leaves their examples to operate by chance. This fault the barbarity of his age cannot extenuate, for it is always a writer's duty to make the world better, and justice is a virtue independent on time or place.

The plots are often so loosely formed that a very slight consideration may improve them, and so carelessly pursued that he seems not always fully to comprehend his own design. He omits opportunities of instructing or delighting which the train of his story seems to force upon him, and apparently rejects those exhibitions which would be more affecting for the sake of those which are more easy.

It may be observed that in many of his plays the latter part is evidently neglected. When he found himself near the end of his work and in view of his reward, he shortened the labor to snatch the profit. He therefore remits his efforts where he should most vigorously exert them, and his catastrophe is improbably produced or imperfectly represented.

He had no regard to distinction of time or place, but gives to one age or nation, without scruple, the customs, institutions, and opinions of another, at the expense not only of likelihood but of possibility. These faults Pope has endeavored, with more zeal than judgment, to transfer to his imagined interpolators. We need not wonder to find Hector⁸ quoting Aristotle when we see the loves of Theseus and Hippolyta⁹ combined with the gothic mythology of fairies. Shakespeare, indeed, was not the only violator of chronology, for in the same age Sidney,¹⁰ who wanted not the advantages of learning, has in his *Arcadia* confounded the pastoral with the feudal times, the days of innocence, quiet, and security with those of turbulence, violence, and adventure.

In his comic scenes he is seldom very successful when he engages his characters in reciprocations of smartness and contests of sarcasm; their jests are commonly gross and their pleas-

antry licentious; neither his gentlemen nor his ladies have much delicacy, nor are sufficiently distinguished from his clowns by any appearance of refined manners. Whether he represented the real conversation of his time is not easy to determine; the reign of Elizabeth is commonly supposed to have been a time of stateliness, formality and reserve, yet perhaps the relaxations of that severity were not very elegant. There must, however, have been always some modes of gaiety preferable to others, and a writer ought to choose the best.

In tragedy his performance seems constantly to be worse as his labor is more. The effusions of passion which exigence forces out are, for the most part, striking and energetic; but whenever he solicits his invention or strains his faculties, the offspring of his throes is tumor,¹¹ meanness,¹² tediousness, and obscurity.

In narration he affects a disproportionate pomp of diction and a wearisome train of circumlocution, and tells the incident imperfectly in many words which might have been more plainly delivered in few. Narration in dramatic poetry is naturally tedious, as it is unanimated and inactive, and obstructs the progress of the action; it should therefore always be rapid and enlivened by frequent interruption. Shakespeare found it an encumbrance, and instead of lightening it by brevity endeavored to recommend it by dignity and splendor.

His declamations or set speeches are commonly cold and weak, for his power was the power of nature; when he endeavored, like other tragic writers, to catch opportunities of amplification and, instead of inquiring what the occasion demanded, to show how much his stores of knowledge could supply, he seldom escapes without the pity or resentment of his reader.

It is incident to him to be now and then entangled with an unwieldy sentiment which he cannot well express and will not reject; he struggles with it a while and, if it continues stubborn, comprises it in words such as occur, and leaves it to be disentangled and evolved by those who have more leisure to bestow upon it.

Not that always where the language is intricate the thought is subtle, or the image al-

⁸ *Troilus and Cressida*, II, ii, 166.

⁹ characters in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

¹⁰ Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586); his *Arcadia* is a prose romance.

¹¹ bombast.

¹² triviality.

ways great where the line is bulky; the equality of words to things is very often neglected, and trivial sentiments and vulgar ideas disappoint the attention, to which they are recommended by sonorous epithets and swelling figures.

But the admirers of this great poet have never less reason to indulge their hopes of supreme excellence than when he seems fully resolved to sink them in dejection and mollify them with tender emotions by the fall of greatness, the danger of innocence, or the crosses of love. He is not long soft and pathetic without some idle conceit¹³ or contemptible equivocation.¹⁴ He no sooner begins to move than he counteracts himself, and terror and pity, as they are rising in the mind, are checked and blasted by sudden frigidity.

A quibble¹⁵ is to Shakespeare what luminous vapors are to the traveler. he follows it at all adventures, it is sure to lead him out of his way, and sure to engulf him in the mire. It has some malignant power over his mind, and its fascinations are irresistible. Whatever be the dignity or profundity of his disquisition, whether he be enlarging knowledge or exalting affection, whether he be amusing attention with incidents or enchanting it in suspense, let but a quibble spring up before him, and he leaves his work unfinished. A quibble is the golden apple for which he will always turn aside from his career¹⁶ or stoop from his elevation. A quibble, poor and barren as it is, gave him such delight that he was content to purchase it by the sacrifice of reason, propriety, and truth. A quibble was to him the fatal Cleopatra for which he lost the world and was content to lose it.

THE DECAY OF FRIENDSHIP

THE IDLER, NO. 23,
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1758

Life has no pleasure higher or nobler than that of friendship. It is painful to consider that this sublime enjoyment may be impaired or destroyed by innumerable causes, and that there is no human possession of which the duration is less certain.

Many have talked in very exalted language,

¹³ far-fetched figure of speech.

¹⁴ pun.

¹⁵ pun.

¹⁶ course.

of the perpetuity of friendship, of invincible constancy, and unalienable kindness; and some examples have been seen of men who have continued faithful to their earliest choice, and whose affection has predominated over changes of fortune, and contrariety of opinion.

But these instances are memorable, because they are rare. The friendship which is to be practised or expected by common mortals, must take its rise from mutual pleasure, and must end when the power ceases of delighting each other.

Many accidents therefore may happen by which the ardor of kindness will be abated, without criminal baseness or contemptible inconstancy on either part. To give pleasure is not always in our power; and little does he know himself who believes that he can be always able to receive it.

Those who would gladly pass their days together may be separated by the different course of their affairs; and friendship, like love, is destroyed by long absence, though it may be increased by short intermissions. What we have missed long enough to want it, we value more when it is regained; but that which has been lost till it is forgotten, will be found at last with little gladness, and with still less if a substitute has supplied the place. A man deprived of the companion to whom he used to open his bosom, and with whom he shared the hours of leisure and merriment, feels the day at first hanging heavy on him; his difficulties oppress, and his doubts distract him; he sees time come and go without his wonted gratification, and all is sadness within, and solitude about him. But this uneasiness never lasts long; necessity produces expedients, new amusements are discovered, and new conversation is admitted.

No expectation is more frequently disappointed, than that which naturally arises in the mind from the prospect of meeting an old friend after long separation. We expect the attraction to be revived, and the coalition to be renewed; no man considers how much alteration time has made in himself, and very few inquire what effect it has had upon others. The first hour convinces them that the pleasure which they have formerly enjoyed, is for ever at an end; different scenes have made different impressions; the opinions of both are changed; and that similitude of manners and sentiment is

lost which confirmed them both in the approbation of themselves.

Friendship is often destroyed by opposition of interest, not only by the ponderous and visible interest which the desire of wealth and greatness forms and maintains, but by a thousand secret and slight competitions, scarcely known to the mind upon which they operate. There is scarcely any man without some favorite trifle which he values above greater attainments, some desire of petty praise which he cannot patiently suffer to be frustrated. This minute ambition is sometimes crossed before it is known, and sometimes defeated by wanton petulance; but such attacks are seldom made without the loss of friendship; for whoever has once found the vulnerable part will always be feared, and the resentment will burn on in secret, of which shame hinders the discovery.

This, however, is a slow malignity, which a wise man will obviate as inconsistent with quiet, and a good man will repress as contrary to virtue; but human happiness is sometimes violated by some more sudden strokes.

A dispute begun in jest upon a subject which a moment before was on both parts regarded with careless indifference, is continued by the desire of conquest, till vanity kindles into rage, and opposition rankles into enmity. Against this hasty mischief, I know not what security can be obtained; men will be sometimes surprised into quarrels; and though they might both hasten to reconciliation, as soon as their tumult had subsided, yet two minds will seldom be found together, which can at once subdue their discontent, or immediately enjoy the sweets of peace without remembering the wounds of the conflict.

Friendship has other enemies. Suspicion is always hardening the cautious, and disgust repelling the delicate. Very slender differences will sometimes part those whom long reciprocation of civility or beneficence has united. Lancelove and Ranger retired into the country to enjoy the company of each other, and returned in six weeks, cold and petulant; Ranger's pleasure was to walk in the fields, and Lancelove's to sit in a bower; each had complied with the other in his turn, and each was angry that compliance had been exacted.

The most fatal disease of friendship is gradual decay, or dislike hourly increased by causes

too slender for complaint, and too numerous for removal. Those who are angry may be reconciled; those who have been injured may receive a recompense: but when the desire of pleasing and willingness to be pleased is silently diminished, the renovation of friendship is hopeless; as, when the vital powers sink into languor, there is no longer any use of the physician.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH 1728-1774

Called an "inspired idiot" by Horace Walpole, Oliver Goldsmith was nevertheless a charter member of Dr. Johnson's famous "Club" and in the course of a rather brief literary career became a classic in four distinct kinds of writing: the essay, the novel, poetry, and comedy. The best of his essays, contributed in 1760-1761 to the Public Ledger, under the title "Chinese Letters," were published in book form in 1762 as The Citizen of the World. His novel, The Vicar of Wakefield, appeared in 1766; his best-known poem, The Deserted Village, in 1770 (see I, 255). His two comedies, The Good-Natured Man and She Stoops to Conquer, were produced in 1768 and 1773 respectively. Goldsmith contributed to English literature a number of memorable characters, among them Dr. Primrose, in The Vicar of Wakefield; Tony Lumpkin, in She Stoops to Conquer; and Beau Tibbs, in The Citizen of the World. His essays possess those qualities that make for delightful reading: naturalness, humor, kindly satire, and picturesque detail. The following essay on happiness was first published in the Bee, a short-lived periodical edited by Goldsmith in 1759. It may be read in connection with Stevenson's "A Christmas Sermon" (II, 165). The study of Beau Tibbs is from The Citizen of the World. For other character portraits in this volume see the note on Earle (II, 16).

HAPPINESS IN A GREAT MEASURE DEPENDENT ON CONSTITUTION¹

When I reflect on the unambitious retirement in which I passed the earlier part of my life in the country, I cannot avoid feeling some pain in

¹ From the *Bee*, a weekly periodical published by Goldsmith.

thinking that those happy days are never to return. In that retreat all nature seemed capable of affording pleasure, I then made no refinements on happiness, but could be pleased with the most awkward efforts of rustic mirth, thought cross purposes² the highest stretch of human wit, and questions and commands³ the most rational amusement for spending the evening. Happy could so charming an illusion still continue! I find age and knowledge only contribute to sour our dispositions. My present enjoyments may be more refined, but they are infinitely less pleasing. The pleasure Garrick⁴ gives can no way compare to that I have received from a country wag, who imitated a Quaker's sermon. The music of Mattei⁵ is dissonance to what I felt when our old darymand sung me into tears with Johnny Armstrong's Last Good Night, or the Cruelty of Barbara Allen.⁶

Writers of every age have endeavoured to show that pleasure is in us, and not in the objects offered for our amusement. If the soul be happily disposed, everything becomes a subject of entertainment, and distress will almost want a name. Every occurrence passes in review like the figures of a procession—some may be awkward, others ill dressed, but none but a fool is for this enraged with the master of the ceremonies.

I remember to have once seen a slave⁷ in a fortification in Flanders, who appeared no way touched with his situation. He was maimed, deformed, and chained, obliged to toil from the appearance of day till nightfall, and condemned to this for life, yet, with all these circumstances of apparent wretchedness, he sung, would have danced, but that he wanted a leg, and appeared the merriest, happiest man of all the garrison. What a practical philosopher was here! A happy constitution supplied philosophy, and though seemingly destitute of wisdom, he was really wise. No reading or study had contributed to disenchant the fairy-land around him. Everything furnished him with an opportunity of mirth; and though some thought him from his insensibility a fool, he

was such an idiot as philosophers might wish in vain to imitate.

They who, like him, can place themselves on that side of the world in which everything appears in a ridiculous or pleasing light, will find something in every occurrence to excite their good humour. The most calamitous events, either to themselves or others, can bring no new affliction, the whole world is to them a theatre, on which comedies only are acted. All the bustle of heroism or the rants of ambition serve only to heighten the absurdity of the scene, and make the humour more poignant. They feel, in short, as little anguish at their own distress, or the complaints of others, as the undertaker, though dressed in black, feels sorrow at a funeral.

Of all the men I ever read of, the famous Cardinal de Retz⁸ possessed this happiness of temper in the highest degree. As he was a man of gallantry, and despised all that wore the pedantic appearance of philosophy, wherever pleasure was to be sold, he was generally foremost to raise the auction. Being an universal admirer of the fair sex, when he found one lady cruel, he generally fell in love with another, from whom he expected a more favourable reception, if she too rejected his addresses, he never thought of retiring into deserts, or pining in hopeless distress. He persuaded himself, that instead of loving the lady, he only fancied he had loved her, and so all was well again. When Fortune wore her angriest look, when he at last fell into the power of his most deadly enemy, Cardinal Mazarine,⁹ and was confined a close prisoner in the Castle of Valenciennes, he never attempted to support his distress by wisdom or philosophy, for he pretended to neither. He laughed at himself and his persecutor, and seemed infinitely pleased at his new situation. In this mansion of distress, though secluded from his friends, though denied all the amusements and even the conveniences of life, teased every hour by the impertinence of wretches who were employed to guard him, he still retained his good humour, laughed at all their little spite, and carried the jest so far as to be revenged, by writing the life of his jailer.

² A parlor game.

³ A parlor game.

⁴ David Garrick (1717–1779), English actor and dramatist.

⁵ A violinist of Goldsmith's day.

⁶ Popular ballads.

⁷ convict.

⁸ French politician and memoir writer (1614–1679).

⁹ French prime minister (1602–1661).

All that the wisdom of the proud can teach is to be stubborn or sullen under misfortunes. The Cardinal's example will instruct us to be merry in circumstances of the highest affliction. It matters not whether our good humour be construed by others into insensibility, or even idiotism; it is happiness to ourselves, and none but a fool would measure his satisfaction by what the world thinks of it.

Dick Wildgoose was one of the happiest silly fellows I ever knew. He was of the number of those good-natured creatures that are said to do no harm to any but themselves. Whenever Dick fell into any misery, he usually called it *seeing life*. If his head was broke by a chairman,¹⁰ or his pocket picked by a sharper, he comforted himself by imitating the Hibernian dialect of the one, or the more fashionable cant of the other. Nothing came amiss to Dick. His inattention to money matters had incensed his father to such a degree that all the intercession of friends in his favour was fruitless. The old gentleman was on his deathbed. The whole family, and Dick among the number, gathered round him. "I leave my second son Andrew," said the expiring miser, "my whole estate, and desire him to be frugal." Andrew, in a sorrowful tone, as is usual on these occasions, "prayed Heaven to prolong his life and health to enjoy it himself." "I recommend Simon, my third son, to the care of his elder brother, and leave him beside four thousand pounds." "Ah! father," cried Simon (in great affliction to be sure), "may Heaven give you life and health to enjoy it yourself!" At last, turning to poor Dick; "As for you, you have always been a sad dog, you'll never come to good, you'll never be rich, I'll leave you a shilling to buy a halter." "Ah! father," cries Dick, without any emotion, "may Heaven give you life and health to enjoy it yourself!" This was all the trouble the loss of fortune gave this thoughtless imprudent creature. However, the tenderness of an uncle recompensed the neglect of a father; and Dick is not only excessively good-humoured, but competently rich.

The world, in short, may cry out at a bankrupt who appears at a ball; at an author who laughs at the public which pronounces him a dunce; at a general who smiles at the reproach

of the vulgar, or the lady who keeps her good humour in spite of scandal; but such is the wisest behaviour they can possibly assume; it is certainly a better way to oppose calamity by dissipation, than to take up the arms of reason or resolution to oppose it: by the first method we forget our miseries, by the last we only conceal them from others; by struggling with misfortunes we are sure to receive some wounds in the conflict. The only method to come off victorious is by running away.

BEAU TIBBS AT HOME

I am apt to fancy I have contracted a new acquaintance whom it will be no easy matter to shake off. My little beau yesterday overtook me again in one of the public walks, and, slapping me on the shoulder, saluted me with an air of the most perfect familiarity. His dress was the same as usual, except that he had more powder in his hair, wore a dirtier shirt, a pair of temple spectacles, and his hat under his arm.

As I knew him to be a harmless, amusing little thing, I could not return his smiles with any degree of severity; so we walked forward on terms of the utmost intimacy, and in a few minutes discussed all the topics preliminary to particular conversation. The oddities that marked his character, however, soon began to appear; he bowed to several well-dressed persons, who, by their manner of returning the compliment, appeared perfect strangers. At intervals he drew out a pocket-book,¹ seeming to take memorandums, before all the company, with much importance and assiduity. In this manner he led me through the length of the whole walk, fretting at his absurdities, and fancying myself laughed at not less than him by every spectator.

When we were got to the end of our procession, "Blast me," cries he, with an air of vivacity, "I never saw the Park so thin in my life before! There's no company at all today; not a single face to be seen."

"No company!" interrupted I peevishly; "no company, where there is such a crowd? Why, man, there's too much. What are the thousands that have been laughing at us but company?"

"Lord, my dear," returned he, with the ut-

¹⁰ a sedan chairman.

¹ a pocket notebook.

most good humor, "you seem immensely chagrined; but, blast me, when the world laughs at me, I laugh at the world, and so we are even. My Lord Tripp, Bill Squash, the Creolian,² and I, sometimes make a party at being ridiculous; and so we say and do a thousand things for the joke's sake. But I see you are grave, and if you are for a fine grave sentimental companion, you shall dine with me and my wife today, I must insist on't. I'll introduce you to Mrs. Tibbs, a lady of as elegant qualifications as any in nature; she was bred, but that's between ourselves, under the inspection of the Countess of All-Night. A charming body of voice, but no more of that—she shall give us a song. You shall see my little girl, too, Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Tibbs, a sweet pretty creature! I design her for my Lord Drumstick's eldest son, but that's in friendship, let it go no farther; she's but six years old, and yet she walks a minuet, and plays on the guitar immensely already. I intend she shall be as perfect as possible in every accomplishment. In the first place, I'll make her a scholar. I'll teach her Greek myself, and learn that language purposely to instruct her; but let that be a secret."

Thus saying, without waiting for a reply, he took me by the arm, and hauled me along. We passed through many dark alleys and winding ways, for, from some motives to me unknown he seemed to have a particular aversion to every frequented street. At last, however, we got to the door of a dismal-looking house in the outlets of the town, where he informed me he chose to reside for the benefit of the air.

We entered the lower door, which ever seemed to lie most hospitably open; and I began to ascend an old and creaking staircase, when, as he mounted to show me the way, he demanded whether I delighted in prospects; to which answering in the affirmative, "Then," says he, "I shall show you one of the most charming in the world out of my windows; we shall see the ships sailing, and the whole country for twenty miles round, tiptop, quite high. My Lord Swamp would give ten thousand guineas for such a one; but, as I sometimes pleasantly tell him, I always love to keep my prospects at home, that my friends may visit me the oftener."

² Creole.

By this time we were arrived as high as the stairs would permit us to ascend till we came to what he was facetiously pleased to call the first floor down the chimney; and knocking at the door, a voice from within demanded, "Who's there?" My conductor answered that it was him. But this not satisfying the querist, the voice again repeated the demand, to which he answered louder than before; and now the door was opened by an old woman with cautious reluctance.

When we were got in, he welcomed me to his house with great ceremony, and turning to the old woman, asked where was her lady. "Good toth," replied she, in a peculiar dialect, "she's washing your twa shirts at the next door, because they have taken an oath against lending out the tub any longer."

"My two shirts!" cried he in a tone that faltered with confusion, "what does the idiot mean?"

"I ken what I mean weel enough," replied the other, "she's washing your twa shirts at the next door, because—"

"Fire and fury, no more of thy stupid explanations!" cried he, "go and inform her we have got company. Were that Scotch hag," continued he, turning to me, "to be forever in my family, she would never learn politeness, nor forget that absurd poisonous accent of hers, or testify the smallest specimen of breeding or high life; and yet it is very surprising, too, as I had her from a parliament man, a friend of mine from the Highlands, one of the politest men in the world; but that's a secret."

We waited some time for Mrs. Tibbs' arrival, during which interval I had a full opportunity of surveying the chamber and all its furniture, which consisted of four chairs with old wrought bottoms, that he assured me were his wife's embroidery; a square table that had been once japanned; a cradle in one corner, a lumbering cabinet in the other; a broken shepherdess, and a mandarin without a head, were stuck over the chimney; and round the walls several paltry unframed pictures which, he observed, were all his own drawing.

"What do you think, sir, of that head in the corner, done in the manner of Grisoni?³ There's the true keeping⁴ in it; it's my own face, and

³ Italian portrait painter.

⁴ harmony.

though there happens to be no likeness, a Countess offered me an hundred for its fellow. I refused her, for hang it! that would be mechanical,⁵ you know."

The wife at last made her appearance, at once a slattern and a coquette; much emaciated, but still carrying the remains of beauty. She made twenty apologies for being seen in such odious dishabille, but hoped to be excused, as she had stayed out all night at the gardens with the Countess, who was excessively fond of the horns.⁶ "And, indeed, my dear," added she, turning to her husband, "his lordship drank your health in a bumper."

"Poor Jack!" cries he; "a dear, good-natured creature, I know he loves me. But I hope, my dear, you have given orders for dinner; you need make no great preparations neither, there are but three of us; something elegant and little will do—a turbot, an ortolan,⁷ a—"

"Or what do you think, my dear," interrupts the wife, "of a nice pretty bit of ox-cheek, piping hot, and dressed with a little of my own sauce?"

"The very thing!" replies he; "it will eat best with some smart bottled beer; but be sure to let us have the sauce his Grace was so fond of. I hate your immense loads of meat; that is country all over; extreme disgusting to those who are in the least acquainted with high life."

By this time my curiosity began to abate, and my appetite to increase. The company of fools may at first make us smile, but at last never fails of rendering us melancholy; I therefore pretended to recollect a prior engagement, and, after having shown my respect to the house, according to the fashion of the English, by giving the servant a piece of money at the door, I took my leave; Mr. Tibbs assuring me that dinner, if I stayed, would be ready at least in less than two hours.

CHARLES LAMB 1775–1834

The essays of Charles Lamb are the man himself, for nowhere is self-portraiture more complete. As a writer Lamb worked under handi-

⁵ like a common workman. ⁶ wind instruments.

⁷ European bunting, the flesh of which is a delicacy.

caps that would have meant failure for most men. "I am wedded," he wrote to Coleridge in 1796, "to the fortunes of my sister and my poor old father." Lamb's sister was given to recur-

5 rent fits of madness and was the object of his constant care. To earn a living he worked as a clerk for the East India House. Yet despite the tedious duties of his clerkship and the care of his sister he immortalized himself under the
10 pen name of Elia. His essays, quaint and whimsical and touched everywhere with beauty of expression, are largely remembrances of things past, and his very style was formed by his reading of old authors like Thomas Browne, Burton,
15 and Walton. "In a degree beneath manhood," he said, "it is my infirmity to look back upon those early days." But to that "infirmity" we are indebted for what to many readers are the most delightful writings in the language. Such
20 a reader was Swinburne. Speaking of Lamb's essays and letters, he asked, ". . . What is there to be said but that it would be a feat far easier to surpass all others than to approach the best of these?" Of the following essays, "Dream
25 Children" and "A Dissertation upon Roast Pig" are from *The Essays of Elia* (1823); "Poor Relations" is from *The Last Essays of Elia* (1833).

POOR RELATIONS

A poor Relation—is the most irrelevant thing in nature,—a piece of impertinent correspondence,—an odious approximation,—a haunting conscience,—a preposterous shadow, lengthening in the noontide of our prosperity,—an unwelcome remembrancer,—a perpetually recurring mortification,—a drain on your purse,—a more intolerable dun upon your pride,—a drawback upon success,—a rebuke to your rising,—a stain in your blood,—a blot on your
35 scutcheon,—a rent in your garment,—a death's head at your banquet,—Agathocles¹ pot,—a Mordecai² in your gate,—a Lazarus³ at your door,—a lion in your path,—a frog in your chamber,—a fly in your ointment,—a mote in
45 your eye,—a triumph to your enemy, an apology to your friends,—the one thing not needful,—the hail in harvest,—the ounce of sour in a pound of sweet.

¹ Tyrant of Syracuse (361–289 B.C.). His father was a potter.

² See Esther 3:1–2; 5:11–13.

³ See Luke 16:20.

He is known by his knock. Your heart telleth you "That is Mr. —." A rap, between familiarity and respect; that demands, and, at the same time, seems to despair of, entertainment. He entereth smiling and—embarrassed. He holdeth out his hand to you to shake, and—draweth it back again. He casually looketh in about dinner-time—when the table is full. He offereth to go away, seeing you have company, but is induced to stay. He filleth a chair, and your visitor's two children are accommodated at a side table. He never cometh upon open days, when your wife says with some complacency, "My dear, perhaps Mr. — will drop in to-day." He remembereth birthdays— and profeseth he is fortunate to have stumbled upon one. He declareth against fish, the turbot being small—yet suffereth himself to be importuned into a slice against his first resolution. He sticketh by the port—yet will be prevailed upon to empty the remainder glass of claret, if a stranger press it upon him. He is a puzzle to the servants, who are fearful of being too obsequious, or not civil enough, to him. The guests think "they have seen him before." Everyone speculateth upon his condition, and the most part take him to be—a tide waiter. He calleth you by your Christian name, to imply that his other is the same with your own. He is too familiar by half, yet you wish he had less diffidence. With half the familiarity he might pass for a casual dependent; with more boldness he would be in no danger of being taken for what he is. He is too humble for a friend, yet taketh on him more state than befits a client. He is a worse guest than a country tenant, inasmuch as he bringeth up no rent—yet 'tis odds, from his garb and demeanor, that your guests take him for one. He is asked to make one at the whist table; refuseth on the score of poverty, and—resents being left out. When the company break up he proffereth to go for a coach—and lets the servant go. He recollects your grandfather; and will thrust in some mean and quite unimportant anecdote of—the family. He knew it when it was not quite so flourishing as "he is blest in seeing it now." He reviveth past situations to institute what he calleth—favorable comparisons. With a reflecting sort of congratulation, he will inquire the price of your furniture: and insults you with a special commendation of your window-cur-

tains. He is of opinion that the urn is the more elegant shape, but, after all, there was something more comfortable about the old tea-kettle—which you must remember. He dare say you must find a great convenience in having a carriage of your own, and appealeth to your lady if it is not so. Inquireth if you have had your arms done on vellum yet, and did not know, till lately, that such-and-such had been the crest of the family. His memory is unseasonable; his compliments perverse, his talk a trouble; his stay pertinacious, and when he goeth away, you dismiss his chair into a corner, as precipitately as possible, and feel fairly rid of two nuisances.

There is a worse evil under the sun, and that is—a female Poor Relation. You may do something with the other; you may pass him off tolerably well; but your indigent she-relative is hopeless. "He is an old humorist," you may say, "and affects to go threadbare. His circumstances are better than folks would take them to be. You are fond of having a Character at your table, and truly he is one." But in the indications of female poverty there can be no disguise. No woman dresses below herself from caprice. The truth must out without shuffling. "She is plainly related to the L—s; or what does she at their house?" She is, in all probability, your wife's cousin. Nine times out of ten, at least, this is the case. Her garb is something between a gentlewoman and a beggar, yet the former evidently predominates. She is most provokingly humble, and ostentatiously sensible to her inferiority. He may require to be repressed sometimes—*aliquando sufflaminandus erat*⁴—but there is no raising her. You send her soup at dinner, and she begs to be helped—after the gentlemen. Mr. — requests the honor of taking wine with her; she hesitates between Port and Madeira, and chooses the former—because he does. She calls the servant Sir; and insists on not troubling him to hold her plate. The housekeeper patronizes her. The children's governess takes upon her to correct her, when she has mistaken the piano for harpsichord.

Richard Amlet, Esq.,⁵ in the play, is a noticeable instance of the disadvantages to which this

⁴ at times he had to be restrained.

⁵ a character in *The Confederacy*, by John Vanbrugh (1664–1726).

chimerical notion of affinity constituting a claim to an acquaintance, may subject the spirit of a gentleman. A little foolish blood is all that is betwixt him and a lady with a great estate. His stars are perpetually crossed by the malignant maternity of an old woman, who persists in calling him "her son Dick." But she has wherewithal in the end to recompense his indignities, and float him again upon the brilliant surface, under which it had been her seeming business and pleasure all along to sink him. All men, besides, are not of Dick's temperament. I knew an Amlet in real life, who wanting Dick's buoyancy, sank indeed. Poor W——⁶ was of my own standing at Christ's, a fine classic, and a youth of promise. If he had a blemish, it was too much pride; but its quality was inoffensive; it was not of that sort which hardens the heart, and serves to keep inferiors at a distance; it only sought to ward off derogation from itself. It was the principle of self-respect carried as far as it could go, without infringing upon that respect, which he would have every one else equally maintain for himself. He would have you to think alike with him on this topic. Many a quarrel have I had with him, when we were rather older boys, and our tallness made us more obnoxious to observation in the blue clothes, because I would not thread the alleys and blind ways of the town with him to elude notice, when we have been out together on a holiday in the streets of this sneering and prying metropolis. W—— went, sore with these notions, to Oxford, where the dignity and sweetness of a scholar's life, meeting with the alloy of a humble introduction, wrought in him a passionate devotion to the place, with a profound aversion to the society. The servitor's gown (worse than his school array) clung to him with Nessian venom.⁷ He thought himself ridiculous in a garb, under which Latimer must have walked erect; and in which Hooker, in his young days, possibly flaunted in a vein of no discommendable vanity. In the depths of college shades, or in his lonely chamber, the poor student shrunk from observation. He found

shelter among books, which insult not; and studies, that ask no questions of a youth's finances. He was lord of his library, and seldom cared for looking out beyond his domains. The healing influence of studious pursuits was upon him, to soothe and to abstract. He was almost a healthy man; when the waywardness of his fate broke out against him with a second and worse malignity. The father of W—— had hitherto exercised the humble profession of house-painter at N——, near Oxford. A supposed interest with some of the heads of colleges had now induced him to take up his abode in that city, with the hope of being employed upon some public works which were talked of. From that moment I read in the countenance of the young man, the determination which at length tore him from academical pursuits for ever. To a person unacquainted with our Universities, the distance between the gowmsmen and the townsmen, as they are called—the trading part of the latter especially—is carried to an excess that would appear harsh and incredible. The temperament of W——'s father was diametrically the reverse of his own. Old W—— was a little, busy, cringing tradesman, who, with his son upon his arm, would stand bowing and scraping, cap in hand, to anything that wore the semblance of a gown—insensible to the winks and opener remonstrances of the young man, to whose chamber-fellow, or equal in standing, perhaps, he was thus obsequiously and gratuitously ducking. Such a state of things could not last. W—— must change the air of Oxford or be suffocated. He chose the former; and let the sturdy moralist, who strains the point of the filial duties as high as they can bear, censure the dereliction; he cannot estimate the struggle. I stood with W——, the last afternoon I ever saw him, under the eaves of his paternal dwelling. It was in the fine lane leading from the High Street to the back of —— college, where W—— kept his rooms. He seemed thoughtful, and more reconciled. I ventured to rally him—finding him in a better mood—upon a representation of the Artist Evangelist,⁸ which the old man, whose affairs were beginning to flourish, had caused to be set up in a splendid sort of frame over his really handsome shop, either as a token of pros-

⁶ Favell, Lamb's friend, referred to by Lamb in "Christ's Hospital." "Favell left Cambridge because he was ashamed of his father who was a house-painter there." (Lamb.)

⁷ Hercules was poisoned by wearing "the shirt of Nessus," whom he had slain.

⁸ St. Luke, by tradition a painter.

perity, or badge of gratitude to his saint. W—— looked up at the Luke, and, like Satan, “knew his mounted sign—and fled.” A letter on his father’s table the next morning, announced that he had accepted a commission in a regiment about to embark for Portugal. He was among the first who perished before the walls of St. Sebastian.⁹

I do not know how, upon a subject which I began with treating half seriously, I should have fallen upon a recital so eminently painful; but this theme of poor relationship is replete with so much matter for tragic as well as comic associations, that it is difficult to keep the account distinct without blending. The earliest impressions which I received on this matter, are certainly not attended with anything painful, or very humiliating, in the recalling. At my father’s table (no very splendid one) was to be found, every Saturday, the mysterious figure of an aged gentleman, clothed in neat black, of a sad yet comely appearance. His deportment was of the essence of gravity, his words few or none, and I was not to make a noise in his presence. I had little inclination to have done so—for my cue was to admire in silence. A particular elbow chair was appropriated to him, which was in no case to be violated. A peculiar sort of sweet pudding, which appeared on no other occasion, distinguished the days of his coming. I used to think him a prodigiously rich man. All I could make out of him was, that he and my father had been schoolfellows a world ago at Lincoln, and that he came from the Mint. The Mint I knew to be a place where all the money was coined—and I thought he was the owner of all that money. Awful ideas of the Tower twined themselves about his presence. He seemed above human infirmities and passions. A sort of melancholy grandeur invested him. From some inexplicable doom I fancied him obliged to go about in an eternal suit of mourning; a captive—a stately being, let out of the Tower on Saturdays. Often have I wondered at the temerity of my father, who, in spite of an habitual general respect which we all in common manifested towards him, would venture now and then to stand up against him in some argument, touching their youthful days. The houses of the ancient city of Lincoln are

divided (as most of my readers know) between the dwellers on the hill, and in the valley. This marked distinction formed an obvious division between the boys who lived above (however brought together in a common school) and the boys whose paternal residence was on the plain, a sufficient cause of hostility in the code of these young Grotiuses.¹⁰ My father had been a leading Mountaineer; and would still maintain the general superiority, in skill and hardihood, of the *Above Boys* (his own faction) over the *Below Boys* (so were they called), of which party his contemporary had been a chieftain. Many and hot were the skirmishes on this topic—the only one upon which the old gentleman was ever brought out—and bad blood bred; even sometimes almost to the recommencement (so I expected) of actual hostilities. But my father, who scorned to insist upon advantages, generally contrived to turn the conversation upon some adroit by-commendation of the old Munster; in the general preference of which, before all other cathedrals in the island, the dweller on the hill, and the plamborn, could meet on a conciliating level, and lay down their less important differences. Once only I saw the old gentleman really ruffled, and I remembered with anguish the thought that came over me: “Perhaps he will never come here again.” He had been pressed to take another plate of the viand, which I have already mentioned as the indispensable concomitant of his visits. He had refused with a resistance amounting to rigor, when my aunt—an old Lincolnian, but who had something of this in common with my cousin Bridget, that she would sometimes press civility out of season—uttered the following memorable application—“Do take another slice, Mr. Billet, for you do not get pudding every day.” The old gentleman said nothing at the time—but he took occasion in the course of the evening, when some argument had intervened between them, to utter with an emphasis which chilled the company, and which chills me now as I write it—“Woman, you are superannuated.” John Billet did not survive long, after the digesting of this affront; but he survived long enough to assure me that peace was actually restored! and, if I remember aright, another pudding was discreetly substituted in the place

⁹ a Spanish city taken by Wellington in 1813.

¹⁰ Hugo Grotius (1583–1645), a Dutch jurist.

of that which had occasioned the offence. He died at the Mint (anno 1781) where he had long held, what he accounted, a comfortable independence; and with five pounds, fourteen shillings, and a penny, which were found in his escritoire after his decease, left the world, blessing God that he had enough to bury him, and that he had never been obliged to any man for a sixpence. This was—a Poor Relation.

DREAM-CHILDREN: A REVERIE

Children love to listen to stories about their elders, when *they* were children; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditional great-uncle, or grandame whom they never saw. It was in this spirit that my little ones crept about me the other evening to hear about their great-grandmother Field,¹ who lived in a great house in Norfolk (a hundred times bigger than that in which they and papa lived) which had been the scene—so at least it was generally believed in that part of the country—of the tragic incidents which they had lately become familiar with from the ballad of the Children in the Wood. Certain it is that the whole story of the children and their cruel uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimney-piece of the great hall, the whole story down to the Robin Redbreasts, till a foolish rich person pulled it down to set up a marble one of modern invention in its stead, with no story upon it. Here Alice put out one of her dear mother's looks, too tender to be called upbraiding. Then I went on to say, how religious and how good their great-grandmother Field was, how beloved and respected by every body, though she was not indeed the mistress of this great house, but had only the charge of it (and yet in some respects she might be said to be the mistress of it too) committed to her by the owner, who preferred living in a newer and more fashionable mansion which he had purchased somewhere in the adjoining county; but still she lived in it in a manner as if it had been her own, and kept up the dignity of the great house in a sort while she lived, which afterwards came to decay, and was nearly pulled down, and all its old ornaments

stripped and carried away to the owner's other house, where they were set up, and looked as awkward as if some one were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey, and stick them up in Lady C.'s tawdry gilt drawing-room. Here John smiled, as much as to say, "that would be foolish indeed." And then I told how, when she came to die, her funeral was attended by a concourse of all the poor, and some of the gentry too, of the neighbourhood for many miles round, to show their respect for her memory, because she had been such a good and religious woman; so good indeed that she knew all the Psaltery² by heart, ay, and a great part of the Testament besides. Here little Alice spread her hands. Then I told what a tall, upright, graceful person their great-grandmother Field once was; and how in her youth she was esteemed the best dancer—here Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement, till, upon my looking grave, it desisted—the best dancer, I was saying, in the county, till a cruel disease, called a cancer, came, and bowed her down with pain; but it could never bend her good spirits, or make them stoop, but they were still upright, because she was so good and religious. Then I told how she was used to sleep by herself in a lone chamber of the great lone house; and how she believed that an apparition of two infants was to be seen at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept, but she said "those innocents would do her no harm"; and how frightened I used to be, though in those days I had my maid to sleep with me, because I was never half so good or religious as she—and yet I never saw the infants. Here John expanded all his eye-brows and tried to look courageous. Then I told how good she was to all her grand-children, having us to the great-house in the holydays, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself, in gazing upon the old busts of the Twelve Cæsars, that had been Emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be turned into marble with them; how I never could be tired with roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken panels, with the gilding al-

¹ Mary Field, Lamb's grandmother, who was housekeeper at Blakesware, in Hertfordshire.

² The Book of Psalms.

most rubbed out—sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself, unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me—and how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then,—and because I had more pleasure in strolling about among the old melancholy-looking yew trees, or the firs, and picking up the red berries, and the fir apples, which were good for nothing but to look at—or in lying about upon the fresh grass, with all the fine garden smells around me—or basking in the orangery, till I could almost fancy myself ripening too along with the oranges and the limes in that grateful warmth—or in watching the dace that darted to and fro in the fish-pond, at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impudent friskings.—I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavours of peaches, nectarines, oranges, and such like common baits of children. Here John slyly deposited back upon the plate a bunch of grapes, which, not unobserved by Alice, he had meditated dividing with her, and both seemed willing to relinquish them for the present as irrelevant. Then in somewhat a more heightened tone, I told how, though their great-grandmother Field loved all her grandchildren, yet in an especial manner she might be said to love their uncle, John L—, because he was so handsome and spirited a youth, and a king to the rest of us, and, instead of moping about in solitary corners, like some of us, he would mount the most mettlesome horse he could get, when but an imp no bigger than themselves, and make it carry him half over the county in a morning, and join the hunters when there were any out—and yet he loved the old great house and gardens too, but had too much spirit to be always pent up within their boundaries—and how their uncle grew up to man's estate as brave as he was handsome, to the admiration of every body, but of their great-grandmother Field most especially; and how he used to carry me upon his back when I was a lame-footed boy—for he was a good bit older than me—

many a mile when I could not walk for pain;—and how in after life he became lame-footed too, and I did not always (I fear) make allowances enough for him when he was impatient, and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lame-footed, and how when he died, though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is betwixt life and death, and how I bore his death as I thought pretty well at first, but afterwards it haunted and haunted me; and though I did not cry or take it to heart as some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died, yet I missed him all day long, and knew not till then how much I had loved him. I missed his kindness, and I missed his crossness, and wished him to be alive again, to be quarrelling with him (for we quarrelled sometimes) rather than not have him again, and was as uneasy without him, as he their poor uncle must have been when the doctor took off his limb. Here the children fell a crying, and asked if their little mourning which they had on was not for uncle John, and they looked up, and prayed me not to go on about their uncle, but to tell them some stories about their pretty dead mother. Then I told how for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W—n;⁴ and, as much as children could understand, I explained to them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial meant in maidens—when suddenly, turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a reality of representment, that I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that bright hair was; and while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech: "We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice call Bartrum father. We are nothing; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before we have existence, and a name"

³ John Lamb, Charles Lamb's brother.

⁴ a feigned name; possibly Anne Simmons, who married a Mr. Bartrum.

THE ESSAY · CHARLES LAMB

—and immediately awaking, I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor arm-chair, where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget unchanged by my side—but John L. (or James Elia) was gone for ever.

A DISSERTATION UPON ROAST PIG

Mankind, says a Chinese manuscript, which my friend M. was obliging enough to read and explain to me, for the first seventy thousand ages ate their meat raw, clawing or biting it from the living animal, just as they do in Abyssinia to this day. This period is not obscurely hinted at by their great Confucius in the second chapter of his Mundane Mutations, where he designates a kind of golden age by the term Cho-fang, literally the Cook's Holiday. The manuscript goes on to say, that the art of roasting, or rather broiling (which I take to be the elder brother) was accidentally discovered in the manner following. The swine-herd, Ho-ti, having gone out into the woods one morning, as his manner was, to collect mast for his hogs, left his cottage in the care of his eldest son Bo-bo, a great lubberly boy, who being fond of playing with fire, as youngsters of his age commonly are, let some sparks escape into a bundle of straw, which kindling quickly, spread the conflagration over every part of their poor mansion, till it was reduced to ashes. Together with the cottage (a sorry antediluvian make-shift of a building, you may think it), what was of much more importance, a fine litter of new-farrowed pigs, no less than nine in number, perished. China pigs have been esteemed a luxury all over the East from the remotest periods that we read of. Bo-bo was in utmost consternation, as you may think, not so much for the sake of the tenement, which his father and he could easily build up again with a few dry branches, and the labor of an hour or two, at any time, as for the loss of the pigs. While he was thinking what he should say to his father, and wringing his hands over the smoking remnants of one of those untimely sufferers, an odor assailed his nostrils, unlike any scent which he had before experienced. What could it proceed from?—not from the burnt cottage—he had smelt that smell before—indeed this was by no means the first accident of the kind which had occurred

through the negligence of this unlucky young firebrand. Much less did it resemble that of any known herb, weed, or flower. A premonitory moistening at the same time overflowed his nether lip. He knew not what to think. He next stooped down to feel the pig, if there were any signs of life in it. He burnt his fingers, and to cool them he applied them in his booby fashion to his mouth. Some of the crumbs of the scorched skin had come away with his fingers, and for the first time in his life (in the world's life indeed, for before him no man had known it) he tasted—*crackling!* Again he felt and fumbled at the pig. It did not burn him so much now, still he licked his fingers from a sort of habit. The truth at length broke into his slow understanding, that it was the pig that smelt so, and the pig that tasted so delicious; and, surrendering himself up to the newborn pleasure, he fell to tearing up whole handfuls of the scorched skin with the flesh next it, and was cramming it down his throat in his beastly fashion, when his sire entered amid the smoking rafters, armed with retributory cudgel, and finding how affairs stood, began to rain blows upon the young rogue's shoulders, as thick as hailstones, which Bo-bo heeded not any more than if they had been flies. The tickling pleasure, which he experienced in his lower regions, had rendered him quite callous to any inconveniences he might feel in those remote quarters. His father might lay on, but he could not beat him from his pig, till he had fairly made an end of it, when, becoming a little more sensible of his situation, something like the following dialogue ensued.

"You graceless whelp, what have you got there devouring? Is it not enough that you have burnt me down three houses with your dog's tricks, and be hanged to you, but you must be eating fire, and I know not what—what have you got there, I say?"

"O, father, the pig, the pig, do come and taste how nice the burnt pig eats."

The ears of Ho-ti tingled with horror. He cursed his son, and he cursed himself that ever he should beget a son that should eat burnt pig.

Bo-bo, whose scent was wonderfully sharpened since morning, soon raked out another pig, and fairly rending it asunder, thrust the lesser half by main force into the fists of Ho-ti, still shouting out "Eat, eat, eat the burnt pig,

father, only taste—O Lord,”—with such-like barbarous ejaculations, cramming all the while as if he would choke.

Ho-ti trembled every joint while he grasped the abominable thing, wavering whether he should not put his son to death for an unnatural young monster, when the crackling scorching his fingers, as it had done his son's, and applying the same remedy to them, he in his turn tasted some of its flavor, which, make what sour mouths he would for a pretence, proved not altogether displeasing to him. In conclusion (for the manuscript here is a little tedious) both father and son fairly sat down to the mess, and never left off till they had despatched all that remained of the litter.

Bo-bo was strictly enjoined not to let the secret escape, for the neighbors would certainly have stoned them for a couple of abominable wretches, who could think of improving upon the good meat which God had sent them. Nevertheless, strange stories got about. It was observed that Ho-ti's cottage was burnt down now more frequently than ever. Nothing but fires from this time forward. Some would break out in broad day, others in the night-time. As often as the sow farrowed, so sure was the house of Ho-ti to be in a blaze; and Ho-ti himself, which was the more remarkable, instead of chastising his son, seemed to grow more indulgent to him than ever. At length they were watched, the terrible mystery discovered, and father and son summoned to take their trial at Pekin, then an inconsiderable assize town. Evidence was given, the obnoxious food itself produced in court, and verdict about to be pronounced, when the foreman of the jury begged that some of the burnt pig, of which the culprits stood accused, might be handed into the box. He handled it, and they all handled it, and burning their fingers, as Bo-bo and his father had done before them, and nature prompting to each of them the same remedy, against the face of all the facts, and the clearest charge which judge had ever given,—to the surprise of the whole court, townsfolk, strangers, reporters, and all present—without leaving the box, or any manner of consultation whatever, they brought in a simultaneous verdict of Not Guilty.

The judge, who was a shrewd fellow, winked at the manifest iniquity of the decision; and, when the court was dismissed, went privily,

and bought up all the pigs that could be had for love or money. In a few days his Lordship's town house was observed to be on fire. The thing took wing, and now there was nothing to be seen but fires in every direction. Fuel and pigs grew enormously dear all over the district. The insurance offices one and all shut up shop. People built slighter and slighter every day, until it was feared that the very science of architecture would in no long time be lost to the world. Thus this custom of firing houses continued, till in process of time, says my manuscript, a sage arose, like our Locke, who made a discovery, that the flesh of swine, or indeed of any other animal, might be cooked (*burnt*, as they called it) without the necessity of consuming a whole house to dress it. Then first began the rude form of a gridiron. Roasting by the string, or spit, came in a century or two later, I forget in whose dynasty. By such slow degrees, concludes the manuscript, do the most useful, and seemingly the most obvious arts, make their way among mankind.—

Without placing too implicit faith in the account above given, it must be agreed, that if a worthy pretext for so dangerous an experiment as setting houses on fire (especially in these days) could be assigned in favor of any culinary object, that pretext and excuse might be found

in ROAST PIG.

Of all the delicacies in the whole *mundus edibilis*,¹ I will maintain it to be the most delicate —*princeps obsoniorum*.²

I speak not of your grown porkers—things between pig and pork—those hobble-dehoy—but a young and tender suckling—under a moon old—guiltless as yet of the sty—with no original speck of the *amor immunditiæ*,³ the hereditary failing of the first parent, yet manifest—his voice as yet not broken, but something between a childish treble, and a grumble—the mild forerunner or *prælude*, of a grunt.

He must be roasted. I am not ignorant that our ancestors ate them seethed, or boiled—but what a sacrifice of the exterior tegument!

There is no flavor comparable, I will contend, to that of the crisp, tawny, well-watched, not over-roasted, *crackling*, as it is well called—the very teeth are invited to their share of

¹ world of eatables.

² chief of dainties.

³ love of filth.

had been down to try Neate, and had backed him considerably, which was a damper to the sanguine confidence of the adverse party. About two hundred thousand pounds were pending. The Gas says, he has lost 3000 £. which were promised him by different gentlemen if he had won. He had presumed too much on himself, which had made others presume on him. This spirited and formidable young fellow seems to have taken for his motto the old maxim, that "there are three things necessary to success in life—*Impudence! Impudence! Impudence!*" It is so in matters of opinion, but not in the *Fancy*,² which is the most practical of all things, though even here confidence is half the battle, but only half. Our friend had vapoured and swaggered too much, as if he wanted to grin and bully his adversary out of the fight. "Alas! the Bristol man was not so tamed!"—"This is the grave-digger" (would Tom Hickman exclaim in the moments of intoxication from gin and success, shewing his tremendous right hand), "this will send many of them to their long homes; I haven't done with them yet!" Why should he—though he had licked four of the best men within the hour, yet why should he threaten to inflict dishonourable chastisement on my old master Richmond, a veteran going off the stage, and who has borne his sable honours meekly? Magnanimity, my dear Tom, and bravery, should be inseparable. Or why should he go up to his antagonist, the first time he ever saw him at the Fives Court, and measuring him from head to foot with a glance of contempt, as Achilles surveyed Hector, say to him, "What, are you Bill Neates? I'll knock more blood out of that great carcase of thine, this day fortnight, than you ever knock'd out of a bullock's." It was not manly, 'twas not fighter-like. If he was sure of the victory (as he was not), the less said about it the better. Modesty should accompany the *Fancy* as its shadow. The best men were always the best behaved. Jem Belcher, the Game Chicken (before whom the Gas-man could not have lived) were civil, silent men. So is Cribb, so is Tom Belcher, the most elegant of sparrers, and not a man for every one to take by the nose. I enlarged on this topic in the mail (while Turtle was asleep), and said very wisely (as I thought) that im-

pertinence was a part of no profession. A boxer was bound to beat his man, but not to thrust his fist either actually or by implication, in every one's face. Even a highwayman, in the way of trade, may blow out your brains, but if he uses foul language at the same time, I should say he was no gentleman. A boxer, I would infer, need not be a blackguard or a coxcomb, more than another. Perhaps I press this point too much on a fallen man—Mr. Thomas Hickman has by this time learnt that first of all lessons, "That man was made to mourn." He has lost nothing by the late fight but his presumption; and that every man may do as well without! By an over-display of this quality, however, the public had been prejudiced against him, and the *knowing-ones* were taken in. Few but those who had bet on him wished Gas to win. With my own prepossessions on the subject, the result of the 11th of December appeared to me as fine a piece of poetical justice as I had ever witnessed. The difference of weight between the two combatants (14 stone to 12) was nothing to the sporting men. Great, heavy, clumsy, long-armed Bill Neate kicked the beam in the scale of the Gas-man's vanity. The amateurs were frightened at his big words, and thought that they would make up for the difference of six feet and five feet nine. Truly, the *FANCY* are not men of imagination. They judge of what has been, and cannot conceive of any thing that is to be. The Gas-man had won hitherto; therefore he must beat a man half as big again as himself—and that to a certainty. Besides, there are as many feuds, factions, prejudices, pedantic notions in the *FANCY* as in the state or in the schools. Mr. Gully is almost the only cool, sensible man among them, who exercises an unbiassed discretion, and is not a slave to his passions in these matters. But enough of reflections, and to our tale. The day, as I have said, was fine for a December morning. The grass was wet, and the ground miry, and ploughed up with multitudinous feet, except that, within the ring itself, there was a spot of virgin-green closed in and unprofaned by vulgar tread, that shone with dazzling brightness in the mid-day sun. For it was now noon, and we had an hour to wait. This is the trying time. It is then the heart sickens, as you think what the two champions are about, and how short a time will determine their fate. After the first blow is struck,

² prize fighting.

there is no opportunity for nervous apprehensions; you are swallowed up in the immediate interest of the scene—but

"Between the acting of a dreadful thing
And the first motion, all the interim is
Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream."³

I found it so as I felt the sun's rays clinging to my back, and saw the white wintry clouds sink below the verge of the horizon. "So, I thought, my fairest hopes have faded from my sight!—so will the Gas-man's glory, or that of his adversary, vanish in an hour." The *swells* were parading in their white box-coats, the outer ring was cleared with some bruises on the heads and shins of the rustic assembly (for the *cockneys* had been distanced by the sixty-six miles); the time drew near, I had got a good stand, a bustle, a buzz, ran through the crowd, and from the opposite side entered Neate, between his second and bottle-holder. He rolled along, swathed in his loose great coat, his knock-knees bending under his huge bulk; and, with a modest cheerful air, threw his hat into the ring. He then just looked round, and began quietly to undress: when from the other side there was a similar rush and an opening made, and the Gas-man came forward with a conscious air of anticipated triumph, too much like the cock-of-the-walk. He strutted about more than became a hero, sucked oranges with a supercilious air, and threw away the skin with a toss of his head, and went up and looked at Neate, which was an act of supererogation. The only sensible thing he did was, as he strode away from the modern Ajax, to fling out his arms, as if he wanted to try whether they would do their work that day. By this time they had stripped, and presented a strong contrast in appearance. If Neate was like Ajax, "with Atlantean shoulders, fit to bear"⁴ the pugilistic reputation of all Bristol, Hickman might be compared to Diomed, light, vigorous, elastic, and his back glistened in the sun, as he moved about, like a panther's hide. There was now a dead pause—attention was awe-struck. Who at that moment, big with a great event, did not draw his breath short—did not feel his heart throb? All was ready. They tossed up for the

sun, and the Gas-man won. They were led up to the *scratch*—shook hands, and went at it.

In the first round every one thought it was all over. After making play a short time, the Gas-man flew at his adversary like a tiger, struck five blows in as many seconds, three first, and then following him as he staggered back, two more, right and left, and down he fell, a mighty ruin. There was a shout, and I said, "There is no standing this." Neate seemed like a lifeless lump of flesh and bone, round which the Gas-man's blows played with the rapidity of electricity or lightning, and you imagined he would only be lifted up to be knocked down again. It was as if Hickman held a sword or a fire in that right hand of his, and directed it against an unarmed body. They met again, and Neate seemed, not cowed, but particularly cautious. I saw his teeth clenched together and his brows knit close against the sun. He held out both his arms at full length straight before him, like two sledge-hammers, and raised his left an inch or two higher. The Gas-man could not get over this guard—they struck mutually and fell, but without advantage on either side. It was the same in the next round; but the balance of power was thus restored—the fate of the battle was suspended. No one could tell how it would end. This was the only moment in which opinion was divided; for, in the next, the Gas-man aiming a mortal blow at his adversary's neck, with his right hand, and failing from the length he had to reach, the other returned it with his left at full swing, planted a tremendous blow on his cheek-bone and eyebrow, and made a red ruin of that side of his face. The Gas-man went down, and there was another shout—a roar of triumph as the waves of fortune rolled tumultuously from side to side. This was a settler. Hickman got up, and "grinned horrible a ghastly smile,"⁵ yet he was evidently dashed in his opinion of himself; it was the first time he had ever been so punished; all one side of his face was perfect scarlet, and his right eye was closed in dingy blackness, as he advanced to the fight, less confident, but still determined. After one or two rounds, not receiving another such remembrance, he rallied and went at it with his former impetuosity. But in vain. His strength had been weak-

³ From *Julius Caesar*, II, i, 63–65.

⁴ From *Paradise Lost*, II, 308.

⁵ From *Paradise Lost*, II, 846.

ened,—his blows could not tell at such a distance,—he was obliged to fling himself at his adversary, and could not strike from his feet; and almost as regularly as he flew at him with his right hand, Neate warded the blow, or drew back out of its reach, and felled him with the return of his left. There was little cautious sparing—no half-hits—no tapping and trifling, none of the *petit-maitreship* of the art—they were almost all knock-down blows:—the fight was a good stand-up fight. The wonder was the half-minute time. If there had been a minute or more allowed between each round, it would have been intelligible how they should by degrees recover strength and resolution; but to see two men smashed to the ground, smeared with gore, stunned, senseless, the breath beaten out of their bodies; and then, before you recover from the shock, to see them rise up with new strength and courage, stand ready to inflict or receive mortal offence, and rush upon each other “like two clouds over the Caspian”⁶—this is the most astonishing thing of all:—this is the high and heroic⁷ state of man! From this time forward the event became more certain every round; and about the twelfth it seemed as if it must have been over. Hickman generally stood with his back to me; but in the scuffle, he had changed positions, and Neate just then made a tremendous lunge at him, and hit him full in the face. It was doubtful whether he would fall backwards or forwards; he hung suspended for a second or two, and then fell back, throwing his hands in the air, and with his face lifted up to the sky. I never saw anything more terrific than his aspect just before he fell. All traces of life, of natural expression, were gone from him. His face was like a human skull, a death’s head, spouting blood. The eyes were filled with blood, the nose streamed with blood, the mouth gaped blood. He was not like an actual man, but like a preternatural, spectral appearance, or like one of the figures in Dante’s *Inferno*. Yet he fought on after this for several

⁶ From *ibid.*, II, 714–716.

⁷ “Scroggins said of the gasman, that he thought he was a man of that courage, that if his hands were cut off, he would still fight on with the stumps—like that of Widdington,—

... ‘in doleful dumps,

Who, when his legs were smitten off

Still fought upon his stumps.’” (Hazlitt’s note.)

rounds, still striking the first desperate blow, and Neate standing on the defensive, and using the same cautious guard to the last, as if he had still all his work to do; and it was not till the 5 Gas-man was so stunned in the seventeenth or eighteenth round, that his senses forsook him, and he could not come to time, that the battle was declared over. Ye who despise the Fancy, do something to shew as much *pluck*, or as much self-possession as this, before you assume a superiority which you have never given a single proof of by any one action in the whole course of your lives!—When the Gas-man came to himself, the first words he uttered were, 15 “Where am I? What is the matter?” “Nothing is the matter, Tom,—you have lost the battle, but you are the bravest man alive.” And Jackson whispered to him, “I am collecting a purse for you, Tom.”—Vain sounds, and unheard at that moment! Neate instantly went up and shook him cordially by the hand, and seeing some old acquaintance, began to flourish with his fists, calling out, “Ah, you always said I couldn’t fight—What do you think now?” But all in good humour, and without any appearance of arrogance; only it was evident Bill Neate was pleased that he had won the fight. When it was over, I asked Cribb if he did not think it was a good one? He said, “*Pretty well!*” 30 The carrier-pigeons now mounted into the air, and one of them flew with the news of her husband’s victory to the bosom of Mrs. Neate. Alas, for Mrs. Hickman!

ON THE FEAR OF DEATH

“Our little life is rounded with a sleep.”¹

Perhaps the best cure for the fear of death is to reflect that life has a beginning as well as an end. There was a time when we were not; this gives us no concern; why, then, should it trouble us that a time will come when we shall cease to be? I have no wish to have been alive a hundred years ago, or in the reign of Queen Anne; why should I regret and lay it so much to heart that I shall not be alive a hundred years hence, in the reign of I cannot tell whom?

When Bickerstaff² wrote his essays, I knew

¹ From Shakespeare’s *Tempest*, IV, i, 157–158.

² Jonathan Swift’s pen name.

nothing of the subjects of them; nay, much later, and but the other day, as it were, in the beginning of the reign of George III, when Goldsmith, Johnson, Burke, used to meet at the Globe,³ when Garrick was in his glory, and Reynolds was over head and ears with his portraits, and Sterne brought out the volumes of *Tristram Shandy* year by year, it was without consulting me; I had not the slightest intimation of what was going on; the debates in the House of Commons on the American War, or the firing at Bunker's Hill, disturbed not me; yet I thought this no evil—I neither ate, drank, nor was merry, yet I did not complain; I had not then looked out into this breathing world, yet I was well; and the world did quite as well without me as I did without it! Why then should I make all this outcry about parting with it, and being no worse off than I was before? There is nothing in the recollection that at a certain time we were not come into the world, that "the gorge rises at"⁴—why should we revolt at the idea that we must one day go out of it? To die is only to be as we were before we were born, yet no one feels any remorse, or regret, or repugnance, in contemplating this last idea. It is rather a relief and disburdening of the mind; it seems to have been holiday time with us then; we were not called to appear upon the stage of life, to wear robes or tatters, to laugh or cry, be hooted or applauded; we had *lun perdue*⁵ all this while, snug, out of harm's way, and had slept out our thousands of centuries without wanting to be waked up; at peace and free from care, in a long nonage, in a sleep deeper and calmer than that of infancy, wrapped in the softest and finest dust. And the worst that we dread is, after a short, fretful, feverish being—after vain hopes and idle fears, to sink to final repose again, and forget the troubled dream of life! Ye armed men, knights templars, that sleep in the stone aisles of that old Temple Church, where all is silent above, and where a deeper silence reigns below, not broken by the pealing organ, are ye not contented where ye lie? Or would you come out of your long homes to go to the Holy War? Or do ye complain that pain no longer visits you, that sickness has done its worst, that

you have paid the last debt to nature, that you hear no more of the thickening phalanx of the foe or your lady's waning love, and that while this ball of earth rolls its eternal round, no sound shall ever pierce through to disturb your lasting repose, fixed as the marble over your tombs, breathless as the grave that holds you! And thou, oh! thou, to whom my heart turns, and will turn while it has feeling left, who didst love in vain, and whose first was thy last sigh, wilt not thou, too, rest in peace (or wilt thou cry to me complaining from thy clay-cold bed) when that sad heart is no longer sad, and that sorrow is dead which thou wert only called into the world to feel! . . .

It is certain that there is nothing in the idea of a preexistent state that excites our longing like the prospect of a posthumous existence. We are satisfied to have begun life when we did; we have no ambition to have set out on our journey sooner; and feel that we have had quite enough to do to battle our way through since. We cannot say,

The wars we well remember of King Nine,
Of old Assaracus and Inachus divine.

Neither have we any wish; we are contented to read of them in story, and to stand and gaze at the vast sea of time that separates us from them. It was early days then, the world was not *well-aired* enough for us; we have no inclination to have been up and stirring. We do not consider the six thousand years of the world before we were born as so much time lost to us; we are perfectly indifferent about the matter. We do not grieve and lament that we did not happen to be in time to see the grand mask and pageant of human life going on in all that period; though we are mortified at being obliged to quit our stand before the rest of the procession passes.

It may be suggested in explanation of this difference that we know from various records and traditions what happened in the time of Queen Anne, or even in the reigns of the Assyrian monarchs, but that we have no means of ascertaining what is to happen hereafter but by awaiting the event, and that our eagerness and curiosity are sharpened in proportion as we are in the dark about it. This is not at all the case; for at that rate we should be constantly wishing to make a voyage of discovery

³ a London coffee house.

⁴ See *Hamlet*, V, i, 208.

⁵ hidden.

THE ESSAY · WILLIAM HAZLITT

to Greenland or to the moon, neither of which we have, in general, the least desire to do. Neither, in truth, have we any particular solicitude to pry into the secrets of futurity but as a pretext for prolonging our own existence. It is not so much that we care to be alive a hundred or a thousand years hence, any more than to have been alive a hundred or a thousand years ago; but the thing lies here, that we would all of us wish the present moment to last forever. We would be as we are, and would have the world remain just as it is, to please us.

The present eye catches the present object,

to have and to hold while it may; and abhors, on any terms, to have it torn from us, and nothing left in its room. It is the pang of parting, the unloosing our grasp, the breaking asunder some strong tie, the leaving some cherished purpose unfulfilled, that creates the repugnance to go, and "makes calamity of so long life" as it often is.

Oh, thou strong heart!

There's such a covenant 'twixt the world and thee
They're loath to break!⁷

The love of life, then, is an habitual attachment, not an abstract principle. Simply to be does not "content man's natural desire"; we long to be in a certain time, place, and circumstance. We would much rather be now, "on this bank and shoal of time," than have our choice of any future period, than take a slice of fifty or sixty years out of the millennium, for instance. This shows that our attachment is not confined either to *being* or to *well-being*, but that we have an inveterate prejudice in favor of our immediate existence, such as it is. The mountaineer will not leave his rock nor the savage his hut; neither are we willing to give up our present mode of life, with all its advantages and disadvantages, for any other that could be substituted for it. No man would, I think, exchange his existence with any other man, however fortunate. We had as lief not be, as not be ourselves. There are some persons of that reach of soul that they would like to live two hundred and fifty years hence, to see to what height of empire America will have grown up

in that period, or whether the English constitution will last so long. These are points beyond me. But I confess I should like to live to see the downfall of the Bourbons.⁸ That is a vital question with me, and I shall like it the better, the sooner it happens!

No young man ever thinks he shall die. He may believe that others will, or assent to the doctrine that "all men are mortal" as an abstract proposition, but he is far enough from bringing it home to himself individually. Youth, buoyant activity, and animal spirits hold absolute antipathy with old age as well as with death; nor have we, in the heyday of life, any more than in the thoughtlessness of childhood, the remotest conception how

This sensible warm motion can become
A kneaded clod,⁹

nor how sanguine, florid health and vigor shall "turn to withered, weak, and gray." Or if in a moment of idle speculation we indulge in this notion of the close of life as a theory, it is amazing at what a distance it seems—what a long, leisurely interval there is between—what a contrast its slow and solemn approach affords to our present gay dreams of existence! We eye the farthest verge of the horizon, and think what a way we shall have to look back upon ere we arrive at our journey's end; and without our in the least suspecting it, the mists are at our feet, and the shadows of age encompass us. The two divisions of our lives have melted into each other; the extreme points close and meet with none of that romantic interval stretching out between them that we had reckoned upon; and for the rich, melancholy, solemn hues of age, "the sear, the yellow leaf," the deepening shadows of an autumnal evening, we only feel a dank, cold mist encircling all objects, after the spirit of youth is fled. There is no inducement to look forward, and, what is worse, little interest in looking back to what has become so trite and common. The pleasures of our existence have worn themselves out, are "gone into the wastes of time," or have turned their indifferent side to us; the pains by their repeated blows have worn us out, and have left us neither spirit nor inclination to encounter

⁷ From *Hamlet*, III, i, 68.

⁸ From *The White Devil*, by John Webster (1580?–1625?).

⁸ the royal family of France. The statement indicates Hazlitt's radicalism.

⁹ From *Measure for Measure*, III, i, 118.

them again in retrospect. We do not want to rip up old grievances, nor to renew our youth like the phoenix, nor to live our lives twice over. Once is enough. As the tree falls, so let it lie. Shut up the book and close the account once for all!

It has been thought by some that life is like the exploring of a passage that grows narrower and darker the farther we advance, without a possibility of ever turning back, and where we are stifled for want of breath at last. For myself, I do not complain of the greater thickness of the atmosphere as I approach the narrow house. I felt it¹⁰ more, formerly, when the idea alone seemed to suppress a thousand rising hopes, and weighed upon the pulses of the blood. At present I rather feel a thinness and want of support, I stretch out my hand to some object and find none, I am too much in a world of abstraction; the naked map of life is spread out before me, and in the emptiness and desolation I see Death coming to meet me. In my youth I could not behold him for the crowd of objects and feelings, and Hope stood always between us, saying—"Never mind that old fellow!" If I had lived indeed, I should not care to die. But I do not like a contract of pleasure broken off unfulfilled, a marriage with joy unconsummated, a promise of happiness rescinded. My public and private hopes have been left a ruin, or remain only to mock me. I would wish them to be reedified. I should like to see some prospect of good to mankind, such as my life began with. I should like to leave some sterling work behind me. I should like to have some friendly hand to consign me to the grave. On these conditions I am ready, if not willing, to depart. I shall then write on my tomb, "GRATEFUL AND CONTENTED." But I have thought and suffered too much to be willing to have thought and suffered in vain. In looking back, it sometimes appears to me as if I had in a manner slept out my life in a dream or shadow on the side of the hill of knowledge, where I have fed on books, on thoughts, on pictures, and only heard in half-murmurs the trampling of busy feet, or the noises of the throng below. Waked out of this dim, twilight

¹⁰ "I remember once, in particular, having this feeling on reading Schiller's *Don Carlos*, where there is a description of death, in a degree that almost stifled me." (Hazlitt's note.)

existence, I have felt a wish to descend to the world of realities, and join in the chase. But I fear too late, and that I had better return to my bookish chimeras and indolence once more! . . .

5 It is not wonderful that the contemplation and fear of death become more familiar to us as we approach nearer to it; that life seems to ebb with the decay of blood and youthful spirits; and that as we find everything about us subject to chance and change, as our strength and beauty die, as our hopes and passions, our friends and our affections, leave us, we begin by degrees to feel ourselves mortal!

I have never seen death but once, and that was in an infant. It is years ago. The look was calm and placid, and the face was fair and firm. It was as if a waxen image had been laid out in the coffin, and strewed with innocent flowers. It was not like death, but more like an image of life! No breath moved the lips, no pulse stirred, no sight or sound would enter those eyes or ears more. While I looked at it, I saw no pain was there; it seemed to smile at the short pang of life which was over; but I could not bear the coffin-lid to be closed—it seemed to stifle me; and still as the nettles wave in a corner of the churchyard over his little grave, the welcome breeze helps to refresh me, and ease the tightness of my breast!

30 An ivory or marble image, like Chantrey's¹¹ monument of the two children, is contemplated with pure delight. Why do we not grieve and fret that the marble is not alive, or fancy that it has a shortness of breath? It never was alive; and it is the difficulty of making the transition from life to death, the struggle between the two in our imagination, that confounds their properties painfully together, and makes us conceive that the infant that is but just dead, still wants to breathe, to enjoy, and look about it, and is prevented by the icy hand of death, locking up its faculties and benumbing its senses; so that, if it could, it would complain of its own hard state. Perhaps religious considerations reconcile the mind to this change sooner than any others, by representing the spirit as fled to another sphere, and leaving the body behind it. So in reflecting on death generally, we mix up the idea of life with it, and

¹¹ Sir Francis Chantrey (1781–1841), an English sculptor.

thus make it the ghastly monster it is. We think, how we should feel, not how the dead feel.

Still from the tomb the voice of nature cries;
Even in our ashes live their wonted fires!¹²

There is an admirable passage on this subject in Tucker's¹³ *Light of Nature Pursued*, which I shall transcribe, as by much the best illustration I can offer of it.

"The melancholy appearance of a lifeless 10 body, the mansion provided for it to inhabit, dark, cold, close, and solitary, are shocking to the imagination; but it is to the imagination only, not the understanding; for whoever consults this faculty will see at first glance that 15 there is nothing dismal in all these circumstances: if the corpse were kept wrapped up in a warm bed, with a roasting fire in the chamber, it would feel no comfortable warmth therefrom; were store of tapers lighted up as 20 soon as day shuts in, it would see no objects to divert it; were it left at large it would have no liberty, nor if surrounded with company would be cheered thereby; neither are the distorted features expressions of pain, uneasiness, or distress. This everyone knows, and will readily allow 25 upon being suggested, yet still cannot behold, nor even cast a thought upon those objects without shuddering; for knowing that a living person must suffer grievously under such 30 appearances, they become habitually formidable to the mind, and strike a mechanical horror, which is increased by the customs of the world around us."

There is usually one pang added voluntarily 35 and unnecessarily to the fear of death, by our affecting to compassionate the loss which others will have in us. If that were all, we might reasonably set our minds at rest. The pathetic exhortation on country tombstones, "Grieve not 40 for me, my wife and children dear," etc., is for the most part speedily followed to the letter. We do not leave so great a void in society as we are inclined to imagine, partly to magnify 45 our own importance, and partly to console ourselves by sympathy. Even in the same family the gap is not so great; the wound closes up sooner than we should expect. Nay, *our room*

is not unfrequently thought better than *our company*. People walk along the streets the day after our deaths just as they did before, and the crowd is not diminished. While we were living, 5 the world seemed in a manner to exist only for us, for our delight and amusement, because it contributed to them. But our hearts cease to beat, and it goes on as usual, and thinks no more about us than it did in our lifetime. The 10 million are devoid of sentiment, and care as little for you or me as if we belonged to the moon. We live the week over in the Sunday's paper, or are decently interred in some obituary at the month's end! It is not surprising that 15 we are forgotten so soon after we quit this mortal stage; we are scarcely noticed while we are on it. It is not merely that our names are not known in China—they have hardly been heard of in the next street. We are hand and 20 glove with the universe, and think the obligation is mutual. This is an evident fallacy. If this, however, does not trouble us now, it will not hereafter. A handful of dust can have no quarrel to pick with its neighbors, or complaint 25 to make against Providence, and might well exclaim, if it had but an understanding and a tongue, "Go thy ways, old world, swing round in blue ether, voluble to every age; you and I shall no more jostle!"

It is amazing how soon the rich and titled, and even some of those who have wielded great political power, are forgotten.

A little rule, a little sway,
Is all the great and mighty have
Betwixt the cradle and the grave—¹⁴

and, after its short date, they hardly leave a name behind them. "A great man's memory may, at the common rate, survive him half a 40 year."¹⁵ His heirs and successors take his titles, his power, and his wealth—all that made him considerable or courted by others; and he has left nothing else behind him either to delight or benefit the world. Posterity are not by any 45 means so disinterested as they are supposed to be. They give their gratitude and admiration only in return for benefits conferred. They cherish the memory of those to whom they are

¹² From Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard."

¹³ Abraham Tucker (1705–1774), an English philosopher.

¹⁴ From "Grongar Hill," by John Dyer (1699–1758).

¹⁵ From *Hamlet*, III, ii, 136–138; inexactly quoted by Hazlitt.

indebted for instruction and delight; and they cherish it just in proportion to the instruction and delight they are conscious they receive. The sentiment of admiration springs immediately from this ground, and cannot be otherwise than well founded.

The effeminate clinging to life as such, as a general or abstract idea, is the effect of a highly civilized and artificial state of society. Men formerly plunged into all the vicissitudes and dangers of war, or staked their all upon a single die, or some one passion, which if they could not have gratified, life became a burden to them; now our strongest passion is to think, our chief amusement is to read new plays, new poems, new novels, and this we may do at our leisure, in perfect security, *ad infinitum*. If we look into the old histories and romances, before the *belles lettres* neutralized human affairs and reduced passion to a state of mental equivocation, we find the heroes and heroines not setting their lives "at a pin's fee," but rather courting opportunities of throwing them away in very wantonness of spirit. They raise their fondness for some favorite pursuit to its height, to a pitch of madness, and think no price too dear to pay for its full gratification. Everything else is dross. They go to death as to a bridal bed, and sacrifice themselves or others without remorse at the shrine of love, of honor, of religion, or any other prevailing feeling. Romeo runs his "seasick, weary bark upon the rocks" of death the instant he finds himself deprived of his Juliet, and she clasps his neck in their last agonies, and follows him to the same fatal shore. One strong idea takes possession of the mind and overrules every other; and even life itself, joyless without that, becomes an object of indifference or loathing. There is at least more of imagination in such a state of things, more vigor of feeling and promptitude to act, than in our lingering, languid, protracted attachment to life for its own poor sake. It is perhaps also better, as well as more heroic, to strike at some daring or darling object, and if we fail in that to take the consequences manfully, than to renew the lease of a tedious, spiritless, charmless existence, merely (as *Pierre*¹⁶ says) "to lose it afterwards in some vile brawl"

for some worthless object. Was there not a spirit of martyrdom, as well as a spice of the reckless energy of barbarism, in this bold defiance of death? Had not religion something to do with it? the implicit belief in a future life, which rendered this of less value, and embodied something beyond it to the imagination; so that the rough soldier, the infatuated lover, the valorous knight, etc., could afford to throw away the present venture, and take a leap into the arms of futurity, which the modern skeptic sinks back from, with all his boasted reason and vain philosophy, weaker than a woman! I cannot help thinking so myself; but I have endeavored to explain this point before, and will not enlarge farther on it here.

A life of action and danger moderates the dread of death. It not only gives us fortitude to bear pain, but teaches us at every step the precarious tenure on which we hold our present being. Seditary and studious men are the most apprehensive on this score. Dr. Johnson was an instance in point. A few years seemed to him soon over, compared with those sweeping contemplations on time and infinity with which he had been used to pose himself. In the still life of a man of letters, there was no obvious reason for a change. He might sit in an arm-chair and pour out cups of tea to all eternity. Would it had been possible for him to do so! The most rational cure, after all, for the inordinate fear of death is to set a just value on life. If we merely wish to continue on the scene to indulge our headstrong humors and tormenting passions, we had better be gone at once; and if we only cherish a fondness for existence according to the good we derive from it, the pang at parting with it will not be very severe!

COMMON SENSE

Common sense is a rare and enviable quality. It may be truly said that "its price is above rubies." How many learned men, how many wits, how many geniuses, how many dull and ignorant people, how many cunning knaves, how many well-meaning fools are without it! How few have it, and how little do they or others know of it, except from the infallible results—for one of its first requisites is the utter absence of all pretension! The vulgar laugh at the pedant and enthusiast for the want of it,

¹⁶ a character in *Venice Preserved*, a play by Thomas Otway (1652–1685).

while they themselves mistake bigotry and narrow-minded notions for it. It is not one of the sciences, but has been well pronounced to be "fairly worth the seven." It is a kind of mental instinct, that feels the air of truth and propriety as the fingers feel objects of touch. It does not consist with ignorance, for we cannot pronounce on what we do not know; and on the other hand, the laying in a stock of knowledge, or mastering any art or science, seems to destroy that native simplicity, and to warp and trammel the unbiased freedom of mind which is necessary to its receiving and giving their due weight to ordinary and casual impressions. Common sense is neither a peculiar talent nor a laborious acquirement, but may be regarded as a sound and impartial judgment operating on the daily practice of life, or on what "comes home to the business and bosoms of men";¹ combined with great attainments and speculative inquiries, it would justly earn the title of *wisdom*; but of the latter we have never known a single instance, though we have met with a few of the former; that is, we have known a number of persons who were wise in the affairs of the world and in what concerned their own interest, but none who, beyond this, and in judging of general questions, were not the dupes of some flaw of temper, or some weakness or vanity, or even striking advantage of their own. To give an example or two in illustration. A person may be an excellent scholar, a good mathematician, well versed in law and history, a first-rate chess-player, a dazzling fencer, in a word, a sort of *admirable Crichton*²—you are disposed to admire or envy so many talents united—you smile to see him wanting in common sense, and getting into a dispute about a *douceur*³ to a paltry police-officer, and thinking to interest all Europe and both Houses of Parliament in his success. It is true, he has law and reason on his side, has Grotius and Puffendorf and the *statutes at large* doubled down in dog-ears for the occasion, has a vast and lively apparatus of well-arranged premises and conclusions ready to play off against his adver-

saries; but he does not consider that he has to deal with interest and custom, those impalpable, intangible essences, that "fear no discipline of human wit." Does he think to check-mate the police? Will he stop the mouth of a hungry tide-water with a syllogism? Or supersede a perquisite by the *reductio ad absurdum*?⁴ It is a want of common sense, or the not distinguishing properly between the definite and the indefinite. No one can have arrived at years of discretion without knowing or feeling that he cannot take a single step without some compromise with existing circumstances; that the path of life is intercepted with innumerable turnpike gates, at which he must pay down the toll of his own convictions and of strict justice; that he cannot walk the streets but by tacit allowance; and that to disregard all impediments in the right line of reason and written forms is to imitate the conduct of *Commodore Trunnion*⁵ who mistook the land for the sea, and went to be married by the wind and compass. The proofs of this occur every hour of the day—they may not be registered, they may not be remembered, but they are virtually and effectively noted down by the faculty of common sense, which does not feel its way the less surely because it proceeds often mechanically and blindly. There may be exceptions indeed to ordinary rules, on which a man may go to martyrdom and a stake (such as that of Hampden⁶ and ship-money), but these occur once in a century, and are only met with at the corners of streets by those who have an excess of logical discrimination, and have to pay a certain tax for being too clever by half. It is the fashion at present among the philosophical vulgar to decry *feeling*, both the name and the thing. It would be difficult, however, to do without it: for this word embraces all that mass of knowledge and of common sense which lies between the extreme of positive proof or demonstration and downright ignorance; and those who would pragmatically confine their own convictions or those of others to what is absolutely known and

¹ From the dedication to the 1625 edition of Bacon's *Essays*.

² James Crichton (1560–1585?), a Scotchman, noted for his beauty and accomplishments, such as fencing and dancing.

³ bribe.

⁴ reduction to an absurdity; disproving a proposition by arguing from it to a false or absurd conclusion.

⁵ a character in Smollett's *Peregrine Pickle*.

⁶ John Hampden (1594–1643), British patriot who resisted the imposition of ship-money, a form of taxation.

understood, would at best become scientific pedants and artificial barbarians. There are some persons who are the victims of argument; as there are others who are the slaves of minute details and matters of fact. One class will have a reason for everything, and will admit the greatest absurdities that are formally proposed to them; the other must have facts to support every conclusion, and can never see an inch beyond their noses. The last have the *organ of individuality* largely developed, and are proportionably deficient in common sense. Their ideas are all local and literal. To borrow the language of a great but obscure metaphysician, their minds are *epileptic*; that is, are in perpetual throes and convulsions, fasten on every object in their way not to help but to hinder their progress, and have no voluntary power to let go their hold of a particular circumstance, to grasp the whole of any question, or suspend their judgment for an instant. The fact that is before them is everything; the rest goes for nothing. They are always at cross-purposes with themselves, for their decisions are the result of the last evidence, without any corrective or qualifier in common sense; in the hunt after proofs, they forget their principles, and again their point, though they lose their cause. . . .

WASHINGTON IRVING 1783-1859

With the publication of his Sketch-Book (1819-1820) Washington Irving became internationally famous, and American letters, in the eyes of the English, became respectable. Byron hailed the author of the book as a genius. And William Godwin found in Irving's essays and sketches a mind of "the utmost elegance and refinement." The elegance discovered by Godwin was doubtless due, in part, to the American writer's emulation of Joseph Addison. Irving hoped to acquire a style that would give his productions a chance of duration "beyond the mere whim and fashions of the day." But although he wrote many books, among them a humorous history of New York and a life of George Washington, his fame rests chiefly on one of his Sketch-Book tales, "Rip Van Winkle." The hero of that tale may endure longer, indeed, than his creator, for Rip belongs to that

immortal company of book characters who live outside books. Irving's paper on Shakespeare's birthplace is also from The Sketch-Book. Additional tales, sketches, and essays by Irving appeared with the publication of his Bracebridge Hall (1822) and Tales of a Traveller (1824).

STRATFORD-ON-AVON

10 *Thou soft-flowing Avon, by thy silver stream
Of things more than mortal sweet Shakespeare
would dream;
The fairies by moonlight dance round his green
bed,*
15 *For hallow'd the turf is which pillow'd his
head.*

GARRICK

To a homeless man, who has no spot on this wide world which he can truly call his own, there is a momentary feeling of something like independence and territorial consequence, when, after a weary day's travel, he kicks off his boots, thrusts his feet into slippers, and stretches himself before an inn fire. Let the world without go as it may; let kingdoms rise or fall, so long as he has the wherewithal to pay his bill, he is, for the time being, the very monarch of all he surveys. The arm-chair is his throne, the poker his sceptre, and the little parlor, some twelve feet square, his undisputed empire. It is a morsel of certainty, snatched from the midst of the uncertainties of life; it is a sunny moment gleaming out kindly on a cloudy day; and he who has advanced some way on the pilgrimage of existence, knows the importance of husbanding even morsels and moments of enjoyment. "Shall I not take mine ease in mine inn?" thought I, as I gave the fire a stir, lolled back in my elbow-chair, and cast a complacent look about the little parlor of the Red Horse, at Stratford-on-Avon.

The words of sweet Shakspeare were just passing through my mind as the clock struck midnight from the tower of the church in which he lies buried. There was a gentle tap at the door, and a pretty chambermaid, putting in her smiling face, inquired, with a hesitating air, whether I had rung. I understood it as a modest hint that it was time to retire. My dream of absolute dominion was at an end; so abdicating my throne, like a prudent potentate, to avoid

being deposed, and putting the Stratford Guide-Book under my arm, as a pillow companion, I went to bed, and dreamt all night of Shakspeare, the jubilee, and David Garrick.¹

The next morning was one of those quickening mornings which we sometimes have in early spring; for it was about the middle of March. The chills of a long winter had suddenly given way; the north wind had spent its last gasp; and a mild air came stealing from the west, breathing the breath of life into nature, and wooing every bud and flower to burst forth into fragrance and beauty.

I had come to Stratford on a poetical pilgrimage. My first visit was to the house where Shakspeare was born, and where, according to tradition, he was brought up to his father's craft of wool-combing. It is a small, mean-looking edifice of wood and plaster, a true nestling-place of genius, which seems to delight in hatching its offspring in by-corners. The walls of its squalid chambers are covered with names and inscriptions in every language, by pilgrims of all nations, ranks, and conditions, from the prince to the peasant; and present a simple, but striking instance of the spontaneous and universal homage of mankind to the great poet of nature.

The house is shown by a garrulous old lady, in a frosty red face, lighted up by a cold blue anxious eye, and garnished with artificial locks of flaxen hair, curling from under an exceedingly dirty cap. She was peculiarly assiduous in exhibiting the relics with which this, like all other celebrated shrines, abounds. There was the shattered stock of the very matchlock with which Shakspeare shot the deer, on his poaching exploits. There, too, was his tobacco-box; which proves that he was a rival smoker of Sir Walter Raleigh; the sword also with which he played Hamlet; and the identical lantern with which Friar Laurence discovered Romeo and Juliet at the tomb! There was an ample supply also of Shakspeare's mulberry-tree, which seems to have as extraordinary powers of self-multiplication as the wood of the true cross; of which there is enough extant to build a ship of the line.

The most favorite object of curiosity, however, is Shakspeare's chair. It stands in the

chimney nook of a small gloomy chamber, just behind what was his father's shop. Here he may many a time have sat when a boy, watching the slowly revolving spit with all the longing of an urchin; or of an evening, listening to the cronies and gossips of Stratford, dealing forth church-yard tales and legendary anecdotes of the troublesome times of England. In this chair it is the custom of every one that visits the house to sit: whether this be done with the hope of imbibing any of the inspiration of the bard I am at a loss to say—I merely mention the fact; and mine hostess privately assured me, that, though built of solid oak, such was the fervent zeal of devotees, that the chair had to be new bottomed at least once in three years. It is worthy of notice also, in the history of this extraordinary chair, that it partakes something of the volatile nature of the Santa Casa of Loretto, or the flying chair of the Arabian enchanter; for though sold some few years since to a northern princess, yet, strange to tell, it has found its way back again to the old chimney.

I am always of easy faith in such matters, and am ever willing to be deceived, where the deceit is pleasant and costs nothing. I am therefore a ready believer in relics, legends, and local anecdotes of goblins and great men; and would advise all travellers who travel for their gratification to be the same. What is it to us, whether these stories be true or false, so long as we can persuade ourselves into the belief of them, and enjoy all the charms of the reality? There is nothing like resolute good-humored credulity in these matters; and on this occasion I went even so far as willingly to believe the claims of mine hostess to a lineal descent from the poet, when, unluckily for my faith she put into my hands a play of her own composition, which set all belief in her consanguinity at defiance.

From the birth place of Shakspeare a few paces brought me to his grave. He lies buried in the chancel of the parish church, a large and venerable pile, mouldering with age, but richly ornamented. It stands on the banks of the Avon, on an embowered point, and separated by adjoining gardens from the suburbs of the town. Its situation is quiet and retired: the river runs murmuring at the foot of the church-yard, and the elms which grow upon its banks droop their

¹ a celebrated English actor (1717-1779).

branches into its clear bosom. An avenue of limes, the boughs of which are curiously interlaced, so as to form in summer an arched way of foliage, leads up from the gate of the yard to the church porch. The graves are overgrown with grass; the gray tombstones, some of them nearly sunk into the earth, are half covered with moss, which has likewise tinted the reverend old building. Small birds have built their nests among the cornices and fissures of the walls, and keep up a continual flutter and chirping; and rooks are sailing and cawing about its lofty gray spire.

In the course of my rambles I met with the gray-headed sexton, Edmonds, and accompanied him home to get the key of the church. He had lived in Stratford, man and boy, for eighty years, and seemed still to consider himself a vigorous man, with the trivial exception that he had nearly lost the use of his legs for a few years past. His dwelling was a cottage, looking out upon the Avon and its bordering meadows, and was a picture of that neatness, order, and comfort, which pervade the humblest dwellings in this country. A low white-washed room, with a stone floor carefully scrubbed, served for parlor, kitchen, and all. Rows of pewter and earthen dishes glittered along the dresser. On an old oaken table, well rubbed and polished, lay the family Bible and prayer-book, and the drawer contained the family library, composed of about half a score of well-thumbed volumes. An ancient clock, that important article of cottage furniture, ticked on the opposite side of the room; with a bright warming-pan hanging on one side of it, and the old man's horn-handled Sunday cane on the other. The fireplace, as usual, was wide and deep enough to admit a gossip knot within its jambs. In one corner sat the old man's granddaughter sewing, a pretty blue-eyed girl,—and in the opposite corner was a superannuated crony, whom he addressed by the name of John Ange, and who, I found, had been his companion from childhood. They had played together in infancy; they had worked together in manhood; they were now tottering about and gossiping away the evening of life; and in a short time they will probably be buried together in the neighboring church-yard. It is not often that we see two streams of existence running thus evenly and tranquilly side by side;

it is only in such quiet "bosom scenes" of life that they are to be met with.

I had hoped to gather some traditionary anecdotes of the bard from these ancient chroniclers; but they had nothing new to impart. The long interval during which Shakspeare's writings lay in comparative neglect has spread its shadow over his history; and it is his good or evil lot that scarcely any thing remains to his biographers but a scanty handful of conjectures.

The sexton and his companion had been employed as carpenters on the preparations for the celebrated Stratford jubilee, and they remembered Garrick, the prime mover of the fête, who superintended the arrangements, and, who, according to the sexton, was "a short punch man, very lively and bustling." John Ange had assisted also in cutting down Shakspeare's mulberry-tree, of which he had a morsel in his pocket for sale; no doubt a sovereign quickener of literary conception.

I was grieved to hear these two worthy wights speak very dubiously of the eloquent dame who shows the Shakspeare house. John Ange shook his head when I mentioned her valuable collection of relics, particularly her remains of the mulberry-tree; and the old sexton even expressed a doubt as to Shakspeare having been born in her house. I soon discovered that he looked upon her mansion with an evil eye, as a rival to the poet's tomb; the latter having comparatively but few visitors. Thus it is that historians differ at the very outset, and mere pebbles make the stream of truth diverge into different channels even at the fountain head.

We approached the church through the avenue of limes, and entered by a Gothic porch, highly ornamented, with carved doors of massive oak. The interior is spacious, and the architecture and embellishments superior to those of most country churches. There are several ancient monuments of nobility and gentry, over some of which hang funeral escutcheons, and banners dropping piecemeal from the walls. The tomb of Shakspeare is in the chancel. The place is solemn and sepulchral. Tall elms wave before the pointed windows, and the Avon, which runs at a short distance from the walls, keeps up a low perpetual murmur. A flat stone marks the spot where the bard is buried. There are four lines inscribed on it, said to have been

THE ESSAY · THOMAS DE QUINCEY

written by himself, and which have in them something extremely awful. If they are indeed his own, they show that solicitude about the quiet of the grave, which seems natural to fine sensibilities and thoughtful minds.

Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbear
To dig the dust enclosed here.
Blessed be he that spares these stones,
And curst be he that moves my bones.

Just over the grave, in a niche of the wall, is a bust of Shakspeare, put up shortly after his death, and considered as a resemblance. The aspect is pleasant and serene, with a finely-arched forehead; and I thought I could read in it clear indications of that cheerful, social disposition, by which he was as much characterized among his contemporaries as by the vastness of his genius. The inscription mentions his age at the time of his decease—fifty-three years; an untimely death for the world: for what fruit might not have been expected from the golden autumn of such a mind, sheltered as it was from the stormy vicissitudes of life, and flourishing in the sunshine of popular and royal favor.

The inscription on the tombstone has not been without its effect. It has prevented the removal of his remains from the bosom of his native place to Westminster Abbey, which was at one time contemplated. A few years since also, as some laborers were digging to make an adjoining vault, the earth caved in, so as to leave a vacant space almost like an arch, through which one might have reached into his grave. No one, however, presumed to meddle with his remains so awfully guarded by a malediction; and lest any of the idle or the curious, or any collector of relics, should be tempted to commit depredations, the old sexton kept watch over the place for two days, until the vault was finished and the aperture closed again. He told me that he had made bold to look in at the hole, but could see neither coffin nor bones; nothing but dust. It was something, I thought, to have seen the dust of Shakspeare.

Next to this grave are those of his wife, his favorite daughter, Mrs. Hall, and others of his family. On a tomb close by, also, is a full-length effigy of his old friend John Combe² of usurious

² a Stratford usurer (d. 1614). He bequeathed Shakespeare five pounds.

memory; on whom he is said to have written a ludicrous epitaph. There are other monuments around, but the mind refuses to dwell on any thing that is not connected with Shakspeare.

His idea pervades the place; the whole pile seems but as his mausoleum. The feelings, no longer checked and thwarted by doubt, here indulge in perfect confidence: other traces of him may be false or dubious, but here is palpable evidence and absolute certainty. As I trod the sounding pavement, there was something intense and thrilling in the idea, that, in very truth, the remains of Shakspeare were mouldering beneath my feet. It was a long time before I could prevail upon myself to leave the place; and as I passed through the church-yard, I plucked a branch from one of the yew trees, the only relic that I have brought from Stratford. . . .

THOMAS DE QUINCEY 1785–1859

Like Samuel Taylor Coleridge, his contemporary, Thomas De Quincey was addicted to the use of opium, that "dread agent of unimaginable pleasure and pain." But De Quincey turned to excellent account his experiences with the "eloquent" drug, drawing upon them, as he did, for the substance of his masterpiece, *The Confessions of an English Opium Eater*. And in those experiences he found, too, the stuff of the dreams or visions he describes in *Suspiria de Profundis* and *The English Mail Coach*. The dream fantasies, as well as certain passages in the *Confessions*, show De Quincey to be a writer of a beautiful poetic prose and place him in the company of such great English stylists as Jeremy Taylor and Sir Thomas Browne. But De Quincey was not only a poet in prose; he was also a profound scholar and a literary critic of unusual insight. His critical powers are well exemplified in both the selections given here. The essay on the literature of knowledge and the literature of power is from De Quincey's "The Poetry of Pope." De Quincey's division of literature into two great classes should be compared with Newman's ideas on the nature of literature (II, 122).

ON THE KNOCKING AT THE
GATE IN MACBETH

From my boyish days I had always felt a great perplexity on one point in *Macbeth*. It was this:—The knocking at the gate which succeeds to the murder of Duncan produced to my feelings an effect for which I never could account. The effect was that it reflected back upon the murderer a peculiar awfulness and a depth of solemnity; yet, however obstinately I endeavoured with my understanding to comprehend this, for many years I never could see *why* it should produce such an effect.

Here I pause for one moment, to exhort the reader never to pay any attention to his understanding when it stands in opposition to any other faculty of his mind. The mere understanding, however useful and indispensable, is the meanest faculty in the human mind, and the most to be distrusted; and yet the great majority of people trust to nothing else,—which may do for ordinary life, but not for philosophical purposes. Of this out of ten thousand instances that I might produce I will cite one. Ask of any person whatsoever who is not previously prepared for the demand by a knowledge of the perspective to draw in the rudest way the commonest appearance which depends upon the laws of that science,—as, for instance, to represent the effect of two walls standing at right angles to each other, or the appearance of the houses on each side of a street as seen by a person looking down the street from one extremity. Now, in all cases, unless the person has happened to observe in pictures how it is that artists produce these effects, he will be utterly unable to make the smallest approximation to it. Yet why? For he has actually seen the effect every day of his life. The reason is that he allows his understanding to overrule his eyes. His understanding, which includes no intuitive knowledge of the laws of vision, can furnish him with no reason why a line which is known and can be proved to be a horizontal line should not *appear* a horizontal line: a line that made any angle with the perpendicular less than a right angle would seem to him to indicate that his houses were all tumbling down together. Accordingly, he makes the line of his houses a horizontal line, and fails, of course, to

produce the effect demanded. Here, then, is one instance out of many in which not only the understanding is allowed to overrule the eyes, but where the understanding is positively allowed to obliterate the eyes, as it were; for not only does the man believe the evidence of his understanding in opposition to that of his eyes, but (what is monstrous) the idiot is not aware that his eyes ever gave such evidence. He does not know that he has seen (and therefore *quoad*¹ his consciousness has not seen) that which he *has* seen every day of his life.

But to return from this digression. My understanding could furnish no reason why the knocking at the gate in *Macbeth* should produce any effect, direct or reflected. In fact, my understanding said positively that it could not produce any effect. But I knew better; I felt that it did; and I waited and clung to the problem until further knowledge should enable me to solve it. At length, in 1812, Mr. Williams² made his *début* on the stage of Ratcliffe Highway, and executed those unparalleled murders which have procured for him such a brilliant and undying reputation. On which murders, by the way, I must observe that in one respect they have had an ill effect, by making the connoisseur in murder³ very fastidious in his taste, and dissatisfied by anything that has been since done in that line. All other murders look pale by the deep crimson of his; and, as an amateur once said to me in a querulous tone, "There has been absolutely nothing *doing* since his time, or nothing that's worth speaking of." But this is wrong; for it is unreasonable to expect all men to be great artists, and born with the genius of Mr. Williams. Now, it will be remembered that in the first of these murders (that of the Marrs) the same incident (of a knocking at the door soon after the work of extermination was complete) did actually occur which the genius of Shakspeare has invented; and all good judges, and the most eminent dilettanti, acknowledged the felicity

¹ as regards.

² In 1812 Williams murdered two families, the Marrs and the Williamsons, in London.

³ See De Quincey's essay, "Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts," in which De Quincey gives an account of Williams's crimes.

of Shakspeare's suggestion as soon as it was actually realized. Here, then, was a fresh proof that I was right in relying on my own feeling, in opposition to my understanding; and I again set myself to study the problem. At length I solved it to my own satisfaction; and my solution is this:—Murder, in ordinary cases, where the sympathy is wholly directed to the case of the murdered person, is an incident of coarse and vulgar horror; and for this reason,—that it flings the interest exclusively upon the natural but ignoble instinct by which we cleave to life: an instinct which, as being indispensable to the primal law of self-preservation, is the same in kind (though different in degree) amongst all living creatures. This instinct, therefore, because it annihilates all distinctions, and degrades the greatest of men to the level of "the poor beetle that we tread on,"⁴ exhibits human nature in its most abject and humiliating attitude. Such an attitude would little suit the purposes of the poet. What then must he do? He must throw the interest on the murderer. Our sympathy must be with *him* (of course I mean a sympathy of comprehension, a sympathy by which we enter into his feelings, and are made to understand them,—not a sympathy of pity or approbation). In the murdered person, all strife of thought, all flux and reflux of passion and of purpose, are crushed by one overwhelming panic; the fear of instant death smites him "with its petrific mace."⁵ But in the murderer, such a murderer as a poet will condescend to, there must be raging some great storm of passion,—jealousy, ambition, vengeance, hatred,—which will create a hell within him; and into this hell we are to look.

In *Macbeth*, for the sake of gratifying his own enormous and teeming faculty of creation, Shakspeare has introduced two murderers: and, as usual in his hands, they are remarkably discriminated: but,—though in *Macbeth* the strife of mind is greater than in his wife, the tiger spirit not so awake, and his feelings caught chiefly by contagion from her,—yet, as both were finally involved in the guilt of murder, the murderous mind of necessity is finally to be presumed in both. This was to be expressed; and, on its own account, as well as to make it

a more proportionable antagonist to the unoffending nature of their victim, "the gracious Duncan," and adequately to expound "the deep damnation of his taking off,"⁶ this was to be expressed with peculiar energy. We were to be made to feel that the human nature,—*i.e.* the divine nature of love and mercy, spread through the hearts of all creatures, and seldom utterly withdrawn from man,—was gone, vanished, extinct, and that the fiendish nature had taken its place. And, as this effect is marvellously accomplished in the *dialogues* and *soliloquies* themselves, so it is finally consummated by the expedient under consideration; and it is to this that I now solicit the reader's attention. If the reader has ever witnessed a wife, daughter, or sister in a fainting fit, he may chance to have observed that the most affecting moment in such a spectacle is *that* in which a sigh and a stirring announce the recommencement of suspended life. Or, if the reader has ever been present in a vast metropolis on the day when some great national idol was carried in funeral pomp to his grave, and, chancing to walk near the course through which it passed, has felt powerfully, in the silence and desertion of the streets, and in the stagnation of ordinary business, the deep interest which at that moment was possessing the heart of man,—if all at once he should hear the death-like stillness broken up by the sound of wheels rattling away from the scene, and making known that the transitory vision was dissolved, he will be aware that at no moment was his sense of the complete suspension and pause in ordinary human concerns so full and affecting as at that moment when the suspension ceases, and the goings-on of human life are suddenly resumed. All action in any direction is best expounded, measured, and made apprehensible, by reaction. Now, apply this to the case in *Macbeth*. Here, as I have said, the retiring of the human heart and the entrance of the fiendish heart was to be expressed and made sensible. Another world has stepped in; and the murderers are taken out of the region of human things, human purposes, human desires. They are transfigured: Lady Macbeth is "unsexed"; Macbeth has forgot that he was born of woman; both are conformed to the image of devils; and the world of devils is

⁴ From *Measure for Measure*, III, i, 79.

⁵ From *Paradise Lost*, X, 294.

⁶ From *Macbeth*, I, vii, 20.

suddenly revealed. But how shall this be conveyed and made palpable? In order that a new world may step in, this world must for a time disappear. The murderers and the murder must be insulated—cut off by an immeasurable gulf from the ordinary tide and succession of human affairs—locked up and sequestered in some deep recess; we must be made sensible that the world of ordinary life is suddenly arrested, laid asleep, tranced, racked into a dread armistice; time must be annihilated, relation to things without abolished; and all must pass self-withdrawn into a deep syncope⁷ and suspension of earthly passion. Hence it is that, when the deed is done, when the work of darkness is perfect, then the world of darkness passes away like a pageantry in the clouds: the knocking at the gate is heard, and it makes known audibly that the reaction has commenced; the human has made its reflux upon the fiendish; the pulses of life are beginning to beat again; and the re-establishment of the goings-on of the world in which we live first makes us profoundly sensible of the awful parenthesis that had suspended them.

O mighty poet! Thy works are not as those of other men, simply and merely great works of art, but are also like the phenomena of nature, like the sun and the sea, the stars and the flowers, like frost and snow, rain and dew, hail-storm and thunder, which are to be studied with entire submission of our own faculties, and in the perfect faith that in them there can be no too much or too little, nothing useless or inert, but that, the farther we press in our discoveries, the more we shall see proofs of design and self-supporting arrangement where the careless eye had seen nothing but accident!

LITERATURE OF KNOWLEDGE AND LITERATURE OF POWER

What is it that we mean by *literature*? Popularly, and amongst the thoughtless, it is held to include everything that is printed in a book. Little logic is required to disturb that definition. The most thoughtless person is easily made aware that in the idea of *literature* one essential element is some relation to a general and common interest of man—so that what ap-

plies only to a local, or professional, or merely personal interest, even though presenting itself in the shape of a book, will not belong to literature. So far the definition is easily narrowed; and it is as easily expanded. For not only is much that takes a station in books not literature, but inversely, much that really *is* literature never reaches a station in books. The weekly sermons of Christendom, that vast pulpit literature which acts so extensively upon the popular mind—to warn, to uphold, to renew, to comfort, to alarm—does not attain the sanctuary of libraries in the ten-thousandth part of its extent. The drama again—as, for instance, the finest part of Shakespeare's plays in England, and all leading Athenian plays in the noontide of the Attic stage—operated as a literature on the public mind, and were (according to the strictest letter of that term) *published* through the audiences that witnessed their representation some time before they were published as things to be read; and they were published in this scenical mode of publication with much more effect than they could have had as books during ages of costly copying or of costly printing.

Books, therefore, do not suggest an idea co-extensive and interchangeable with the idea of literature; since much literature, scenic, forensic, or didactic (as from lecturers and public orators), may never come into books, and much that does come into books may connect itself with no literary interest. But a far more important correction, applicable to the common vague idea of literature, is to be sought not so much in a better definition of literature as in a sharper distinction of the two functions which it fulfills. In that great social organ which, collectively, we call literature, there may be distinguished two separate offices, that may blend and often do so, but capable, severally, of a severe insulation, and naturally fitted for reciprocal repulsion. There is, first, the literature of *knowledge*, and secondly, the literature of *power*. The function of the first is to *teach*; the function of the second is to *move*; the first is a rudder, the second an oar or a sail. The first speaks to the *mere* discursive understanding; the second speaks ultimately, it may happen, to the higher understanding or reason, but always through affections of pleasure and sympathy. Remotely, it may travel toward an object

⁷ swooning.

seated in what Lord Bacon calls "dry light";¹ but proximately it does and must operate—else it ceases to be a literature of *power*—on and through that *humid* light which clothes itself in the mists and glittering *iris* of human passions, desires, and genial emotions. Men have so little reflected on the higher functions of literature as to find it a paradox if one should describe it as a mean or subordinate purpose of books to give information. But this is a paradox only in the sense which makes it honorable to be paradoxical. Whenever we talk in ordinary language of seeking information or gaining knowledge, we understand the words as connected with something of absolute novelty. But it is the grandeur of all truth which can occupy a very high place in human interests that it is never absolutely novel to the meanest of minds; it exists eternally by way of germ or latent principle in the lowest as in the highest, needing to be developed, but never to be planted. To be capable of transplantation is the immediate criterion of a truth that ranges on a lower scale.

Besides which, there is a rarer thing than truth—namely *power*, or deep sympathy with truth. What is the effect, for instance, upon society, of children? By the pity, by the tenderness, and by the peculiar modes of admiration which connect themselves with the helplessness, with the innocence, and with the simplicity of children, not only are the primal affections strengthened and continually renewed, but the qualities which are dearest in the sight of heaven—the frailty, for instance, which appeals to forbearance, the innocence which symbolizes the heavenly, and the simplicity which is most alien from the worldly—are kept up in perpetual remembrance, and their ideals are continually refreshed. A purpose of the same nature is answered by the higher literature, viz., the literature of power. What do you learn from *Paradise Lost*? Nothing at all. What do you learn from a cookery-book? Something new, something that you did not know before, in every paragraph. But would you therefore put the wretched cookery-book on a higher level of estimation than the divine poem? What you owe to Milton is not any

¹ In Bacon's essay "Of Friendship": "Heraclitus saith well in one of his enigmas, *Dry light is ever the best.*"

knowledge, of which a million separate items are still but a million of advancing steps on the same earthly level; what you owe is *power*—that is, exercise and expansion to your own latent capacity of sympathy with the infinite, where every pulse and each separate influx is a step upward, a step ascending as upon a Jacob's ladder² from earth to mysterious altitudes above the earth. All the steps of knowledge, from first to last, carry you further on the same plane, but could never raise you one foot above your ancient level of earth; whereas the very *first* step in power is a flight—is an ascending movement into another element where earth is forgotten.

Were it not that human sensibilities are ventilated and continually called out into exercise by the great phenomena of infancy, or of real life as it moves through chance and change, or of literature as it recombines these elements in the mimics of poetry, romance, etc., it is certain that, like any animal power or muscular energy falling into disuse, all such sensibilities would gradually droop and dwindle. It is in relation to these great *moral* capacities of man that the literature of power, as contradistinguished from that of knowledge, lives and has its field of action. It is concerned with what is highest in man; for the Scriptures themselves never condescended to deal by suggestion or coöperation with the mere discursive understanding. When speaking of man in his intellectual capacity, the Scriptures speak not of the understanding, but of "the understanding heart"—making the heart, i. e., the great *intuitive* (or non-discursive) organ, to be the interchangeable formula for man in his highest state of capacity for the infinite. Tragedy, romance, fairy tale, or epopee,³ all alike restore to man's mind the ideals of justice, of hope, of truth, of mercy, of retribution, which else (left to the support of daily life in its realities) would languish for want of sufficient illustration.

What is meant, for instance, by *poetic justice*? It does not mean a justice that differs by its object from the ordinary justice of human jurisprudence, for then it must be confessedly a very bad kind of justice; but it means

a justice that differs from common forensic jus-

² See Genesis 28:12.

³ an epic poem.

tice by the degree in which it attains its object
 —a justice that is more omnipotent over its
 own ends, as dealing, not with the refractory
 elements of earthly life, but with the elements
 of its own creation, and with materials flexible
 to its own purest preconceptions. It is certain
 that, were it not for the literature of power,
 these ideals would often remain amongst us as
 mere arid notional forms; whereas, by the cre-
 ative forces of man put forth in literature, they
 gain a vernal life of restoration, and germinate
 into vital activities. The commonest novel, by
 moving in alliance with human fears and hopes,
 with human instincts of wrong and right, sus-
 tains and quickens those affections. Calling
 them into action, it rescues them from torpor.
 And hence the preeminency over all authors
 that merely *teach*, of the meanest that *moves*,
 or that teaches, if at all, indirectly by moving.
 The very highest work that has ever existed in
 the literature of knowledge is but a provisional
 work—a book upon trial and sufferance, and
quamdiu bene se gesserit.⁴ Let its teaching be
 even partially revised, let it be but expanded—
 nay, even let its teaching be but placed in a
 better order—and instantly it is superseded.
 Whereas the feeblest works in the literature of
 power, surviving at all, survive as finished and
 unalterable amongst men. For instance, the
Principia of Sir Isaac Newton was a book *mili-*
tant on earth from the first. In all stages of its
 progress it would have to fight for its existence:
 first, as regards absolute truth; secondly, when
 that combat was over, as regards its form or
 mode of presenting the truth. And as soon as
 a Laplace,⁵ or anybody else, builds higher upon
 the foundations laid by this book, effectually
 he throws it out of the sunshine into decay and
 darkness; by weapons won from this book he
 superannuates and destroys this book, so that
 soon the name of Newton remains as a mere
nominis umbra,⁶ but his book, as a living
 power, has transmigrated into other forms.
 Now, on the contrary, the *Iliad*, the *Prometheus*
 of Aeschylus, the *Othello* or *King Lear*, the
Hamlet or *Macbeth*, and the *Paradise Lost*, are
 not militant, but triumphant forever, as long as
 the languages exist in which they speak or can

be taught to speak. They never *can* transmi-
 grate into new incarnations. To reproduce *these*
 in new forms, or variations, even if in some
 things they should be improved, would be to
 plagiarize. A good steam engine is properly
 superseded by a better. But one lovely pastoral
 valley is not superseded by another, nor a
 statue of Praxiteles by a statue of Michael An-
 gelo. These things are separated not by im-
 parity, but by disparity. They are not thought
 of as unequal under the same standard, but as
 different in *kind*, and, if otherwise equal, as
 equal under a different standard. Human works
 of immortal beauty and works of nature in one
 respect stand on the same footing: they never
 absolutely repeat each other, never approach so
 near as not to differ, and they differ not as bet-
 ter and worse, or simply by more and less—
 they differ by undecipherable and incommuni-
 cable differences, that cannot be caught by
 mimicries, that cannot be reflected in the mir-
 ror of copies, that cannot become ponderable in
 the scales of vulgar comparison. . . . At this
 hour, five hundred years since their creation,
 the tales of Chaucer, never equaled on this
 earth for their tenderness and for life of pic-
 turesqueness, are read familiarly by many in
 the charming language of their natal day, and
 by others in the modernizations of Dryden, of
 Pope, and Wordsworth. At this hour, one thou-
 sand eight hundred years since their creation,
 the pagan tales⁷ of Ovid, never equaled on this
 earth for the gayety of their movement and the
 capricious graces of their narrative, are read by
 all Christendom. This man's people and their
 monuments are dust, but *he* is alive; he has
 survived them, as he told us that he had it in
 his commission to do, by a thousand years, "and
 shall a thousand more."

All the literature of knowledge builds only
 ground-nests, that are swept away by floods, or
 confounded by the plow; but the literature of
 power builds nests in aerial altitudes of temples
 sacred from violation, or of forests inaccessible
 to fraud. This is a great prerogative of the
 power literature, and it is a greater which lies
 in the mode of its influence. The *knowledge*
 literature, like the fashion of this world, passeth
 away. An encyclopedia is its abstract; and, in
 this respect, it may be taken for its speaking

⁴ as long as it behaves itself well.

⁵ Pierre Simon de Laplace (1749-1827), French astronomer.

⁶ shadow of a name.

⁷ *The Metamorphoses*.

symbol—that before one generation has passed, an encyclopedia is superannuated; for it speaks through the dead memory and unimpassioned understanding, which have not the repose of higher faculties, but are continually enlarging and varying their phylacteries. But all literature properly so called—literature κατ' ἐξοχήν⁸—for the very reason that it is so much more durable than the literature of knowledge, is (and by the very same proportion it is) more intense and electrically searching in its impressions. The directions in which the tragedy of this planet has trained our human feelings to play, and the combinations into which the poetry of this planet has thrown our human passions of love and hatred, of admiration and contempt, exercise a power for bad or good over human life that cannot be contemplated, when stretching through many generations, without a sentiment allied to awe. And of this let everyone be assured—that he owes to the impassioned books which he has read many a thousand more of emotions than he can consciously trace back to them. Dim by their origination, these emotions yet arise in him, and mold him through life, like forgotten incidents of his childhood. . . .

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY
1800–1859

Like Edward Gibbon, his great predecessor in the writing of history, Thomas Babington Macaulay was a literary artist of extraordinary gifts. That he has been disparaged by later historians as being biased and inaccurate has done little or nothing to detract from his fame. Nor has his position in English letters been markedly affected by the anti-Victorians, who have called him a Philistine—Matthew Arnold's word for Macaulay—and attacked him for his uncritical belief in progress. Even Lytton Strachey, one of his leading detractors, conceded Macaulay's genius as a writer. The following selection on history is from Macaulay's "The Romance of History" (1828); the characterization of seventeenth-century Puritans is from his "Milton," an essay published in 1825, when Macaulay was a very young man, but which went far to establish him as a writer of unusual powers.

⁸ *par excellence*, of the highest degree.

THE PERFECT HISTORIAN

The perfect historian is he in whose work the character and spirit of an age is exhibited in miniature. He relates no fact, he attributes no expression to his characters, which is not authenticated by sufficient testimony. But, by judicious selection, rejection, and arrangement, he gives to truth those attractions which have been usurped by fiction. In his narrative a due subordination is observed: some transactions are prominent; others retire. But the scale on which he represents them is increased or diminished, not according to the dignity of the persons concerned in them, but according to the degree in which they elucidate the condition of society and the nature of man. He shows us the court, the camp, and the senate. But he shows us also the nation. He considers no anecdote, no peculiarity of manner, no familiar saying, as too insignificant for his notice which is not too insignificant to illustrate the operation of laws, of religion, and of education, and to mark the progress of the human mind. Men will not merely be described, but will be made intimately known to us. The changes of manners will be indicated, not merely by a few general phrases or a few extracts from statistical documents, but by appropriate images presented in every line.

If a man, such as we are supposing, should write the history of England, he would assuredly not omit the battles, the sieges, the negotiations, the seditions, the ministerial changes. But with these he would intersperse the details which are the charm of historical romances. At Lincoln Cathedral there is a beautiful painted window, which was made by an apprentice out of the pieces of glass which had been rejected by his master. It is so far superior to every other in the church, that, according to the tradition, the vanquished artist killed himself from mortification. Sir Walter Scott, in the same manner, has used those fragments of truth which historians have scornfully thrown behind them in a manner which may well excite their envy. He has constructed out of their gleanings works which, even considered as histories, are scarcely less valuable than theirs. But a truly great historian would reclaim those materials which the novelist has appropriated. The history of the government, and the history of the people,

would be exhibited in that mode in which alone they can be exhibited justly, in inseparable conjunction and intermixture. We should not then have to look for the wars and votes of the Puritans in Clarendon,¹ and for their phraseology in *Old Mortality*;² for one half of King James in Hume,³ and for the other half in the *Fortunes of Nigel*.⁴

The early part of our imaginary history would be rich with coloring from romance, ballad, and chronicle. We should find ourselves in the company of knights such as those of Froissart,⁵ and of pilgrims such as those who rode with Chaucer from the Tabard.⁶ Society would be shown from the highest to the lowest,—from the royal cloth of state to the den of the outlaw; from the throne of the Legate⁷ to the chimney-corner where the begging friar regaled himself. Palmers, minstrels, crusaders,—the stately monastery, with the good cheer in its refectory and the high-mass in its chapel,—the manor-house, with its hunting and hawking,—the tournament, with the heralds and ladies, the trumpets and the cloth of gold,—would give truth and life to the representation. We should perceive, in a thousand slight touches, the importance of the privileged burgher, and the fierce and haughty spirit which swelled under the collar of the degraded villain.⁸ The revival of letters would not merely be described in a few magnificent periods. We should discern, in innumerable particulars, the fermentation of mind, the eager appetite for knowledge, which distinguished the sixteenth from the fifteenth century. In the Reformation we should see, not merely a schism which changed the ecclesiastical constitution of England and the mutual relations of the European powers, but a moral war which raged in every family, which set the father against the son, and the son

against the father, the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother. Henry would be painted with the skill of Tacitus.⁹ We should have the change of his character from his profuse and joyous youth to his savage and imperious old age. We should perceive the gradual progress of selfish and tyrannical passions in a mind not naturally insensible or ungenerous; and to the last we should detect some remains of that open and noble temper which endeared him to a people whom he oppressed, struggling with the hardness of despotism and the irritability of disease. We should see Elizabeth in all her weakness and in all her strength, surrounded by the handsome favorites whom she never trusted, and the wise old statesman whom she never dismissed, uniting in herself the most contradictory qualities of both her parents,—the coquetry, the caprice, the petty malice of Anne,—the haughty and resolute spirit of Henry. We have no hesitation in saying that a great artist might produce a portrait of this remarkable woman at least as striking as that in the novel of Kenilworth,¹⁰ without employing a single trait not authenticated by ample testimony. In the meantime, we should see arts cultivated, wealth accumulated, the conveniences of life improved. We should see the keeps,¹¹ where nobles, insecure themselves, spread insecurity around them, gradually giving place to the halls of peaceful opulence, to the oriel¹² of Longleat, and the stately pinnacles of Burleigh. We should see towns extended, deserts cultivated, the hamlets of fishermen turned into wealthy havens, the meal of the peasant improved, and his hut more commodiously furnished. We should see those opinions and feelings which produced the great struggle against the House of Stuart slowly growing up in the bosom of private families, before they manifested themselves in parliamentary debates. Then would come the Civil War. Those skirmishes on which Clarendon dwells so minutely would be told, as Thucydides would have told them, with perspicuous conciseness. They are merely connecting links. But the great characteristics of the age, the loyal enthusiasm

¹ Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon (1609–1674), author of *The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England*.

² a novel by Sir Walter Scott.

³ David Hume (1711–1776), Scottish philosopher and historian.

⁴ a novel by Sir Walter Scott.

⁵ Jean Froissart (1337?–1410), a French chronicler.

⁶ The Tabard Inn, in Southwark, where the pilgrims in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* gather for their pilgrimage.

⁷ the ambassador of the Pope.

⁸ a medieval serf.

⁹ Roman historian (c. 55–117 A.D.).

¹⁰ a novel by Sir Walter Scott.

¹¹ a keep is the central tower of a medieval castle.

¹² bay windows.

of the brave English gentry, the fierce licentiousness of the swearing, dicing, drunken reprobates whose excesses disgraced the royal cause,—the austerity of the Presbyterian Sabbaths in the city, the extravagance of the independent preachers in the camp, the precise garb, the severe countenance, the petty scruples, the affected accent, the absurd names and phrases which marked the Puritans,—the valor, the policy, the public spirit, which lurked beneath these ungraceful disguises,—the dreams of the raving Fifth-monarchy-man,¹³ the dreams, scarcely less wild, of the philosophic republican,—all these would enter into the representation, and render it at once more exact and more striking.

The instruction derived from history thus written would be of a vivid and practical character. It would be received by the imagination as well as by the reason. It would be not merely traced on the mind, but branded into it. Many truths, too, would be learned, which can be learned in no other manner. As the history of states is generally written, the greatest and most momentous revolutions seem to come upon them like supernatural inflictions, without warning or cause. But the fact is, that such revolutions are almost always the consequences of moral changes, which have gradually passed on the mass of the community, and which ordinarily proceed far, before their progress is indicated by any public measure. An intimate knowledge of the domestic history of nations is therefore absolutely necessary to the prognosis of political events. A narrative, defective in this respect, is as useless as a medical treatise which should pass by all the symptoms attendant on the early stage of a disease and mention only what occurs when the patient is beyond the reach of remedies.

A historian such as we have been attempting to describe would indeed be an intellectual prodigy. In his mind, powers scarcely compatible with each other must be tempered into an exquisite harmony. We shall sooner see another Shakspeare or another Homer. The highest excellence to which any single faculty can be brought would be less surprising than such a happy and delicate combination of qualities.

¹³ a member of a seventeenth-century sect in England who held that the second coming of Christ was at hand. See Daniel 2:44.

Yet the contemplation of imaginary models is not an unpleasant or useless employment of the mind. It cannot indeed produce perfection; but it produces improvement, and nourishes that generous and liberal fastidiousness which is not inconsistent with the strongest sensibility to merit, and which, while it exalts our conceptions of the art, does not render us unjust to the artist.

THE PURITANS

We would speak first of the Puritans, the most remarkable body of men, perhaps, which the world has ever produced. The odious and ridiculous parts of their character lie on the surface. He that runs may read them; nor have there been wanting attentive and malicious observers to point them out. For many years after the Restoration,¹ they were the theme of unmeasured invective and derision. They were exposed to the utmost licentiousness of the press and of the stage, at the time when the press and the stage were most licentious. They were not men of letters; they were, as a body, unpopular; they could not defend themselves; and the public would not take them under its protection. They were therefore abandoned, without reserve, to the tender mercies of the satirists and dramatists. The ostentatious simplicity of their dress, their sour aspect, their nasal twang, their stiff posture, their long graces, their Hebrew names, the Scriptural phrases which they introduced on every occasion, their contempt of human learning, their detestation of polite amusements, were indeed fair game for the laughers. But it is not from the laughers alone that the philosophy of history is to be learnt. And he who approaches this subject should carefully guard against the influence of that potent ridicule which has already misled so many excellent writers.

*"Ecco il fonte del riso, ed ecco il rio
Che mortali perigli in so contiene:
Hor qui tener a fren nostro desio,
Ed esser cauti molto a noi conviene."*²

¹ the reëstablishment of the English monarchy with the return of Charles II (1660).

² From Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*, translated by Edward Fairfax:

See here the fount of laughter! See the stream
To which such fatal qualities belong!
"Now," they exclaimed, "let us avoid the dream
Of warm desire, and in resolve be strong."

Those who roused the people to resistance, who directed their measures through a long series of eventful years, who formed, out of the most unpromising materials, the finest army that Europe had ever seen, who trampled down King, Church, and Aristocracy, who, in the short intervals of domestic sedition and rebellion, made the name of England terrible to every nation on the face of the earth, were no vulgar fanatics. Most of their absurdities were mere external badges, like the signs of freemasonry, or the dresses of friars. We regret that these badges were not more attractive. We regret that a body to whose courage and talents mankind has owed inestimable obligations had not the lofty elegance which distinguished some of the adherents of Charles the First, or the easy good-breeding for which the court of Charles the Second was celebrated. But, if we must make our choice, we shall, like Bassanio in the play, turn from the specious caskets which contain only the Death's head and the Fool's head, and fix on the plain leaden chest which conceals the treasure.³

The Puritans were men whose minds had derived a peculiar character from the daily contemplation of superior beings and eternal interests. Not content with acknowledging, in general terms, an overruling Providence, they habitually ascribed every event to the will of the Great Being, for whose power nothing was too vast, for whose inspection nothing was too minute. To know him, to serve him, to enjoy him, was with them the great end of existence. They rejected with contempt the ceremonious homage which other sects substituted for the pure worship of the soul. Instead of catching occasional glimpses of the Deity through an obscuring veil, they aspired to gaze full on his intolerable brightness, and to commune with him face to face. Hence originated their contempt for terrestrial distinctions. The difference between the greatest and the meanest of mankind seemed to vanish, when compared with the boundless interval which separated the whole race from him on whom their own eyes were constantly fixed. They recognized no title to superiority but his favour; and, confident of that favour, they despised all the accomplishments and all the dignities of the world. If they

were unacquainted with the works of philosophers and poets, they were deeply read in the oracles of God. If their names were not found in the registers of heralds, they were recorded in the Book of Life. If their steps were not accompanied by a splendid train of menials, legions of ministering angels had charge over them. Their palaces were houses not made with hands, their diadems crowns of glory which should never fade away. On the rich and the eloquent, on nobles and priests, they looked down with contempt: for they esteemed themselves rich in a more precious treasure, and eloquent in a more sublime language, nobles by the right of an earlier creation, and priests by the imposition of a mightier hand. The very meanest of them was a being to whose fate a mysterious and terrible importance belonged, on whose slightest action the spirits of light and darkness looked with anxious interest, who had been destined, before heaven and earth were created, to enjoy a felicity which should continue when heaven and earth should have passed away. Events which shortsighted politicians ascribed to earthly causes, had been ordained on his account. For his sake empires had risen, and flourished, and decayed. For his sake the Almighty had proclaimed his will by the pen of the evangelist, and the harp of the prophet. He had been wrested by no common deliverer from the grasp of no common foe. He had been ransomed by the sweat of no vulgar agony, by the blood of no earthly sacrifice. It was for him that the sun had been darkened, that the rocks had been rent, that the dead had risen, that all nature had shuddered at the sufferings of her expiring God.

Thus the Puritan was made up of two different men, the one all self-abasement, penitence, gratitude, passion; the other proud, calm, inflexible, sagacious. He prostrated himself in the dust before his Maker: but he set his foot on the neck of his king. In his devotional retirement, he prayed with convulsions, and groans, and tears. He was half-maddened by glorious or terrible illusions. He heard the lyres of angels or the tempting whispers of fiends. He caught a gleam of the Beatific Vision, or woke screaming from dreams of everlasting fire. Like Vane,⁴ he thought himself intrusted with the

³ See *The Merchant of Venice*, III, ii.

⁴ Sir Henry Vane (1612–1662), a leader of the Puritans.

sceptre of the millennial year.⁵ Like Fleetwood,⁶ he cried in the bitterness of his soul that God had hid his face from him. But when he took his seat in the council, or girt on his sword for war, these tempestuous workings of the soul had left no perceptible trace behind them. People who saw nothing of the godly but their uncouth visages, and heard nothing from them but their groans and their whining hymns, might laugh at them. But those had little reason to laugh who encountered them in the hall of debate or in the field of battle. These fanatics brought to civil and military affairs a coolness of judgment and an immutability of purpose which some writers have thought inconsistent with their religious zeal, but which were in fact the necessary effects of it. The intensity of their feelings on one subject made them tranquil on every other. One overpowering sentiment had subjected to itself pity and hatred, ambition and fear. Death had lost its terrors and pleasure its charms. They had their smiles and their tears, their raptures and their sorrows, but not for the things of this world. Enthusiasm had made them Stoics, had cleared their minds from every vulgar passion and prejudice, and raised them above the influence of danger and of corruption. It sometimes might lead them to pursue unwise ends, but never to choose unwise means. They went through the world, like Sir Artegal's⁷ iron man Talus with his flail, crushing and trampling down oppressors, mingling with human beings, but having neither part nor lot in human infirmities, insensible to fatigue, to pleasure, and to pain, not to be pierced by any weapon, not to be withstood by any barrier.

Such we believe to have been the character of the Puritans. We perceive the absurdity of their manners. We dislike the sullen gloom of their domestic habits. We acknowledge that the tone of their minds was often injured by straining after things too high for mortal reach: and we know that, in spite of their hatred of Popery, they too often fell into the worst vices of that bad system, intolerance and extravagant austerity, that they had their anchorites and

their crusades, their Dunstons⁸ and their De Montforts,⁹ their Dominics¹⁰ and their Escobars.¹¹ Yet, when all circumstances are taken into consideration, we do not hesitate to pronounce them a brave, a wise, an honest, and an useful body.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON 1803–1882

From the books of Ralph Waldo Emerson one does not carry away a system of thought, for Emerson did not think systematically. But from Emerson the reader gets what is better, perhaps, than a philosophical system. He experiences that enlargement or ennobling of self that comes from a belief in the importance of the individual soul and the relation of that soul to the Universal Spirit. Between us and God the walls are down, so Emerson thought, and we "lie open on one side to the depths of spiritual nature, to the attributes of God. Justice we see and know, Love, Freedom, Power." Optimist that he is, Emerson has been called the philosopher of hope, and he is said to offer an escape from a too-realistic or cynical view of life. That his insistent optimism is somewhat wearing must be admitted, and his refusal to accept evil as an inevitable fact in the world makes his essays appear rather shallow for certain readers. His oracular manner of delivering his gospel of hope may be offensive, moreover, to one who would qualify that gospel by reference to the darker facts of human experience. As for Emerson's style, his periods often have the force of proverb or epigram: "God will not make himself manifest to cowards," or "Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own minds." Believing that the truth resides within the individual soul, he admonishes us to plant ourselves indomitably on our instincts. (For further comment on Emerson, see I, 290.) Both the essays included here were first published in Emerson's Essays: First Series (1841). Other

⁸ St. Dunstan (924–988), Archbishop of Canterbury.

⁹ Simon de Montfort (1160–1218), leader of the crusade against the Albigenses, a religious sect of southern France.

¹⁰ St. Dominic (1170–1221), founder of the Dominican order.

¹¹ Antonio Escobar y Mendoza (1589–1669), a Spanish Jesuit.

⁵ See Revelations 20.

⁶ Charles Fleetwood (d. 1692), Cromwell's son-in-law.

⁷ a character in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, personifying justice.

collections of his essays are Representative Men (1850), English Traits (1856), and The Conduct of Life (1860).

SELF-RELIANCE

I read the other day some verses written by an eminent painter which were original and not conventional. The soul always hears an admonition in such lines, let the subject be what it may. The sentiment they instil is of more value than any thought they may contain. To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men,—that is genius. Speak your latent conviction, and it shall be the universal sense, for the inmost in due time becomes the outmost, and our first thought is rendered back to us by the trumpets of the Last Judgment. Familiar as the voice of the mind is to each, the highest merit we ascribe to Moses, Plato, and Milton is that they set at naught books and traditions, and spoke not what men, but what *they* thought. A man should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within, more than the lustre of the firmament of bards and sages. Yet he dismisses without notice his thought, because it is his. In every work of genius we recognize our own rejected thoughts; they come back to us with a certain alienated majesty. Great works of art have no more affecting lesson for us than this. They teach us to abide by our spontaneous impression with good-humored inflexibility then most when the whole cry of voices is on the other side. Else to-morrow a stranger will say with masterly good sense precisely what we have thought and felt all the time, and we shall be forced to take with shame our own opinion from another.

There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better for worse as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till. The power which resides in him is new in nature, and none but he knows what that is which he can do, nor does he know until he has tried. Not for nothing one face, one character, one fact, makes much impression on him and an-

other none. This sculpture in the memory is not without preestablished harmony. The eye was placed where one ray should fall, that it might testify of that particular ray. We but half express ourselves, and are ashamed of that divine idea which each of us represents. It may be safely trusted as proportionate and of good issues, so it be faithfully imparted, but God will not have his work made manifest by cowards. A man is relieved and gay when he has put his heart into his work and done his best; but what he has said or done otherwise shall give him no peace. It is a deliverance which does not deliver. In the attempt his genius deserts him; no muse befriends; no invention, no hope.

Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that non string. Accept the place the divine providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events. Great men have always done so, and confided themselves childlike to the genius of their age, betraying their perception that the absolutely trustworthy was seated at their heart, working through their hands, predominating in all their being. And we are now men, and must accept in the highest mind the same transcendent destiny; and not minors and invalids in a protected corner, not cowards fleeing before a revolution, but guides, redeemers, and benefactors, obeying the Almighty effort and advancing on Chaos and the Dark.

What pretty oracles nature yields us on this text in the face and behavior of children, babes, and even brutes! That divided and rebel mind, that distrust of a sentiment because our arithmetic has computed the strength and means opposed to our purpose, these have not. Their mind being whole, their eye is as yet unconquered, and when we look in their faces we are disconcerted. Infancy conforms to nobody; all conform to it; so that one babe commonly makes four or five out of the adults who prattle and play to it. So God has armed youth and puberty and manhood no less with its own piquancy and charm, and made it enviable and gracious and its claims not to be put by, if it will stand by itself. Do not think the youth has no force, because he cannot speak to you and to me. Hark! in the next room his voice is sufficiently clear and emphatic. It seems he knows how to speak to his contemporaries. Bashful or

bold then, he will know how to make us seniors very unnecessary.

The nonchalance of boys who are sure of a dinner, and would disdain as much as a lord to do or say aught to conciliate one, is the healthy attitude of human nature. A boy is in the parlor what the pit is in the playhouse; independent, irresponsible, looking out from his corner on such people and facts as pass by, he tries and sentences them on their merits, in the swift, summary ways of boys, as good, bad, interesting, silly, eloquent, troublesome. He cumber himself never about consequences, about interdicts; he gives an independent, genuine verdict. You must court him; he does not court you. But the man is as it were clapped into jail by his consciousness. As soon as he has once acted or spoken with *éclat*¹ he is a committed person, watched by the sympathy or the hatred of hundreds whose affections must now enter into his account. There is no Lethe² for this. Ah, that he could pass again into his neutrality! Who can thus avoid all pledges and, having observed, observe again from the same unaffected, unbiased, unbribable, unafrighted innocence, —must always be formidable. He would utter opinions on all passing affairs, which being seen to be not private but necessary, would sink like darts into the ear of men and put them in fear.

These are the voices which we hear in solitude, but they grow faint and inaudible as we enter into the world. Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members. Society is a joint-stock company, in which the members agree, for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities and creators, but names and customs.

Whoso would be a man, must be a nonconformist. He who would gather immortal palms³ must not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it be goodness. Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind. Absolve you to yourself, and you shall have the suffrage of the world. I remember an answer

which when quite young I was prompted to make to a valued adviser who was wont to importune me with the dear old doctrines of the church. On my saying, "What have I to do with the sacredness of traditions, if I live wholly from within?" my friend suggested,—“But these impulses may be from below, not from above.” I replied, “They do not seem to me to be such; but if I am the Devil’s child, I will live then from the Devil.” No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature. Good and bad are but names very readily transferable to that or this; the only right is what is after my constitution; the only wrong what is against it. A man is to carry himself in the presence of all opposition as if everything were titular and ephemeral but he. I am ashamed to think how easily we capitulate to badges and names, to large societies and dead institutions. Every decent and well-spoken individual affects and sways me more than is right. I ought to go upright and vital, and speak the rude truth in all ways. If malice and vanity wear the coat of philanthropy, shall that pass? If an angry bigot assumes this bountiful cause of Abolition, and comes to me with his last news from Barbadoes,⁴ why should I not say to him, “Go love thy infant; love thy wood-chopper; be good-natured and modest; have that grace; and never varnish your hard, uncharitable ambition with this incredible tenderness for black folk a thousand miles off. Thy love afar is spite at home.” Rough and graceless would be such greeting, but truth is handsomer than the affectation of love. Your goodness must have some edge to it, —else it is none. The doctrine of hatred must be preached, as the counteraction of the doctrine of love, when that pules and whines. I shun father and mother and wife and brother when my genius calls me. I would write on the lintels of the doorpost, *Whim*. I hope it is somewhat better than whim at last, but we cannot spend the day in explanation. Expect me not to show cause why I seek or why I exclude company. Then again, do not tell me, as a good man did to-day, of my obligation to put all poor men in good situations. Are they *my* poor? I tell thee, thou foolish philanthropist, that I grudge the dollar, the dime, the cent I give to such men as do not belong to me and to whom

¹ brilliance.

² river in Hades. Drinking its waters caused one to forget the past.

³ emblems of victory.

⁴ island in the West Indies. In 1834 slavery was abolished there.

I do not belong. There is a class of persons to whom by all spiritual affinity I am bought and sold; for them I will go to prison if need be; but your miscellaneous popular charities; the education at college of fools; the building of meeting-houses to the vain end to which many now stand; alms to sots, and the thousand-fold Relief Societies;—though I confess with shame I sometimes succumb and give the dollar, it is a wicked dollar, which by and by I shall have the manhood to withhold.

Virtues are, in the popular estimate, rather the exception than the rule. There is the man *and* his virtues. Men do what is called a good action, as some piece of courage or charity, much as they would pay a fine in expiation of daily non-appearance on parade. Their works are done as an apology or extenuation of their living in the world,—as invalids and the insane pay a high board. Their virtues are penances. I do not wish to expiate, but to live. My life is for itself and not for a spectacle. I much prefer that it should be of a lower strain, so it be genuine and equal, than that it should be glittering and unsteady. I wish it to be sound and sweet, and not to need diet and bleeding. I ask primary evidence that you are a man and refuse this appeal from the man to his actions. I know that for myself it makes no difference whether I do or forbear those actions which are reckoned excellent. I cannot consent to pay for a privilege where I have intrinsic right. Few and mean as my gifts may be, I actually am, and do not need for my own assurance or the assurance of my fellows any secondary testimony.

What I must do is all that concerns me, not what the people think. This rule, equally arduous in actual and in intellectual life, may serve for the whole distinction between greatness and meanness. It is the harder because you will always find those who think they know what is your duty better than you know it. It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.

The objection to conforming to usages that have become dead to you is that it scatters your force. It loses your time and blurs the impression of your character. If you maintain a

dead church, contribute to a dead Bible-society, vote with a great party either for the government or against it, spread your table like base housekeepers,—under all these screens I have difficulty to detect the precise man you are: and of course so much force is withdrawn from all your proper life. But do your work, and I shall know you. Do your work, and you shall reinforce yourself. A man must consider what a blind-man's-buff is this game of conformity. If I know your sect I anticipate your argument. I hear a preacher announce for his text and topic the expediency of one of the institutions of his church. Do I not know beforehand that not possibly can he say a new and spontaneous word? Do I not know that with all this ostentation of grounds of the institution he will do no such thing? Do I not know that he is pledged to himself not to look but at one side, the permitted side, not as a man, but as a parish minister? He is a retained attorney, and these airs of the bench are the emptiest affectation. Well, most men have bound their eyes with one or another handkerchief, and attached themselves to some one of these communities of opinion. This conformity makes them not false in a few particulars, authors of a few lies, but false in all particulars. Their every truth is not quite true. Their two is not the real two, their four not the real four, so that every word they say chagrins us and we know not where to begin to set them right. Meantime nature is not slow to equip us in the prison-uniform of the party to which we adhere. We come to wear one cut of face and figure, and acquire by degrees the gentlest asinine expression. There is a mortifying experience in particular, which does not fail to wreak itself also in the general history; I mean the "foolish face of praise," the forced smile which we put on in company where we do not feel at ease, in answer to conversation which does not interest us. The muscles, not spontaneously moved but moved by a low usurping wilfulness, grow tight about the outline of the face, with the most disagreeable sensation.

For nonconformity the world whips you with its displeasure. And therefore a man must know how to estimate a sour face. The by-standers look askance on him in the public street or in the friend's parlor. If this aversion had its origin in contempt and resistance like his own he might well go home with a sad countenance;

but the sour faces of the multitude, like their sweet faces, have no deep cause, but are put on and off as the wind blows and a newspaper directs. Yet is the discontent of the multitude more formidable than that of the senate and the college. It is easy enough for a firm man who knows the world to brook the rage of the cultivated classes. Their rage is decorous and prudent for they are timid, as being very vulnerable themselves. But when to their feminine rage the indignation of the people is added, when the ignorant and the poor are aroused, when the unintelligent brute force that lies at the bottom of society is made to growl and mow, it needs the habit of magnanimity and religion to treat it god-like as a trifle of no concernment.

The other terror that scares us from self-trust is our consistency; a reverence for our past act or word because the eyes of others have no other data for computing our orbit than our past acts, and we are loth to disappoint them.

But why should you keep your head over your shoulder? Why drag about this corpse of your memory, lest you contradict somewhat you have stated in this or that public place? Suppose you should contradict yourself; what then? It seems to be a rule of wisdom never to rely on your memory alone, scarcely even in acts of pure memory, but to bring the past for judgment into the thousand-eyed present, and live ever in a new day. In your metaphysics you have denied personality to the Deity, yet when the devout motions of the soul come, yield to them heart and life, though they should clothe God with shape and color. Leave your theory, as Joseph⁵ his coat in the hand of the harlot, and flee.

A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall. Speak what you think now in hard words and to-morrow speak what to-morrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict everything you said to-day.—“Ah, so you shall be sure to be misunderstood.”—Is it so bad then to be misunderstood? Pythagoras was misunderstood, and Socrates, and Jesus, and Luther, and Co-

pernicus, and Galileo, and Newton,⁶ and every pure and wise spirit that ever took flesh. To be great is to be misunderstood.

I suppose no man can violate his nature. All the sallies of his will are rounded in by the law of his being, as the inequalities of Andes and Himmaleh are insignificant in the curve of the sphere. Nor does it matter how you gauge and try him. A character is like an acrostic⁷ or Alexandrian stanza;—read it forward, backward, or across, it still spells the same thing. In this pleasing contrite wood-life which God allows me, let me record day by day my honest thought without prospect or retrospect, and, I cannot doubt, it will be found symmetrical, though I mean it not and see it not. My book should smell of pines and resound with the hum of insects. The swallow over my window should interweave that thread or straw he carries in his bill into my web also. We pass for what we are. Character teaches above our wills. Men imagine that they communicate their virtue or vice only by overt actions, and do not see that virtue or vice emit a breath every moment.

There will be an agreement in whatever variety of actions, so they be each honest and natural in their hour. For of one will, the actions will be harmonious, however unlike they seem. These varieties are lost sight of at a little distance, at a little height of thought. One tendency unites them all. The voyage of the best ship is a zigzag line of a hundred tacks. See the line from a sufficient distance, and it straightens itself to the average tendency. Your genuine action will explain itself and will explain your other genuine actions. Your conformity explains nothing. Act singly, and what you have already done singly will justify you now.

⁶ Pythagoras . . . Newton: Pythagoras, a Greek philosopher of the sixth century B.C.; Socrates (469–399 B.C.), Greek philosopher, poisoned because of his advanced views; Martin Luther (1483–1546), German religious leader, suffered imprisonment; Copernicus (1473–1543), astronomer whose views about the solar system were doubted; Galileo (1564–1642), Italian astronomer, forced to repudiate the Copernican theory; Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727), English philosopher and discoverer of the law of gravitation, which for years was not accepted.

⁷ mistake for palindrome, which is the same whether read backward or forward; for example, “Madam, I’m Adam.”

⁵ See Genesis 39:12.

Greatness appeals to the future. If I can be firm enough to-day to do right and scorn eyes, I must have done so much right before as to defend me now. Be it how it will, do right now. Always scorn appearances and you always may. The force of character is cumulative. All the foregone days of virtue work their health into this. What makes the majesty of the heroes of the senate and the field, which so fills the imagination? The consciousness of a train of great days and victories behind. They shed a united light on the advancing actor. He is attended as by a visible escort of angels. That is it which throws thunder into Chatham's voice, and dignity into Washington's port, and America into Adams's⁸ eye. Honor is venerable to us because it is no ephemera. It is always ancient virtue. We worship it to-day because it is not of to-day. We love it and pay it homage because it is not a trap for our love and homage, but is self-dependent, self-derived, and therefore of an old immaculate pedigree, even if shown in a young person.

I hope in these days we have heard the last of conformity and consistency. Let the words be gazetted and ridiculous henceforward. Instead of the gong for dinner, let us hear a whistle from the Spartan fife. Let us never bow and apologize more. A great man is coming to eat at my house. I do not wish to please him; I wish that he should wish to please me. I will stand here for humanity, and though I would make it kind, I would make it true. Let us affront and reprimand the smooth mediocrity and squalid contentment of the times, and hurl in the face of custom and trade and office, the fact which is the upshot of all history, that there is a great responsible Thinker and Actor working wherever a man works, that a true man belongs to no other time or place, but is the centre of things. Where he is there is nature. He measures you and all men and all events. Ordinarily, everybody in society reminds us of somewhat else, or of some other person. Character, reality, reminds you of nothing else; it takes place of the whole creation. The man must be so much that he must make all circumstances indifferent. Every true man is a cause, a country, and an age; requires infinite spaces

⁸ William Pitt (1708–1778), English statesman.

⁹ Samuel Adams (1722–1803), American Revolutionary leader.

and numbers and time fully to accomplish his design;—and posterity seem to follow his steps as a train of clients. A man Caesar is born, and for ages after we have a Roman Empire. Christ is born, and millions of minds so grow and cleave to his genius that he is confounded with virtue and the possible of man. An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man, as, Monachism, of the Hermit Antony, the Reformation, of Luther, Quakerism, of Fox; Methodism, of Wesley, Abolition, of Clarkson. Scipio,¹⁰ Milton called "the height of Rome", and all history resolves itself very easily into the biography of a few stout and earnest persons.

Let a man then know his worth, and keep things under his feet. Let him not peep or steal, or skulk up and down with the air of a charity-boy, a bastard, or an interloper in the world which exists for him. But the man in the street, finding no worth in himself which corresponds to the force which built a tower or sculptured a marble god, feels poor when he looks on these. To him a palace, a statue, or a costly book have an alien and forbidding air, much like a gay equipage, and seem to say like that, "Who are you, Sir?" Yet they all are his, suitors for his notice, petitioners to his faculties that they will come out and take possession. The picture waits for my verdict; it is not to command me, but I am to settle its claims to praise. That popular fable¹¹ of the sot who was picked up dead-drunk in the street, carried to the duke's house, washed and dressed and laid in the duke's bed, and, on his waking, treated with all obsequious ceremony like the duke, and assured that he had been insane, owes its popularity to the fact that it symbolizes so well the state of man, who is in the world a sort of sot, but now and then wakes up, exercises his reason and finds himself a true prince.

Our reading is mendicant and sycophantic. In history our imagination plays us false. Kingdom and lordship, power and estate, are a gaudier vocabulary than private John and Ed-

¹⁰ Antony . . . Scipio. Anthony the Great, ascetic of the third century; George Fox (1624–1691), founder of the Society of Friends; John Wesley (1703–1791), an early Methodist; Thomas Clarkson (1760–1846), English opponent of slavery; Scipio, Roman general who defeated Hannibal, 202 B.C.

¹¹ "The Story of the Sleeper Awakened," *Arabian Nights*.

ward in a small house and common day's work; but the things of life are the same to both; the sum total of both is the same. Why all this deference to Alfred and Scanderberg and Gustavus?¹² Suppose they were virtuous; did they wear out virtue? As great a stake depends on your private act to-day as followed their public and renowned steps. When private men shall act with original views, the lustre will be transferred from the actions of kings to those of gentlemen.

The world has been instructed by its kings, who have so magnetized the eyes of nations. It has been taught by this colossal symbol the mutual reverence that is due from man to man. The joyful loyalty with which men have everywhere suffered the king, the noble, or the great proprietor to walk among them by a law of his own, make his own scale of men and things and reverse theirs, pay for benefits not with money but with honor, and represent the law in his person, was the hieroglyphic by which they obscurely signified their consciousness of their own right and comeliness, the right of every man.

The magnetism which all original action exerts is explained when we inquire the reason of self-trust. Who is the Trustee? What is the aboriginal Self, on which a universal reliance may be grounded? What is the nature and power of that science-baffling star, without parallax, without calculable elements, which shoots a ray of beauty even into trivial and impure actions, if the least mark of independence appear? The inquiry leads us to that source, at once the essence of genius, of virtue, and of life, which we call Spontaneity or Instinct. We denote this primary wisdom as Intuition, whilst all later teachings are tuitions. In that deep force, the last fact behind which analysis cannot go, all things find their common origin. For the sense of being which in calm hours rises, we know not how, in the soul, is not diverse from things, from space, from light, from time, from man, but one with them and proceeds obviously from the same source whence their life and being also proceed. We first share the life by which things exist and afterwards see them as appear-

ances in nature and forget that we have shared their cause. Here is the fountain of action and of thought. Here are the lungs of that inspiration which giveth man wisdom and which cannot be denied without impiety and atheism. We lie in the lap of immense intelligence, which makes us receivers of its truth and organs of its activity. When we discern justice, when we discern truth, we do nothing of ourselves, but allow a passage to its beams. If we ask whence this comes, if we seek to pry into the soul that causes, all philosophy is at fault. Its presence or its absence is all we can affirm. Every man discriminates between the voluntary acts of his mind and his involuntary perceptions, and knows that to his involuntary perceptions a perfect faith is due. He may err in the expression of them, but he knows that these things are so, like day and night, not to be disputed. My wilful actions and acquisitions are but roving;—the idlest reverie, the faintest native emotion, command my curiosity and respect. Thoughtless people contradict as readily the statement of perceptions as of opinions, or rather much more readily, for they do not distinguish between perception and notion. They fancy that I choose to see this or that thing. But perception is not whimsical, but fatal. If I see a trait, my children will see it after me, and in course of time all mankind,—although it may chance that no one has seen it before me. For my perception of it is as much a fact as the sun.

The relations of the soul to the divine spirit are so pure that it is profane to seek to interpose helps. It must be that when God speaketh he should communicate, not one thing, but all things; should fill the world with his voice; should scatter forth light, nature, time, souls, from the centre of the present thought; and new date and new create the whole. Whenever a mind is simple and receives a divine wisdom, old things pass away,—means, teachers, texts, temples fall; it lives now, and absorbs past and future into the present hour. All things are made sacred by relation to it,—one as much as another. All things are dissolved to their centre by their cause, and in the universal miracle petty and particular miracles disappear. If therefore a man claims to know and speak of God and carries you backward to the phraseology of some old mouldered nation in another country, in another world, believe him not. Is

¹² Alfred . . . Gustavus: Alfred the Great (849–901), King of England; Scanderberg (1403–1468), Albanian patriot; Gustavus Adolphus (1594–1632), King of Sweden, leader in the Thirty Years' War.

the acorn better than the oak which is its fullness and completion? Is the parent better than the child into whom he has cast his ripened being? Whence then this worship of the past? The centuries are conspirators against the sanity and authority of the soul. Time and space are but physiological colors which the eye makes, but the soul is light: where it is, is day; where it was, is night; and history is an impertinence and an injury if it be anything more than a cheerful apologue or parable of my being and becoming.

Man is timid and apologetic; he is no longer upright; he dares not say "I think," "I am," but quotes some saint or sage. He is ashamed before the blade of grass or the blowing rose. These roses under my window make no reference to former roses or to better ones; they are for what they are; they exist with God to-day. There is no time to them. There is simply the rose; it is perfect in every moment of its existence. Before a leaf-bud has burst, its whole life acts; in the full-blown flower there is no more; in the leafless root there is no less. Its nature is satisfied and it satisfies nature in all moments alike. But man postpones or remembers; he does not live in the present, but with reverted eye laments the past, or, heedless of the riches that surround him, stands on tiptoe to foresee the future. He cannot be happy and strong until he too lives with nature in the present, above time.

This should be plain enough. Yet see what strong intellects dare not yet hear God himself unless he speaks the phrasology of I know not what David, or Jeremiah, or Paul. We shall not always set so great a price on a few texts, on a few lives. We are like children who repeat by rote the sentences of grandames and tutors, and, as they grow older, of the men of talents and character they chance to see,—painfully recollecting the exact words they spoke; afterwards, when they come into the point of view which those had who uttered these sayings, they understand them and are willing to let the words go; for at any time they can use words as good when occasion comes. If we live truly, we shall see truly. It is as easy for the strong man to be strong, as it is for the weak to be weak. When we have new perception, we shall gladly disburden the memory of its hoarded treasures as old rubbish. When a man lives with God, his

voice shall be as sweet as the murmur of the brook and the rustle of the corn.

And now at last the highest truth on this subject remains unsaid, probably cannot be said, for all that we say is the far-off remembering of the intuition. That thought by what I can now nearest approach to say it, is this. When good is near you, when you have life in yourself, it is not by any known or accustomed way; you shall not discern the footprints of any other; you shall not see face of man; you shall not hear any name;—the way, the thought, the good, shall be wholly strange and new. It shall exclude example and experience. You take the way from man, not to man. All persons that ever existed are its forgotten ministers. Fear and hope are alike beneath it. There is somewhat low even in hope. In the hour of vision there is nothing that can be called gratitude, nor properly joy. The soul raised over passion beholds identity and eternal causation, perceives the self-existence of Truth and Right, and calms itself with knowing that all things go well. Vast spaces of nature, the Atlantic Ocean, the South Sea; long intervals of time, yeas, centuries, are of no account. This which I think and feel underlay every former state of life and circumstances, as it does underlie my present, and what is called life and what is called death.

Life only avails, not the having lived. Power ceases in the instant of repose; it resides in the moment of transition from a past to a new state, in the shooting of the gulf, in the darting to an aim. This one fact the world hates; that the soul *becomes*; for that forever degrades the past, turns all riches to poverty, all reputation to a shame, confounds the saint with the rogue, shoves Jesus and Judas equally aside. Why then do we prate of self-reliance? Inasmuch as the soul is present there will be power not confident but agent.¹³ To talk of reliance is a poor external way of speaking. Speak rather of that which relies because it works and is. Who has more obedience than I masters me, though he should not raise his finger. Round him I must revolve by the gravitation of spirits. We fancy it rhetoric when we speak of eminent virtue. We do not yet see that virtue is Height, and that a man or a company of men, plastic and permeable to principles, by the law of nature

¹³ active.

must overpower and ride all cities, nations, kings, rich men, poets, who are not.

This is the ultimate fact which we so quickly reach on this, as on every topic, the resolution of all into the ever-blessed ONE. Self-existence is the attribute of the Supreme Cause, and it constitutes the measure of good by the degree in which it enters into all lower forms. All things real are so by so much virtue as they contain. Commerce, husbandry, hunting, whaling, war, eloquence, personal weight, are somewhat, and engage my respect as examples of its presence and impure action. I see the same law working in nature for conservation and growth. Power is, in nature, the essential measure of right. Nature suffers nothing to remain in her kingdoms which cannot help itself. The genesis and maturation of a planet, its poise and orbit, the bended tree recovering itself from the strong wind, the vital resources of every animal and vegetable, are demonstrations of the self-sufficing and therefore self-relying soul.

Thus all concentrates: let us not rove; let us sit at home with the cause. Let us stun and astonish the intruding rabble of men and books and institutions by a simple declaration of the divine fact. Bid the invaders take the shoes from off their feet, for God is here within. Let our simplicity judge them, and our docility to our own law demonstrate the poverty of nature and fortune beside our native riches.

But now we are a mob. Man does not stand in awe of man, nor is his genius admonished to stay at home, to put itself in communication with the internal ocean, but it goes abroad to beg a cup of water of the urns of other men. We must go alone. I like the silent church before the service begins, better than any preaching. How far off, how cool, how chaste the persons look, begirt each one with a precinct or sanctuary! So let us always sit. Why should we assume the faults of our friend, or wife, or father, or child, because they sit around our hearth, or are said to have the same blood? All men have my blood and I all men's. Not for that will I adopt their petulance or folly, even to the extent of being ashamed of it. But your isolation must not be mechanical, but spiritual, that is, must be elevation. At times the whole world seems to be in conspiracy to importune you with emphatic trifles. Friend, climate, child, sickness, fear, want, charity, all knock at

once at thy closet door and say,—“Come out unto us.” But keep thy state; come not into their confusion. The power men possess to annoy me I give them by a weak curiosity. No man can come near me but through my act. “What we love that we have, but by desire we bereave ourselves of the love.”

If we cannot at once rise to the sanctities of obedience and faith, let us at least resist our temptations; let us enter into the state of war and wake Thor and Woden,¹⁴ courage and constancy, in our Saxon breasts. This is to be done in our smooth times by speaking the truth. Check this lying hospitality and lying affection. Live no longer to the expectation of these deceived and deceiving people with whom we converse. Say to them, “O father, O mother, O wife, O brother, O friend, I have lived with you after appearances hitherto. Henceforward I am the truth's. Be it known unto you that henceforward I obey no law less than the eternal law. I will have no covenants but proximities. I shall endeavor to nourish my parents, to support my family, to be the chaste husband of one wife,—but these relations I must fill after a new and unprecedented way. I appeal from your customs. I must be myself. I cannot break myself any longer for you, or you. If you can love me for what I am, we shall be the happier. If you cannot, I will still seek to deserve that you should. I will not hide my tastes or aversions. I will so trust that what is deep is holy, that I will do strongly before the sun and moon whatever inly rejoices me and the heart appoints. If you are noble, I will love you; if you are not, I will not hurt you and myself by hypocritical attentions. If you are true, but not in the same truth with me, cleave to your companions; I will seek my own. I do this not selfishly but humbly and truly. It is alike your interest, and mine, and all men's, however long we have dwelt in lies, to live in truth. Does this sound harsh to-day? You will soon love what is dictated by your nature as well as mine, and if we follow the truth it will bring us out safe at last.”—But so may you give these friends pain. Yes, but I cannot sell my liberty and my power, to save their sensibility. Besides, all persons have their moments of reason, when they look out into the region of absolute

¹⁴ Thor . . . Woden, Norse gods of thunder and war, respectively.

truth; then will they justify me and do the same thing.

The populace think that your rejection of popular standards is a rejection of all standard, and mere antinomianism,¹⁵ and the bold sensualist will use the name of philosophy to gild his crimes. But the law of consciousness abides. There are two confessionals, in one or the other of which we must be shriven. You may fulfil your round of duties by clearing yourself in the *direct*, or in the *reflex* way. Consider whether you have satisfied your relations to father, mother, cousin, neighbor, town, cat and dog—whether any of these can upbraid you. But I may also neglect this reflex standard and absolve me to myself. I have my own stern claims and perfect circle. It denies the name of duty to many offices that are called duties. But if I can discharge its debts it enables me to dispense with the popular code. If any one imagines that this law is lax, let him keep its commandment one day.

And truly it demands something godlike in him who has cast off the common motives of humanity and has ventured to trust himself for a taskmaster. High be his heart, faithful his will, clear his sight, that he may in good earnest be doctrine, society, law, to himself, that a simple purpose may be to him as strong as iron necessity is to others!

If any man consider the present aspects of what is called by distinction *society*, he will see the need of these ethics. The sinew and heart of man seem to be drawn out, and we are become timorous, desponding whimperers. We are afraid of truth, afraid of fortune, afraid of death, and afraid of each other. Our age yields no great and perfect persons. We want men and women who shall renovate life and our social state, but we see that most natures are insolvent, cannot satisfy their own wants, have an ambition out of all proportion to their practical force and do lean and beg day and night continually. Our housekeeping is mendicant, our arts, our occupations, our marriages, our religion we have not chosen, but society has chosen for us. We are parlor soldiers. We shun the rugged battle of fate, where strength is born.

¹⁵ the view that faith alone, without obedience of the moral law, is essential to salvation.

If our young men miscarry in their first enterprises they lose all heart. If the young merchant fails, men say he is *ruined*. If the finest genius studies at one of our colleges and is not installed in an office within one year afterwards in the cities or suburbs of Boston or New York, it seems to his friends and himself that he is right in being disheartened and in complaining the rest of his life. A sturdy lad from New Hampshire or Vermont, who in turn tries all the professions, who *teams it, farms it, peddles*, keeps a school, preaches, edits a newspaper, goes to Congress, buys a township, and so forth, in successive years, and always like a cat falls on his feet, is worth a hundred of these city dolls. He walks abreast with his days and feels no shame in not "studying a profession," for he does not postpone his life, but lives already. He has not one chance, but a hundred chances. Let a Stoic open the resources of man and tell men they are not leaning willows, but can and must detach themselves; that with the exercise of self-trust, new powers shall appear, that a man is the word made flesh, born to shed healing to the nations; that he should be ashamed of our compassion, and that the moment he acts from himself, tossing the laws, the books, idolatries and customs out of the window, we pity him no more but thank and revere him;—and that teacher shall restore the life of man to splendor and make his name dear to all history.

It is easy to see that a greater self-reliance must work a revolution in all the offices and relations of men; in their religion; in their education; in their pursuits; their modes of living; their association; in their property; in their speculative views.

1. In what prayers do men allow¹⁶ themselves! That which they call a holy office is not so much as brave and manly. Prayer looks abroad and asks for some foreign addition to come through some foreign virtue, and loses itself in endless mazes of natural and supernatural, and mediatorial and miraculous. Prayer that craves a particular commodity, anything less than all good, is vicious. Prayer is the contemplation of the facts of life from the highest point of view. It is the soliloquy of a being holding and jubilant soul. It is the spirit of

¹⁶ justify.

God pronouncing his works good. But prayer as a means to effect a private end is meanness and theft. It supposes dualism and not unity in nature and consciousness. As soon as the man is at one with God, he will not beg. He will then see prayer in all action. The prayer of the farmer kneeling in his field to weed it, the prayer of the rower kneeling with the stroke of his oar, are true prayers heard throughout nature, though for cheap ends. Caratach, in Fletcher's *Bonduca*,¹⁷ when admonished to inquire the mind of the god Audate, replies,—

"His hidden meaning lies in our endeavors;
Our valors are our best gods."

Another sort of false prayers are our regrets. Discontent is the want of self-reliance: it is infirmity of will. Regret calamities if you can thereby help the sufferer, if not attend your own work and already the evil begins to be repaired. Our sympathy is just as base. We come to them who weep foolishly and sit down and cry for company, instead of imparting to them truth and health in rough electric shocks, putting them once more in communication with their own reason. The secret of fortune is joy in our hands. Welcome evermore to gods and men is the self-helping man. For him all doors are flung wide; him all tongues greet, all honors crown, all eyes follow with desire. Our love goes out to him and embraces him because he did not need it. We solicitously and apologetically caress and celebrate him because he held on his way and scorned our disapprobation. The gods love him because men hated him. "To the persevering mortal," said Zoroaster, "the blessed Immortals are swift."

As men's prayers are a disease of the will, so are their creeds a disease of the intellect. They say with those foolish Israelites, "Let not God speak to us, lest we die. Speak thou, speak any man with us, and we will obey." Everywhere I am hindered of meeting God in my brother, because he has shut his own temple doors and recites fables merely of his brother's, or his brother's brother's God. Every new mind is a new classification. If it prove a mind of uncommon activity and power, a Locke, a Lavoisier, a Hutton, a Bentham, a Fourier,¹⁸ it im-

poses its classification on other men, and lo! a new system. In proportion to the depth of the thought, and so to the number of the objects it touches and brings within reach of the pupil, is his complacency. But chiefly is this apparent in creeds and churches, which are also classifications of some powerful mind acting on the elemental thought of duty and man's relation to the Highest. Such is Calvinism, Quakerism, Swedenborgism.¹⁹ The pupil takes the same delight in subordinating everything to the new terminology as a girl who has just learned botany in seeing a new earth and new seasons thereby. It will happen for a time that the pupil will find his intellectual power has grown by the study of his master's mind. But in all unbalanced minds the classification is idolized, passes for the end and not for a speedily exhaustible means, so that the walls of the system blend to their eye in the remote horizon with the walls of the universe; the luminaries of heaven seem to them hung on the arch their master built. They cannot imagine how you aliens have any right to see,—how you can see; "It must be somehow that you stole the light from us." They do not yet perceive that light, unsystematic, indomitable, will break into any cabin, even into theirs. Let them chirp awhile and call it their own. If they are honest and do well, presently their neat new pinfold²⁰ will be too strait and low, will crack, will lean, will rot and vanish, and the immortal light, all young, and joyful, million-orbed, million-colored, will beam over the universe as on the first morning.

2. It is for want of self-culture that the superstition of Travelling, whose idols are Italy, England, Egypt, retains its fascination for all educated Americans. They who made England, Italy, or Greece venerable in the imagination, did so by sticking fast where they were, like an axis of the earth. In manly hours we feel that duty is our place. The soul is no traveller; the wise man stays at home, and when his necessities, his duties, on any occasion call him from his house, or into foreign lands, he is at

James Hutton, Scotch geologist; Fourier, French socialist.

¹⁹ Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772), Swedish philosopher and mystic.

²⁰ enclosure for animals.

¹⁷ a play by John Fletcher (1579–1625).

¹⁸ Locke . . . Fourier: Locke and Bentham, English philosophers; Lavoisier, French chemist;

home still and shall make men sensible by the expression of his countenance that he goes, the missionary of wisdom and virtue, and visits cities and men like a sovereign and not like an interloper or a valet.

I have no churlish objection to the circumnavigation of the globe for the purposes of art, of study, and benevolence, so that the man is first domesticated, or does not go abroad with the hope of finding somewhat greater than he knows. He who travels to be amused, or to get somewhat which he does not carry, travels away from himself, and grows old even in youth among old things. In Thebes, in Palmyra, his will and mind have become old and dilapidated as they. He carries ruins to ruins.

Travelling is a fool's paradise. Our first journeys discover to us the indifference of places. At home I dream that at Naples, at Rome, I can be intoxicated with beauty and lose my sadness. I pack my trunk, embrace my friends, embark on the sea and at last wake up in Naples, and there beside me is the stern fact, the sad self, unrelenting, identical, that I fled from. I seek the Vatican and the palaces. I affect to be intoxicated with sights and suggestions, but I am not intoxicated. My giant goes with me wherever I go.

3. But the rage of travelling is a symptom of a deeper unsoundness affecting the whole intellectual action. The intellect is vagabond, and our system of education fosters restlessness. Our minds travel when our bodies are forced to stay at home. We imitate; and what is imitation but the travelling of the mind? Our houses are built with foreign taste; our shelves are garnished with foreign ornaments; our opinions, our tastes, our faculties lean, and follow the Past and the Distant. The soul created the arts wherever they have flourished. It was in his own mind that the artist sought his model. It was an application of his own thought to the thing to be done and the conditions to be observed. And why need we copy the Doric or the Gothic model? Beauty, convenience, grandeur of thought and quaint expression are as near to us as to any, and if the American artist will study with hope and love the precise thing to be done by him, considering the climate, the soil, the length of the day, the wants of the people, the habit and form of the government, he will create a house in

which all these will find themselves fitted, and taste and sentiment will be satisfied also.

Insist on yourself, never imitate. Your own gift you can present every moment with the cumulative force of a whole life's cultivation; but of the adopted talent of another you have only an extemporaneous half possession. That which each can do best, none but his Maker can teach him. No man yet knows what it is, nor can, till that person has exhibited it. Where is the master who could have taught Shakspeare? Where is the master who could have instructed Franklin, or Washington, or Bacon, or Newton? Every great man is a unique. The Scipionism of Scipio is precisely that part he could not borrow. Shakspeare will never be made by the study of Shakspeare. Do that which is assigned you, and you cannot hope too much or dare too much. There is at this moment for you an utterance brave and grand as that of the colossal chisel of Phidias,²¹ or trowel of the Egyptians, or the pen of Moses or Dante, but different from all these. Not possibly will the soul, all rich, all eloquent, with thousand-cloven tongue, deign to repeat itself; but if you can hear what these patriarchs say, surely you can reply to them in the same pitch of voice; for the ear and the tongue are two organs of one nature. Abide in the simple and noble regions of thy life, obey thy heart, and thou shall reproduce the Foreworld again.

4. As our Religion, our Education, our Art look abroad, so does our spirit of society. All men plume themselves on the improvement of society, and no man improves.

Society never advances. It recedes as fast on one side as it gains on the other. It undergoes continual changes; it is barbarous, it is civilized, it is christianized, it is rich, it is scientific; but this change is not amelioration. For everything that is given something is taken. Society acquires new arts and loses old instincts. What a contrast between the well-clad, reading, writing, thinking American, with a watch, a pencil, and a bill of exchange in his pocket, and the naked New Zealander, whose property is a club, a spear, a mat, and an undivided twentieth of a shed to sleep under! But compare the health of the two men and you shall see that the white man has lost his aboriginal

²¹ Greek sculptor (c. 500-432 B.C.).

strength. If the traveller tell us truly, strike the savage with a broad-axe and in a day or two the flesh shall unite and heal as if you struck the blow into soft pitch, and the same blow shall send the white to his grave.

The civilized man has built a coach, but has lost the use of his feet. He is supported on crutches, but lacks so much support of muscle. He has a fine Geneva watch, but he fails of the skill to tell the hour by the sun. A Greenwich nautical almanac he has, and so being sure of the information when he wants it, the man in the street does not know a star in the sky. The solstice he does not observe, the equinox he knows as little; and the whole bright calendar of the year is without a dial in his mind. His note-books impair his memory; his libraries overload his wit; the insurance-office increases the number of accidents; and it may be a question whether machinery does not encumber; whether we have not lost by refinement some energy, by a Christianity, entrenched in establishments and forms, some vigor of wild virtue. For every Stoic was a Stoic; but in Christendom where is the Christian?

There is no more deviation in the moral standard than in the standard of height or bulk. No greater men are now than ever were. A singular equality may be observed between the great men of the first and of the last ages; nor can all the science, art, religion, and philosophy of the nineteenth century avail to educate greater men than Plutarch's heroes, three or four and twenty centuries ago. Not in time is the race progressive. Phocion,²² Socrates, Anaxagoras, Diogenes, are great men, but they leave no class. He who is really of their class will not be called by their name, but will be his own man, and in his turn the founder of a sect. The arts and inventions of each period are only its costume and do not invigorate men. The harm of the improved machinery may compensate its good. Hudson and Behring accomplished so much in their fishing-boats as to astonish Parry and Franklin,²³ whose equipment exhausted the resources of science and art. Galileo, with an opera-glass, discovered a more splendid series of celestial phenomena

than any one since. Columbus found the New World in an undecked boat. It is curious to see the periodical disuse and perishing of means and machinery which were introduced with loud laudation a few years or centuries before.

The great genius returns to essential man. We reckoned the improvements of the art of war among the triumphs of science, and yet Napoleon conquered Europe by the bivouac, which consisted of falling back on naked valor and disencumbering it of all aids. The Emperor held it impossible to make a perfect army, says Las Cases,²⁴ "without abolishing our arms, magazines, commissaries, and carriages, until, in imitation of the Roman custom, the soldier should receive his supply of corn, grind it in his handmill and bake his bread himself."

Society is a wave. The wave moves onward, but the water of which it is composed does not. The same particle does not rise from the valley to the ridge. Its unity is only phenomenal. The persons who make up a nation to-day, next year die, and their experience dies with them.

And so the reliance on Property, including the reliance on governments which protect it, is the want of self-reliance. Men have looked away from themselves and at things so long that they have come to esteem the religious, learned, and civil institutions as guards of property, and they deprecate assaults on these, because they feel them to be assaults on property. They measure their esteem of each other by what each has, and not by what each is. But a cultivated man becomes ashamed of his property, out of new respect for his nature. Especially he hates what he has if he see that it is accidental,—came to him by inheritance, or gift, or crime; then he feels that it is not having; it does not belong to him, has no root in him and merely lies there because no revolution or no robber takes it away. But that which a man is, does always by necessity acquire; and what the man acquires, is living property, which does not wait the beck of rulers, or mobs, or revolutions, or fire, or storm, or bankruptcies, but perpetually renews itself wherever the man breathes. "Thy lot or portion of life," said the

²² Creek general (402–317 B.C.).

²³ Parry . . . Franklin: Sir William Edward Parry and Sir John Franklin, nineteenth-century Arctic explorers.

²⁴ Voluntary exile with Napoleon on St. Helena; he served as Napoleon's secretary, and recorded Napoleon's life there.

Caliph Ali,²⁵ "is seeking after thee; therefore be at rest from seeking after it." Our dependence on these foreign goods leads us to our slavish respect for numbers. The political parties meet in numerous conventions, the greater the concourse and with each new uproar of announcement. The delegation from Essex! The Democrats from New Hampshire! The Whigs of Maine! the young patriot feels himself stronger than before by a new thousand of eyes and arms. In like manner the reformers summon conventions and vote and resolve in multitude. Not so, O friends! will the God design to enter and inhabit you, but by a method precisely the reverse. It is only as a man puts off all foreign support and stands alone that I see him to be strong and to prevail. He is weaker by every recruit to his banner. Is not a man better than a town? Ask nothing of men, and, in the endless mutation, thou only firm column must presently appear the upholder of all that surrounds thee. He who knows that power is inborn, that he is weak because he has looked for good out of him and elsewhere, and, so perceiving, throws himself unhesitatingly on his thought, instantly rights himself, stands in the erect position, commands his limbs, works miracles; just as a man who stands on his feet is stronger than a man who stands on his head.

So use all that is called Fortune. Most men gamble with her, and gain all, and lose all, as her wheel rolls. But do thou leave as unlawful these winnings, and deal with Cause and Effect, the chancellors of God. In the Will work and acquire, and thou hast chained the wheel of Chance, and shall sit hereafter out of fear from her rotations. A political victory, a rise of rents, the recovery of your sick or the return of your absent friend, or some other favorable event raises your spirits, and you think good days are preparing for you. Do not believe it. Nothing can bring you peace but yourself. Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of principles.

FRIENDSHIP

We have a great deal more kindness than is ever spoken. Barring all the selfishness that

²⁵ fourth Arabian caliph (seventh century), the son-in-law of Mohammed.

chills like east winds the world, the whole human family is bathed with an element of love like a fine ether. How many persons we meet in houses, whom we scarcely speak to, whom yet we honor, and who honor us! How many we see in the street, or sit with in church, whom, though silently, we warmly rejoice to be with! Read the language of these wandering eye-beams. The heart knoweth.

The effect of the indulgence of this human affection is a certain cordial exhilaration. In poetry, and in common speech, the emotions of benevolence and complacency which are felt toward others are likened to the material effects of fire, so swift, or much more swift, more active, more cheering are these fine inward irradiations. From the highest degree of passionate love to the lowest degree of good will they make the sweetness of life.

Our intellectual and active powers increase with our affection. The scholar sits down to write, and all his years of meditation do not furnish him with one good thought or happy expression; but it is necessary to write a letter to a friend, and, forthwith, troops of gentle thoughts invest themselves, on every hand, with chosen words. See in any house where virtue and self-respect abide the palpitation which the approach of a stranger causes. A commended stranger is expected and announced, and an uneasiness between pleasure and pain invades all the hearts of a household. His arrival almost brings fear to the good hearts that would welcome him. The house is dusted, all things fly into their places, the old coat is exchanged for the new, and they must get up a dinner if they can. Of a commended stranger, only the good report is told by others, only the good and new is heard by us. He stands to us for humanity. He is what we wish. Having imagined and invested him, we ask how we should stand related in conversation and action with such a man, and are uneasy with fear. The same idea exalts conversation with him. We talk better than we are wont. We have the numblest fancy, a richer memory, and our dumb devil has taken leave for the time. For long hours we can continue a series of sincere, graceful, rich communications, drawn from the oldest, secretest experience, so that they who sit by, of our own kinsfolk and acquaintance, shall feel a lively surprise at our unusual powers. But

as soon as the stranger begins to intrude his partialities, his definitions, his defects, into the conversation, it is all over. He has heard the first, the last and best, he will ever hear from us. He is no stranger now. Vulgarities, ignorance, misapprehension are old acquaintances. Now, when he comes, he may get the order, the dress, and the dinner, but the throbbing of the heart, and the communications of the soul, no more.

What is so pleasant as these jets of affection which relume a young world for me again? What is so delicious as a just and firm encounter of two, in a thought, in a feeling? How beautiful, on their approach to this beating heart, the steps and forms of the gifted and the true! The moment we indulge our affections, the earth is metamorphosed; there is no winter, and no night; all tragedies, all ennui¹ vanish, all duties even; nothing fills the proceeding eternity but the forms all radiant of beloved persons. Let the soul be assured that somewhere in the universe it should rejoin its friend, and it would be content and cheerful alone for a thousand years.

I awoke this morning with devout thanksgiving for my friends, the old and the new. Shall I not call God, the Beautiful, who daily showeth himself so to me in his gifts? I chide society, I embrace solitude, and yet I am not so ungrateful as not to see the wise, the lovely, and the noble-minded, as from time to time they pass my gate. Who hears me, who understand me, becomes mine—a possession for all time. Nor is Nature so poor but she gives me this joy several times, and thus we weave social threads of our own, a new web of relations; and, as many thoughts in succession substantiate themselves, we shall by-and-by stand in a new world of our own creation, and no longer strangers and pilgrims in a traditionary globe. My friends have come to me unsought. The great God gave them to me. By oldest right, by the divine affinity of virtue with itself, I find them, or rather, not I, but the Deity in me and in them, both derides and cancels the thick walls of individual character, relation, age, sex, and circumstance, at which he usually connives, and now makes many one. High thanks I owe you, excellent lovers, who carry out the world

for me to new and noble depths, and enlarge the meaning of all my thoughts. These are new poetry of the first bard—poetry without stop—hymn, ode, and epic, poetry still flowing, Apollo and the Muses chanting still. Will these two separate themselves from me again, or some of them? I know not, but I fear it not; for my relation to them is so pure that we hold by simple affinity, and, the genius of my life being thus social, the same affinity will exert its energy on whomsoever is as noble as these men and women, wherever I may be.

I confess to an extreme tenderness of nature on this point. It is almost dangerous to me to “crush the sweet poison of misused wine”² of the affections. A new person is to me a great event and hinders me from sleep. I have had such fine fancies lately about two or three persons as have given me delicious hours; but the joy ends in the day; it yields no fruit. Thought is not born of it; my action is very little modified. I must feel pride in my friend’s accomplishments as if they were mine, and a property in his virtues. I feel as warmly when he is praised, as the lover when he hears applause of his engaged maiden. We overestimate the conscience of our friend. His goodness seems better than our goodness, his nature finer, his temptations less. Everything that is his—his name, his form, his dress, books and instruments—fancy enhances. Our own thought sounds new and larger from his mouth.

Yet the systole and diastole of the heart are not without their analogy in the ebb and flow of love. Friendship, like the immortality of the soul, is too good to be believed. The lover, beholding his maiden, half knows that she is not verily that which he worships; and in the golden hour of friendship we are surprised with shades of suspicion and unbelief. We doubt that we bestow on our hero the virtues in which he shines, and afterwards worship the form to which we have ascribed this divine inhabitation. In strictness, the soul does not respect men as it respects itself. In strict science all persons underlie the same condition of an infinite remoteness. Shall we fear to cool our love by mining for the metaphysical foundation of this Elysian³ temple? Shall I not be as real as the

¹ wearinesses.

² From Milton’s *Comus*, l. 46.

³ heavenly, delightful.

things I see? If I am, I shall not fear to know them for what they are. Their essence is not less beautiful than their appearance, though it needs finer organs for it apprehension. The root of the plant is not unsightly to science, though for chaplets and festoons we cut the stem short. And I must hazard the production of the bald fact amid these pleasing reveries, though it should prove an Egyptian skull⁴ at our banquet. A man who stands united with his thought conceives magnificently to himself. He is conscious of a universal success, even though bought by uniform particular failures. No advantages, no powers, no gold or force can be any match for him. I cannot choose but rely on my own poverty more than on your wealth. I cannot make your consciousness tantamount to mine. Only the star dazzles; the planet has a faint, moon-like ray. I hear what you say of the admirable parts and tried temper of the party you praise, but I see well that for all his purple cloaks I shall not like him, unless he is at last a poor Greek⁵ like me. I cannot deny it, O friend, that the vast shadow of the Phenomenal⁶ includes thee, also, in its pied and painted immensity— thee, also, compared with whom all else is shadow. Thou art not Being, as Truth is, as Justice is; thou art not my soul, but a picture and effigy of that. Thou hast come to me lately, and already thou art seizing thy hat and cloak. Is it not that the soul puts forth friends, as the tree puts forth leaves, and presently, by the germination of new buds, extrudes the old leaf? The law of nature is alternation forevermore. Each electrical state superinduces the opposite. The soul environs itself with friends that it may enter into a grander self-acquaintance or solitude; and it goes alone, for a season, that it may exalt its conversation or society. This method betrays itself along the whole history of our personal relations. The instinct of affection revives the hope of union with our mates, and the returning sense of insulation recalls us from the chase. Thus every man passes his life in the search after friendship, and if he should record his true sentiment, he might write a letter like this, to each new candidate for his love:

⁴ Death's head at Egyptian banquets to remind the merry-makers to make the most of life's joys, since time is fleeting.

⁵ scholar.

⁶ the physical universe.

DEAR FRIEND:

If I was sure of thee, sure of thy capacity, sure to match my mood with thine, I should never think again of trifles in relation to thy comings and goings. I am not very wise, my moods are quite attainable, and I respect thy genius, it is to me as yet unfathomed; yet dare I not presume in thee a perfect intelligence of me, and so thou art to me a delicious torment. Thine ever, or never.

Yet these uneasy pleasures and fine pains are for curiosity, and not for life. They are not to be indulged. This is to weave cobweb, and not cloth. Our friendships hurry to short and poor conclusions because we have made them a texture of wine and dreams instead of the tough fiber of the human heart. The laws of friendship are great, austere, and eternal, of one web with the laws of nature and of morals. But we have aimed at a swift and petty benefit, to suck a sudden sweetness. We snatch at the slowest fruit in the whole garden of God, which many summers and many winters must ripen. We seek our friend not sacredly, but with an adulterate passion which would appropriate him to ourselves. In vain. We are aimed all over with subtle antagonisms, which, as soon as we meet, begin to play, and translate all poetry into stale prose. Almost all people descend to meet. All association must be a compromise, and, what is worst, the very flower and aroma of the flower of each of the beautiful natures disappear as they approach each other. What a perpetual disappointment is actual society, even of the virtuous and gifted! After interviews have been compassed with long foresight, we must be tormented presently by baffled blows, by sudden, unseasonable apathies, by epilepsies of wit and of animal spirits, in the heyday of friendship and thought. Our faculties do not play us true, and both parties are relieved by solitude.

I ought to be equal to every relation. It makes no difference how many friends I have, and what content I can find in conversing with each, if there be one to whom I am not equal. If I have shrunk unequal from one contest instantly, the joy I find in all the rest becomes mean and cowardly. I should hate myself, if then I made my other friends my asylum.

The valiant warrior famous^d for fight,
After a hundred victories, once foiled,

Is from the book of honor razéd quite,
And all the rest forgot for which he toiled.⁷

Our impatience is thus sharply rebuked. Bashfulness and apathy are a tough husk in which a delicate organization is protected from premature ripening. It would be lost if it knew itself before any of the best souls were yet ripe enough to know and own it. Respect the *naturlangsamkett*⁸ which hardens the ruby in a million years, and works in duration, in which Alps and Andes come and go as rainbows. The good spirit of our life has no heaven which is the price of rashness. Love, which is the essence of God, is not for levity, but for the total worth of man. Let us not have this childish luxury in our regards, but the austere worth; let us approach our friend with an audacious trust in the truth of his heart, in the breadth, impossible to be overturned, of his foundations.

The attractions of this subject are not to be resisted, and I leave, for the time, all account of subordinate social benefit, to speak of that select and sacred relation which is a kind of absolute, and which even leaves the language of love suspicious and common, so much is this purer, and nothing is so much divine.

I do not wish to treat friendships daintily, but with roughest courage. When they are real, they are not glass threads or frost-work, but the solidest thing we know. For now, after so many ages of experience, what do we know of nature, or of ourselves? Not one step has been taken toward the solution of the problem of his destiny. In one condemnation of folly stand the whole universe of men. But the sweet sincerity of joy and peace, which I draw from this alliance with my brother's soul, is the nut itself whereof all nature and all thought is but the husk and shell. Happy is the house that shelters a friend! It might well be built, like a festal bower or arch, to entertain him a single day. Happier, if he know the solemnity of that relation, and honor its law! He who offers himself a candidate for that covenant comes up like an Olympian⁹ to the great games where the first-born of the world are the competitors. He proposes himself for contests where Time,

Want, Danger are in the lists, and he alone is victor who has truth enough in his constitution to preserve the delicacy of his beauty from the wear and tear of all these. The gifts of fortune may be present or absent, but all the hap in that contest depends on intrinsic nobleness and the contempt of trifles. There are two elements that go to the composition of friendship, each so sovereign that I can detect no superiority in either, no reason why either should be first named. One is Truth. A friend is a person with whom I may be sincere. Before him, I may think aloud. I am arrived at last in the presence of a man so real and equal that I may drop even those undermost garments of dissimulation, courtesy, and second thought, which men never put off, and may deal with him with the simplicity and wholeness with which one chemical atom meets another. Sincerity is the luxury allowed, like diadems and authority, only to the highest rank, that being permitted to speak truth as having none above it to court or conform unto. Every man alone is sincere. At the entrance of a second person hypocrisy begins. We parry and fend the approach of our fellow-man by compliments, by gossip, by amusements, by affairs. We cover up our thought from him under a hundred folds. I knew a man who, under a certain religious frenzy, cast off this drapery, and, omitting all compliments and commonplace, spoke to the conscience of every person he encountered, and that with great insight and beauty. At first he was resisted, and all men agreed he was mad. By persisting, as indeed he could not help doing, for some time in this course, he attained to the advantage of bringing every man of his acquaintance into true relations with him. No man would think of speaking falsely with him, or of putting him off with any chat of markets or reading-rooms. But every man was constrained by so much sincerity to the like plain dealing, and what love of nature, what poetry, what symbol of truth he had, he did certainly show him. But to most of us society shows not its face and eye, but its side and its back. To stand in true relations with men in a false age is worth a fit of insanity, is it not? We can seldom go erect. Almost every man we meet requires some civility, requires to be humored; he has some fame, some talent, some whim of religion or philanthropy in his head that is not to be questioned,

⁷ From Shakespeare, Sonnet XXV, inexactly quoted.

⁸ slow processes of nature.

⁹ one taking part in the Olympic games of ancient Greece.

and which spoils all conversation with him. But a friend is a sane man who exercises not my ingenuity, but me. My friend gives me entertainment without requiring any stipulation on my part. A friend, therefore, is a sort of paradox in nature. I who alone am, I who see nothing in nature whose existence I can affirm with equal evidence to my own, behold now the semblance of my being in all its height, variety, and curiosity reiterated in a foreign form; so that a friend may well be reckoned the masterpiece of nature.

The other element of friendship is tenderness. We are holden to men by every sort of tie, by blood, by pride, by fear, by hope, by lucre, by lust, by hate, by admiration, by every circumstance and badge and trifle, but we can scarce believe that so much character can subsist in another as to draw us by love. Can another be so blessed, and we so pure, that we can offer him tenderness? When a man becomes dear to me, I have touched the goal of fortune. I find very little written directly to the heart of this matter in books. And yet I have one text which I cannot choose but remember. My author¹⁰ says: "I offer myself faintly and bluntly to those whose I effectually am, and tender myself least to him to whom I am the most devoted." I wish that friendship should have feet, as well as eyes and eloquence. It must plant itself on the ground before it vaults over the moon. I wish it to be a little of a citizen before it is quite a cherub. We chide the citizen because he makes love a commodity. It is an exchange of gifts, of useful loans, it is good neighborhood, it watches with the sick, it holds the pall of the funeral, and quite loses sight of the delicacies and nobility of the relation. But though we cannot find the god under this disguise of a sutler, yet, on the other hand, we cannot forgive the poet if he spins his thread too fine, and does not substantiate his romance by the municipal virtues of justice, punctuality, fidelity, and pity. I hate the prostitution of the name of friendship to signify modish and worldly alliances. I much prefer the company of plowboys and tin-peddlers to the silken and perfumed amity which only celebrates its days of encounter by a frivolous display, by rides in a curricle, and dinners at the best taverns. The

end of friendship is a commerce the most strict and homely that can be joined, more strict than any of which we have experience. It is for aid and comfort through all the relations and passages of life and death. It is fit for serene days, and graceful gifts, and country rambles, but also for rough roads and hard fare, shipwreck, poverty, and persecution. It keeps company with the sallies of the wit and the trances of religion. We are to dignify to each other the daily needs and offices of man's life and embellish it by courage, wisdom, and unity. It should never fall into something usual and settled, but should be alert and inventive and add rime and reason to what was drudgery.

Friendship may be said to require natures so rare and costly, each so well tempered, and so happily adapted, and withal so circumstanced (for even in that particular, a poet says, love demands that the parties be altogether paired) that its satisfaction can very seldom be assured. It cannot subsist in its perfection, say some of those who are learned in this warm lore of the heart, betwixt more than two. I am not quite so strict in my terms, perhaps because I have never known so high a fellowship as others. I please my imagination more with a circle of godlike men and women variously related to each other and between whom subsists a lofty intelligence. But I find this law of *one to one* peremptory for conversation, which is the practice and consummation of friendship. Do not mix waters too much. The best mix as ill as good and bad. You shall have very useful and cheering discourse at several times with two several men, but let all three of you come together, and you shall not have one new and hearty word. Two may talk and one may hear, but three cannot take part in a conversation of the most sincere and searching sort. In good company there is never such discourse between two, across the table, as takes place when you leave them alone. In good company the individuals at once merge their egotism into a social soul exactly coextensive with the several consciousnesses there present. No partialities of friend to friend, no fondnesses of brother to sister, of wife to husband, are there pertinent, but quite otherwise. Only he may then speak who can sail on the common thought of the party, and not poorly limited to his own. Now this convention, which good sense demands,

¹⁰ Montaigne.

Is from the book of honor razéd quite,
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⁷ From Shakespeare, Sonnet XXV, inexactly quoted.

⁸ slow processes of nature.

⁹ one taking part in the Olympic games of ancient Greece.

at least this satisfaction in crime, according to the Latin proverb: you can speak to your accomplice on even terms. *Crimen quos inquinat, aequat*.¹¹ To those whom we admire and love, at first we cannot. Yet the least defect of self-possession vitiates, in my judgment, the entire relation. There can never be deep peace between two spirits, never mutual respect, until, in their dialogue, each stands for the whole world.

What is so great as friendship, let us carry with what grandeur of spirit we can. Let us be silent, so we may hear the whisper of the gods. Let us not interfere. Who set you to cast about what you should say to the select souls, or how to say anything to such? No matter how ingenious, no matter how graceful and bland. There are innumerable degrees of folly and wisdom, and for you to say aught is to be frivolous. Wait, and the heart shall speak. Wait until the necessary and everlasting overpowers you, until day and night avail themselves of your lips. The only reward of virtue is virtue; the only way to have a friend is to be one. You shall not come nearer a man by getting into his house. If unlike, his soul only flees the faster from you, and you shall catch never a true glance of his eye. We see the noble afar off, and they repel us; why should we intrude? Late—very late—we perceive that no arrangements, no introductions, no consuetudes¹² or habits of society would be of any avail to establish us in such relations with them as we desire, but solely the uprising of nature in us to the same degree it is in them; then shall we meet as water with water; and if we should not meet them then, we shall not want them, for we are already they. In the last analysis, love is only the reflection of a man's own worthiness from other men. Men have sometimes exchanged names with their friends, as if they would signify that in their friend each loved his own soul.

The higher the style we demand of friendship, of course the less easy to establish it with flesh and blood. We walk alone in the world. Friends such as we desire are dreams and fables. But a sublime hope cheers ever the faithful heart, that elsewhere, in other regions of the

universal power, souls are now acting, enduring, and daring, which can love us, and which we can love. We may congratulate ourselves that the period of nonage, of follies, of blunders, and of shame, is passed in solitude, and when we are finished men, we shall grasp heroic hands in heroic hands. Only be admonished by what you already see, not to strike leagues of friendship with cheap persons, where no friendship can be. Our impatience betrays us into rash and foolish alliances which no God attends. By persisting in your path, though you forfeit the little, you gain the great. You demonstrate yourself, so as to put yourself out of the reach of false relations, and you draw to you the first-born of the world, those rare pilgrims whereof only one or two wander in nature at once, and before whom the vulgar great show as specters and shadows merely.

It is foolish to be afraid of making our ties too spiritual, as if so we could lose any genuine love. Whatever correction of our popular views we make from insight, nature will be sure to bear us out in, and though it seem to rob us of some joy, will repay us with a greater. Let us feel, if we will, the absolute isolation of man. We are sure that we have all in us. We go to Europe, or we pursue persons, or we read books, in the instinctive faith that these will call it out and reveal us to ourselves. Beggars all. The persons are such as we; the Europe, an old faded garment of dead persons; the books, their ghosts. Let us drop this idolatry. Let us give over this mendicancy. Let us even bid our dearest friends farewell, and defy them, saying, "Who are you? Unhand me. I will be dependent no more." Ah! seest thou not, O brother, that thus we part only to meet again on a higher platform, and only be more each other's, because we are more our own? A friend is Janus-faced;¹³ he looks to the past and the future. He is the child of all my foregoing hours, the prophet of those to come, and the harbinger of a greater friend.

I do then with my friends as I do with my books. I would have them where I can find them, but I seldom use them. We must have society on our own terms, and admit or exclude it on the slightest cause. I cannot afford to

¹¹ Guilt puts on a level those whom it defiles; from Lucan's *Pharsalia*, V, 290, inaccurately quoted by Emerson.

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¹³ Janus was the Roman god of gates and doors and was represented with two faces looking in opposite directions.

speak much with my friend. If he is great, he makes me so great that I cannot descend to converse. In the great days presentiments hover before me, far before me in the firmament. I ought then to dedicate myself to them. I go in that I may seize them; I go out that I may seize them. I fear only that I may lose them receding into the sky in which now they are only a patch of brighter light. Then, though I prize my friends, I cannot afford to talk with them and study their visions, lest I lose my own. It would indeed give me a certain household joy to quit this lofty seeking, this spiritual astronomy, or search of stars, and come down to warm sympathies with you; but then I know well I shall mourn always the vanishing of my mighty gods. It is true, next week I shall have languid moods when I can well afford to occupy myself with foreign objects; then I shall regret the lost literature of your mind, and wish you were by my side again. But if you come, perhaps you will fill my mind only with new visions, not with yourself but with your lusters, and I shall not be able any more than now to converse with you. So I will owe to my friends this evanescent intercourse. I will receive from them, not what they have, but what they are. They shall give me that which properly they cannot give, but which emanates from them. But they shall not hold me by any relations less subtle and pure. We will meet as though we met not, and part as though we parted not.

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THOMAS CARLYLE 1795–1881

10 *That Thomas Carlyle berated the age in which he lived does not mean that he was a prophet of despair. His fiery, denunciatory preaching was intended to show man the error of his ways and set him on the right path. He proclaimed*
 15 *the truth as he saw it, unpalatable though that truth might be. He denounced Mammon worship when material gain or money-getting was held to be the measure of one's success in life. He inveighed against democracy because he*
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LABOR

45 There is a perennial nobleness, and even sacredness, in Work. Were he never so benighted, forgetful of his high calling, there is always hope in a man that actually and earnestly works; in Idleness alone is there perpetual despair. Work, never so Mammonish,¹ mean, is in

¹ from Mammon, the god of riches.

communication with Nature; the real desire to get Work done will itself lead one more and more to truth, to Nature's appointments and regulations, which are truth.

The latest Gospel in this world is, Know thy work and do it, "Know thyself": long enough has that poor "self" of thine tormented thee, thou wilt never get to "know" it, I believe! Think it not thy business, this of knowing thyself; thou art an unknowable individual: know what thou canst work at, and work at it, like a Hercules! That will be thy better plan.

It has been written, "an endless significance lies in Work"; a man perfects himself by working. Foul jungles are cleared away, fair seed-fields rise instead, and stately cities; and withal the man himself first ceases to be a jungle and foul unwholesome desert thereby. Consider how, even in the meanest sorts of Labor, the whole soul of a man is composed into a kind of real harmony the instant he sets himself to work! Doubt, Desire, Sorrow, Remorse, Indignation, Despair itself, all these, like hell-dogs, lie beleaguering the soul of the poor day-worker, as of every man; but he bends himself with free valor against his task, and all these are stilled, all these shrink murmuring far off into their caves. The man is now a man. The blessed glow of Labor in him, is it not as purifying fire, wherem all poison is burned up, and of sour smoke itself there is made bright blessed flame!

Destiny, on the whole, has no other way of cultivating us. A formless Chaos, once set it *revolving*, grows round and ever rounder; ranges itself, by mere force of gravity, into strata, spherical courses; is no longer a Chaos, but a round compacted world. What would become of the Earth did she cease to revolve? In the poor old Earth, so long as she revolves, all inequalities, irregularities disperse themselves; all irregularities are incessantly becoming regular. Hast thou looked on the Potter's wheel—one of the venerablest objects; old as the Prophet Ezekiel² and far older? Rude lumps of clay, how they spin themselves up, by mere quick whirling, into beautiful circular dishes. And fancy the most assiduous Potter, but without his wheel; reduced to make dishes or rather amorphous botches, by mere kneading and bak-

ing! Even such a Potter were Destiny, with a human soul that would rest and lie at ease, that would not work and spin! Of an idle unrevolving man the kindest Destiny, like the most assiduous Potter without wheel, can bake and knead nothing other than a botch; let her spend on him what expensive coloring, what gilding and enameling she will, he is but a botch. Not a dish; no, a bulging, kneaded, crooked, shambling, squint-cornered, amorphous botch—a mere enameled vessel of dishonor! Let the idle think of this.

Blessed is he who has found his work; let him ask no other blessedness. He has a work, a life-purpose; he has found it, and will follow it! How, as a free-flowing channel, dug and torn by noble force through the sour mud-swamp of one's existence, like an ever-deepening river there, it runs and flows,—draining off the sour festering water gradually from the root of the remotest grass-blade; making, instead of pestilential swamp, a green fruitful meadow with its clear-flowing stream. How blessed for the meadow itself, let the stream and its value be great or small! Labor is Life, from the inmost heart of the Worker rises his god-given Force, the sacred celestial Life-essence breathed into him by Almighty God; from his inmost heart awakens him to all nobleness—to all knowledge, "self-knowledge" and much else, so soon as Work fitly begins. Knowledge? The knowledge that will hold good in working, cleave thou to that, for Nature herself accredits that, says Yea to that. Properly thou hast no other knowledge but what thou hast got by working; the rest is yet all a hypothesis of knowledge; a thing to be argued of in schools, a thing floating in the clouds, in endless logic-vortices, till we try it and fix it. "Doubt, of whatever kind, can be ended by action alone."

And again, hast thou valued Patience, Courage, Perseverance, Openness to light; readiness to own thyself mistaken, to do better next time? All these, all virtues, in wrestling with the dim brute Powers of Fact, in ordering of thy fellows in such wrestle, there and elsewhere not at all, thou wilt continually learn. Set down a brave Sir Christopher³ in the middle of black ruined Stone-heaps, of foolish unarchitectural Bishops,

³ Sir Christopher Wren (1632–1723), architect of St. Paul's cathedral, rebuilt after the London fire in 1666.

² Not in Ezekiel; in Jeremiah 18:3, 4.

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tumultuous unmeasured World here round thee is; thou, in thy strong soul, as with wrestler's arms, shalt embrace it, harness it down; and make it bear thee on—to new Americas, or whither God will!

THE BATTLEFIELD OF LIFE

For all human things do require to have an Ideal in them; to have some Soul in them, as we said, were it only to keep the Body unputrefied. And wonderful it is to see how the Ideal or Soul, place it in what ugliest Body you may, will irradiate said Body with its own nobleness; will gradually, incessantly, mold, modify, new-form or reform said ugliest Body, and make it at last beautiful, and to a certain degree divine! —Oh, if you could dethrone that Brute-god Mammon,¹ and put a Spirit-god in his place! One way or other, he must and will have to be dethroned.

Fighting, for example, as I often say to myself, Fighting with steel murder-tools is surely a much uglier operation than Working, take it how you will. Yet even of Fighting, in religious Abbot Samson's² days, see what a Feudalism there had grown,—a 'glorious Chivalry,' much besung down to the present day. Was not that one of the 'impossiblest' things? Under the sky is no uglier spectacle than two men with clenched teeth, and hell-fire eyes, hacking one another's flesh, converting precious living bodies, and priceless living souls, into nameless masses of putrescence, useful only for turnip-manure. How did a Chivalry ever come out of that; how anything that was not hideous, scandalous, infernal? It will be a question worth considering by and by.

I remark, for the present, only two things: first, that the Fighting itself was not, as we rashly suppose it, a Fighting without cause, but more or less with cause. Man is created to fight; he is perhaps best of all definable as a born soldier; his life 'a battle and a march,' under the right General. It is forever indispensable for a man to fight: now with Necessity, with Barrenness, Scarcity, with Puddles, Bogs, tangled Forests, unkempt Cotton;—now also with the hallucinations of his poor fellow Men. Hal-

lucinatory visions rise in the head of my poor fellow man; make him claim over me rights which are not his. All fighting, as we noticed long ago, is the dusty conflict of strengths, each thinking itself the strongest, or, in other words, the justest;—of Might which do in the long-run, and forever will in this just Universe in the long-run, mean Rights. In conflict the perishable part of them, beaten sufficiently, flies off into dust; this process ended, appears the imperishable, the true and exact.

And now let us remark a second thing: how, in these baleful operations, a noble devout-hearted Chevalier will comport himself, and an ignoble godless Buccaneer and Chactaw Indian. Victory is the aim of each. But deep in the heart of the noble man it lies forever legible, that as an Invisible Just God made him, so will and must God's Justice and this only, were it never so invisible, ultimately prosper in all controversies and enterprises and battles whatsoever. What an Influence; ever present,—like a Soul in the rudest Caliban of a body; like a ray of Heaven, and illuminative creative *Fiat-Lux*,³ in the wastest terrestrial Chaos! Blessed divine Influence, traceable even in the horror of Battlefields and garments rolled in blood: how it ennobles even the Battlefield; and, in place of a Chactaw Massacre, makes it a Field of Honor! A Battlefield too, is great. Considered well, it is a kind of Quintessence of Labor, Labor distilled into its utmost concentration; the significance of years of it compressed into an hour. Here too thou shalt be strong, and not in muscle only, if thou wouldst prevail. Here too thou shalt be strong of heart, noble of soul; thou shalt dread no pain or death, thou shalt not love ease or life; in rage, thou shalt remember mercy, justice,—thou shalt be a Knight and not a Chactaw, if thou wouldst prevail! It is the rule of all battles, against hallucinating fellow Men, against unkempt Cotton, or whatsoever battles they may be, which a man in this world has to fight.

Howel Davies dyes the West-Indian Seas with blood, piles his decks with plunder; approves himself the expertest Seaman, the daringest Seafighter: but he gains no lasting victory, lasting victory is not possible for him. Not, had he fleets larger than the combined British

¹ God of riches.

² The hero of the chronicle of Jovelin de Brekelond (fl. 1200).

³ Let there be light. See Genesis 1:3.

Navy all united with him in bucaniering. He, once for all, cannot prosper in his duel. He strikes down his man: yes; but his man, or his man's representative, has no notion to lie struck down; neither, though slain ten times, will he keep so lying;—nor has the Universe any notion to keep him so lying! On the contrary, the Universe and he have, at all moments, all manner of motives to start up again, and desperately fight again. Your Napoleon is flung out, at last, to St. Helena; the latter end of him sternly compensating the beginning. The Bucanier strikes down a man, a hundred or a million men: but what profits it? He has one enemy never to be struck down, nay two enemies: Mankind and the Maker of Men. On the great scale or on the small, in fighting of men or fighting of difficulties, I will not embark my venture with Howel Davies: it is not the Bucanier, it is the Hero only that can gain victory, that can do more than *seem* to succeed. These things will deserve meditating; for they apply to all battle and soldiership, all struggle and effort whatsoever in this Fight of Life. It is a poor Gospel, Cash-Gospel or whatever name it have, that does not, with clear tone, uncontradictable, carrying conviction to all hearts, forever keep men in mind of these things. . . .

HENRY DAVID THOREAU
1817-1862

Every man is something of a rebel, and the interest that Henry David Thoreau still holds for us derives in no small measure from his engaging recalcitrance, his disposition to oppose things as they are. "The order of things should be somewhat reversed," he said as a young man. And later in life he was to argue that civil disobedience, rather than obedience, should at times be advised, as when the state is in the wrong. So he refused to pay taxes to a state that approved of slavery. He showed his disapproval of the conventional order in other ways, too. According to Emerson, he never went to church and never voted. Nor did he work in the ordinary sense. "I have as many trades as fingers," he said—he was primarily carpenter, surveyor, pencil-maker—but he plied his trades only when he needed to supply his wants. For two years he lived in a hut on Walden Pond to prove his point that by working very little a

man could give his time to books and nature and so cultivate his mind and spirit. Thoreau's Walden (1854), one of the world's best nature books, is the record of his experiment. Both the following selections are from that work. They should be read in connection with White's "Walden" (II, 280), Stevenson's "An Apology for Idlers" (II, 175), and Atkinson's "Thoreau," (II, 389).

WHERE I LIVED, AND WHAT
I LIVED FOR

At a certain season of our life we are accustomed to consider every spot as the possible site of a house. I have thus surveyed the country on every side within a dozen miles of where I live. In imagination I have bought all the farms in succession, for all were to be bought, and I knew their price. I walked over each farmer's premises, tasted his wild apples, discoursed on husbandry with him, took his farm at his price, at any price, mortgaging it to him in my mind; even put a higher price on it,—took everything but a deed of it,—took his word for his deed, for I dearly love to talk,—cultivated it, and him too to some extent, I trust, and withdrew when I had enjoyed it long enough, leaving him to carry it on. This experience entitled me to be regarded as a sort of real-estate broker by my friends. Wherever I sat, there I might live, and the landscape radiated from me accordingly. What is a house but a *sedes*, a seat?—better if a country seat. I discovered many a site for a house not likely to be soon improved, which some might have thought too far from the village, but to my eyes the village was too far from it. Well, there I might live, I said; and there I did live, for an hour, a summer and a winter life; saw how I could let the years run off, buffet the winter through, and see the spring come in. The future inhabitants of this region, wherever they may place their houses, may be sure that they have been anticipated. An afternoon sufficed to lay out the land into orchard, wood-lot, and pasture, and to decide what fine oaks or pines should be left to stand before the door, and whence each blasted tree could be seen to the best advantage; and then I let it lie, fallow perchance, for a man is rich in proportion to the number of things which he can afford to let alone.

My imagination carried me so far that I even had the refusal of several farms,—the refusal was all I wanted,—but I never got my fingers burned by actual possession. The nearest that I came to actual possession was when I bought the Hollowell place, and had begun to sort my seeds, and collected materials with which to make a wheelbarrow to carry it on or off with, but before the owner gave me a deed of it, his wife—every man has such a wife—changed her mind and wished to keep it, and he offered me ten dollars to release him. Now, to speak the truth, I had but ten cents in the world, and it surpassed my arithmetic to tell, if I was that man who had ten cents, or who had a farm, or ten dollars, or all together. However, I let him keep the ten dollars and the farm too, for I had carried it far enough, or rather, to be generous, I sold him the farm for just what I gave for it, and, as he was not a rich man, made him a present of ten dollars, and still had my ten cents, and seeds, and materials for a wheelbarrow left. I found thus that I had been a rich man without any damage to my poverty. But I retained the landscape, and I have since annually carried off what it yielded without a wheelbarrow. With respect to landscapes,—

"I am monarch of all I survey.

My right there is none to dispute."¹

I have frequently seen a poet withdraw, having enjoyed the most valuable part of a farm, while the crusty farmer supposed that he had got a few wild apples only. Why, the owner does not know it for many years when a poet has put his farm in rhyme, the most admirable kind of invisible fence, has fairly impounded it, milked it, skimmed it, and got all the cream, and left the farmer only the skimmed milk.

The real attractions of the Hollowell farm, to me, were: its complete retirement, being about two miles from the village, half a mile from the nearest neighbor, and separated from the highway by a broad field; its bounding on the river, which the owner said protected it by its fogs from frosts in the spring, though that was nothing to me, the gray color and ruinous

state of the house and barn, and the dilapidated fences, which put such an interval between me and the last occupant, the hollow and lichen-covered apple trees, gnawed by rabbits, showing what kind of neighbors I should have, but above all the recollection I had of it from my earliest voyages up the river, when the house was concealed behind a dense grove of red maples, through which I heard the house-dog bark. I was in haste to buy it, before the proprietor finished getting out some rocks, cutting down the hollow apple trees, and grubbing up some young birches which had sprung up in the pasture, or, in short, had made any more of his improvements. To enjoy these advantages I was ready to carry it on; like Atlas, to take the world on my shoulders,—I never heard what compensation he received for that,—and do all those things which had no other motive or excuse but that I might pay for it and be unmolested in my possession of it, for I knew all the while that it would yield the most abundant crop of the kind I wanted, if I could only afford to let it alone. But it turned out as I have said.

All that I could say, then, with respect to farming on a large scale—I have always cultivated a garden—was, that I had had my seeds ready. Many think that seeds improve with age. I have no doubt that time discriminates between the good and the bad, and when at last I shall plant, I shall be less likely to be disappointed. But I would say to my fellows, once for all. As long as possible live free and uncommitted. It makes but little difference whether you are committed to a farm or the county jail.

Old Cato, whose *De Re Rusticæ*² is my *Cultivator*, says,—and the only translation I have seen makes sheer nonsense of the passage,—“When you think of getting a farm turn it thus in your mind, not to buy greedily; nor spare your pains to look at it, and do not think it enough to go round it once. The oftener you go there the more it will please you, if it is good.” I think I shall not buy greedily, but go round and round it as long as I live, and be buried in it first, that it may please me the more at last.

¹ From “Imaginary Verses of Alexander Selkirk,” by William Cowper (1731–1800). Selkirk, a privateer, was put ashore on an uninhabited island. His experiences there gave Defoe the basis for *Robinson Crusoe*.

The present was my next experiment of this kind, which I purpose to describe more at

² *On Farming*, by the Elder Cato (234–149 B.C.).

length, for convenience putting the experience of two years into one. As I have said I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag as lustily as chanticleer in the morning, standing on his roost, if only to wake my neighbors up.

When first I took up my abode in the woods, that is, began to spend my nights as well as days there, which, by accident, was on Independence Day, or the Fourth of July, 1845, my house was not finished for winter, but was merely a defence against the rain, without plastering or chimney, the walls being of rough, weather-stained boards, with wide chinks, which made it cool at night. The upright white hewn studs and freshly planed door and window casings gave it a clean and airy look, especially in the morning, when its timbers were saturated with dew, so that I fancied that by noon some sweet gum would exude from them. To my imagination it retained throughout the day more or less of this auroral character, reminding me of a certain house on a mountain which I had visited a year before. This was an airy and unplastered cabin, fit to entertain a travelling god, and where a goddess might trail her garments. The winds which passed over my dwelling were such as sweep over the ridges of mountains, bearing the broken strains, or celestial parts only, of terrestrial music. The morning wind forever blows, the poem of creation is uninterrupted: but few are the ears that hear it. Olympus is but the outside of the earth everywhere.

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"An abode without birds is like a meat without seasoning." Such was not my abode, for I found myself suddenly neighbor to the birds; not by having imprisoned one, but having caged myself near them. I was not only nearer to some of those which commonly frequent the garden and the orchard, but to those wilder and more thrilling songsters of the forest which never, or rarely, serenade a villager,—the wood thrush, the veery, the scarlet tanager, the field sparrow, the whip-poor-will, and many others.

I was seated by the shore of a small pond, about a mile and a half south of the village of Concord and somewhat higher than it, in the midst of an extensive wood between that town and Lincoln, and about two miles south of that our only field known to fame, Concord Battle Ground; but I was so low in the woods that the opposite shore, half a mile off, like the rest, covered with wood, was my most distant horizon. For the first week, whenever I looked out on the pond it impressed me like a tarn high up on the side of a mountain, its bottom far above the surface of other lakes, and, as the sun arose, I saw it throwing off its nightly clothing of mist, and here and there, by degrees, its soft ripples or its smooth reflecting surface was revealed, while the mists, like ghosts, were stealthily withdrawing in every direction into the woods, as at the breaking up of some nocturnal convective. The very dew seemed to hang upon the trees later into the day than usual, as on the sides of mountains.

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looked between and over the near green hills to some distant and higher ones in the horizon, tinged with blue. Indeed, by standing on tiptoe I could catch a glimpse of some of the peaks of the still bluer and more distant mountain ranges in the northwest, those true-blue coins from heaven's own mint, and also of some portion of the village. But in other directions, even from this point, I could not see over or beyond the woods which surrounded me. It is well to have some water in your neighborhood, to give buoyancy to and float the earth. One value even of the smallest well is, that when you look into it you see that earth is not continent but insular. This is as important as that it keeps but-
 5 ter cool. When I looked across the pond from this peak toward the Sudbury meadows, which in time of flood I distinguished elevated perhaps by a mirage in their seething valley, like a coin in a basin, all the earth beyond the pond appeared like a thin crust insulated and floated even by this small sheet of intervening water, and I was reminded that this on which I dwelt was but *dry land*.

Though the view from my door was still more contracted, I did not feel crowded or confined in the least. There was pasture enough for my imagination. The low shrub oak plateau to which the opposite shore arose stretched away toward the prairies of the West and the steppes of Tartary, affording ample room for all the roving families of men. "There are none happy in the world but beings who enjoy freely a vast horizon,"—said Damodara,⁴ when his herds required new and larger pastures.

Both place and time were changed, and I dwelt nearer to those parts of the universe and to those eras in history which had most attracted me. Where I lived was as far off as many a region viewed nightly by astronomers. We are wont to imagine rare and delectable places in some remote and more celestial corner of the system, behind the constellation of Cassiopeia's Chair, far from noise and disturbance. I discovered that my house actually had its site in such a withdrawn, but forever new and un-
 45 profaned, part of the universe. If it were worth the while to settle in those parts near to the Pleiades or the Hyades, to Aldebaran or Altair, then I was really there, or at an equal remote-

ness from the life which I had left behind, dwindled and twinkling with as fine a ray to my nearest neighbor, and to be seen only in moonless nights by him. Such was that part of
 5 creation where I had squatted;

"There was a shepherd that did live,
 And held his thoughts as high
 As where the mounts whereon his flocks
 Did hourly feed him by."

What should we think of the shepherd's life if his flocks always wandered to higher pastures than his thoughts?

Every morning was a cheerful invitation to make my life of equal simplicity, and I may say innocence, with Nature herself. I have been as sincere a worshipper of Aurora as the Greeks. I got up early and bathed in the pond; that was a religious exercise, and one of the best things which I did. They say that characters were en-
 20 graven on the bathing tub of King Tching-thang to this effect: "Renew thyself completely each day; do it again, and again, and forever again." I can understand that. Morning brings back the heroic ages. I was as much affected by the faint hum of a mosquito making its invisible and unimaginable tour through my apartment at earliest dawn, when I was sitting with door and windows open, as I could be by any trumpet that ever sang of fame. It was Homer's requiem; itself an Iliad and Odyssey in the air, singing its own wrath and wanderings. There was something cosmical about it; a standing advertisement, till forbidden, of the everlasting
 35 vigor and fertility of the world. The morning, which is the most memorable season of the day, is the awakening hour. Then there is least somnolence in us; and for an hour, at least, some part of us awakes which slumbers all the rest of the day and night. Little is to be expected of that day, if it can be called a day, to which we are not awakened by our Genius, but by the mechanical nudgings of some servitor, are not awakened by our own newly acquired force
 45 and aspirations from within, accompanied by the undulations of celestial music, instead of factory bells, and a fragrance filling the air—to a higher life than we fell asleep from; and thus the darkness bear its fruit, and prove itself to be good, no less than the light. That man who does not believe that each day contains an earlier, more sacred, and auroral hour than he

⁴ an eleventh-century Sanskrit poet.

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federacy, made up of petty states, with its boundary forever fluctuating, so that even a German cannot tell you how it is bounded at any moment. The nation itself, with all its so-called internal improvements, which, by the way are all external and superficial, is just such an unwieldy and overgrown establishment, cluttered with furniture and tripped up by its own traps, ruined by luxury and heedless expense, by want of calculation and a worthy aim, as the million households in the land, and the only cure for it, as for them, is in a rigid economy, a stern and more than Spartan simplicity of life and elevation of purpose. It lives too fast. Men think that it is essential that the *Nation* have commerce, and export ice, and talk through a telegraph, and ride thirty miles an hour, without a doubt, whether *they* do or not; but whether we should live like baboons or like men, is a little uncertain. If we do not get out sleepers,⁹ and forge rails, and devote days and nights to the work, but go to tinkering upon our *lives* to improve *them*, who will build railroads? And if railroads are not built, how shall we get to heaven in season? But if we stay at home and mind our business, who will want railroads? We do not ride on the railroad, it rides upon us. Did you ever think what those sleepers are that underlie the railroad? Each one is a man, an Irishman, or a Yankee man. The rails are laid on them, and they are covered with sand, and the cars run smoothly over them. They are sound sleepers, I assure you. And every few years a new lot is laid down and run over; so that, if some have the pleasure of riding on a rail, others have the misfortune to be ridden upon. And when they run over a man that is walking in his sleep, a supernumerary sleeper in the wrong position, and wake him up, they suddenly stop the cars, and make a hue and cry about it, as if this were an exception. I am glad to know that it takes a gang of men for every five miles to keep the sleepers down and level in their beds as it is, for this is a sign that they may sometime get up again.

Why should we live with such hurry and waste of life? We are determined to be starved before we are hungry. Men say that a stitch in time saves nine, and so they take a thousand stitches to-day to save nine tomorrow. As for

work, we haven't any of any consequence. We have the Saint Vitus's dance, and cannot possibly keep our heads still. If I should only give a few pulls at the parish bell-rope, as for a fire, that is, without setting the bell, there is hardly a man on his farm in the outskirts of Concord, notwithstanding that press of engagements which was his excuse so many times this morning, nor a boy, nor a woman, I might almost say, but would forsake all and follow that sound, not mainly to save property from the flames, but, if we will confess the truth, much more to see it burn, since burn it must, and we, be it known, did not set it on fire,—or to see it put out, and have a hand in it, if that is done as handsomely, yes, even if it were the parish church itself. Hardly a man takes a half-hour's nap after dinner, but when he wakes he holds up his head and asks, "What's the news?" as if the rest of mankind had stood his sentinels. Some give directions to be waked every half-hour, doubtless for no other purpose, and then, to pay for it, they tell what they have dreamed. After a night's sleep the news is as indispensable as the breakfast. "Pray tell me anything new that has happened to a man anywhere on this globe,"—and he reads it over his coffee and rolls, that a man has had his eyes gouged out this morning on the Wachito River, never dreaming the while that he lives in the dark unfathomed mammoth cave of this world, and has but the rudiment of an eye himself.

For my part, I could easily do without the post-office. I think that there are very few important communications made through it. To speak critically, I never received more than one or two letters in my life—I wrote this some years ago—that were worth the postage. The penny-post is, commonly, an institution through which you seriously offer a man that penny for his thoughts which is so often safely offered in jest. And I am sure that I never read any memorable news in a newspaper. If we read of one man robbed, or murdered, or killed by accident, or one house burned, or one vessel wrecked, or one steamboat blown up, or one cow run over on the Western Railroad, or one mad dog killed, or one lot of grasshoppers in the winter,—we never need read of another. One is enough. If you are acquainted with the principle, what do you care for a myriad instances and applications? To a philosopher all *news*, as

⁹ railway ties.

it is called, is gossip, and they who edit and read it are old women over their tea. Yet not a few are greedy after this gossip. There was such a rush, as I hear, the other day at one of the offices to learn the foreign news by the last arrival, that several large squares of plate glass belonging to the establishment were broken by the pressure,—news which I seriously think a ready wit might write a twelvemonth, or twelve years, beforehand with sufficient accuracy. As for Spain, for instance, if you know how to throw in Don Carlos and the Infanta, and Don Pedro and Seville and Granada, from time to time in the right proportions,—they may have changed the names a little since I saw the papers,—and serve up a bull-fight when other entertainments fail, it will be true to the letter, and give us as good an idea of the exact state or ruin of things in Spain as the most succinct and lucid reports under this head in the newspapers: and as for England, almost the last significant scrap of news from that quarter was the revolution of 1649; and if you have learned the history of her crops for an average year, you never need attend to that thing again, unless your speculations are of a merely pecuniary character. If one may judge who rarely looks into the newspapers, nothing new does ever happen in foreign parts, a French revolution not excepted.

What news! how much more important to know what that is which was never old! "Kicou-he-yu (great dignity of the state of Wei) sent a man to Khoung-tseu to know his news. Khoung-tseu caused the messenger to be seated near him, and questioned him in these terms: What is your master doing? The messenger answered with respect: My master desires to diminish the number of his faults, but he cannot come to the end of them. The messenger being gone, the philosopher remarked: What a worthy messenger! What a worthy messenger!" The preacher, instead of vexing the ears of drowsy farmers on their day of rest at the end of the week,—for Sunday is the fit conclusion of an ill-spent week, and not the fresh and brave beginning of a new one,—with this one other draggle-tail of a sermon, should shout with thundering voice, "Pause! Avast! Why so seeming fast, but deadly slow?"

Shams and delusions are esteemed for soundest truths, while reality is fabulous. If men

would steadily observe realities only, and not allow themselves to be deluded, life, to compare it with such things as we know, would be like a fairy tale and the Arabian Nights' Entertainments. If we respected only what is inevitable and has a right to be, music and poetry would resound along the streets. When we are unhurried and wise, we perceive that only great and worthy things have any permanent and absolute existence, that petty fears and petty pleasures are but the shadow of the reality. This is always exhilarating and sublime. By closing the eyes and slumbering, and consenting to be deceived by shows, men establish and confirm their daily life of routine and habit everywhere, which still is built on purely illusory foundations. Children, who play life, discern its true law and relations more clearly than men, who fail to live it worthily, but who think that they are wiser by experience, that is, by failure. I have read in a Hindoo book, that "there was a king's son, who, being expelled in infancy from his native city, was brought up by a forester, and, growing up to maturity in that state, imagined himself to belong to the barbarous race with which he lived. One of his father's ministers having discovered him, revealed to him what he was, and the misconception of his character was removed, and he knew himself to be a prince. So soul," continues the Hindoo philosopher, "from the circumstances in which it is placed, mistakes its own character, until the truth is revealed to it by some holy teacher, and then it knows itself to be *Brahme*." I perceive that we inhabitants of New England live this mean life that we do because our vision does not penetrate the surface of things. We think that that is which appears to be. If a man should walk through this town and see only the reality, where, think you, would the "Milldam" go to? If he should give us an account of the realities he beheld there, we should not recognize the place in his description. Look at a meeting-house, or a court-house, or a jail, or a shop, or a dwelling-house, and say what that thing really is before a true gaze, and they would all go to pieces in your account of them. Men esteem truth remote, in the outskirts of the system, behind the farthest star, before Adam and after the last man. In eternity there is indeed something true and sublime. But all these times and places and oc-

casions are now and here. God himself culminates in the present moment, and will never be more divine in the lapse of all the ages. And we are enabled to apprehend at all what is sublime and noble only by the perpetual instilling and drenching of the reality that surrounds us. The universe constantly and obediently answers to our conceptions; whether we travel fast or slow, the track is laid for us. Let us spend our lives in conceiving then. The poet or the artist never yet had so far and noble a design but some of his posterity at least could accomplish it.

Let us spend one day as deliberately as Nature, and not be thrown off the track by every nutshell and mosquito's wing that falls on the rails. Let us rise early and fast, or break fast, gently and without perturbation; let company come and let company go, let the bells ring and the children cry,—determined to make a day of it. Why should we knock under and go with the stream? Let us not be upset and overwhelmed in that terrible rapid and whirlpool called a dinner, situated in the meridian shallows. Weather this danger and you are safe, for the rest of the way is down hill. With unrelaxed nerves, with morning vigor, sail by it, looking another way, tied to the mast like Ulysses. If the engine whistles, let it whistle till it is hoarse for its pains. If the bell rings, why should we run? We will consider what kind of music they are like. Let us settle ourselves, and work and wedge our feet downward through the mud and slush of opinion, and prejudice, and tradition, and delusion, and appearance, that alluvion which covers the globe, through Paris and London, through New York and Boston and Concord, through Church and State, through poetry and philosophy and religion, till we come to a hard bottom and rocks in place, which we can call *reality*, and say, This is, and no mistake; and then begin, having a *point d'appui*,¹⁰ below freshet and frost and fire, a place where you might found a wall or a state, or set a lamppost safely, or perhaps a gauge, not a Nilometer, but a Realometer, that future ages might know how deep a freshet of shams and appearances had gathered from time to time. If you stand right fronting and face to face to a fact, you will see the sun glimmer on

both its surfaces, as if it were a cineter, and feel its sweet edge dividing you through the heart and marrow, and so you will happily conclude your mortal career. Be it life or death, we crave only reality. If we are really dying, let us hear the rattle in our throats and feel cold in the extremities, if we are alive, let us go about our business.

Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in. I drink at it, but while I drink I see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow it is. Its thin current slides away, but eternity remains. I would drink deeper, fish in the sky, whose bottom is pebbly with stars. I cannot count one. I know not the first letter of the alphabet. I have always been regretting that I was not as wise as the day I was born. The intellect is a cleaver, it discerns and rifts its way into the secret of things. I do not wish to be any more busy with my hands than is necessary. My head is hands and feet. I feel all my best faculties concentrated in it. My instinct tells me that my head is an organ for burrowing, as some creatures use their snout and fore paws, and with it I would mine and burrow my way through these hills. I think that the richest vein is somewhere hereabouts; so by the divining-rod and thin rising vapors I judge, and here I will begin to mine.

BRUTE NEIGHBORS

The mice which haunted my house were not the common ones, which are said to have been introduced into the country, but a wild native kind not found in the village. I sent one to a distinguished naturalist, and it interested him much. When I was building, one of these had its nest underneath the house, and before I had laid the second floor, and swept out the shavings, would come out regularly at lunch time and pick up the crumbs at my feet. It probably had never seen a man before, and it soon became quite familiar, and would run over my shoes and up my clothes. It could readily ascend the sides of the room by short impulses, like a squirrel, which it resembled in its motions. At length, as I leaned with my elbow on the bench one day, it ran up my clothes, and along my sleeve, and round and round the paper which held my dinner, while I kept the latter close, and dodged and played at bo-

¹⁰ point of support, resting point.

peep with it; and when at last I held still a piece of cheese between my thumb and finger, it came and nibbled it, sitting in my hand, and afterward cleaned its face and paws, like a fly, and walked away.

A phoebe soon built in my shed, and a robin for protection in a pine which grew against the house. In June the partridge (*Tetrao umbellus*), which is so shy a bird, led her brood past my windows, from the woods in the rear to the front of my house, clucking and calling to them like a hen, and in all her behavior proving herself the hen of the woods. The young suddenly disperse on your approach, at a signal from the mother, as if a whirlwind had swept them away, and they so exactly resemble the dried leaves and twigs that many a traveller has placed his foot in the midst of a brood, and heard the whir of the old bird as she flew off, and her anxious calls and mewings, or seen her trail her wings to attract his attention, without suspecting their neighborhood. The parent will sometimes roll and spin round before you in such a dishabille, that you cannot, for a few moments, detect what kind of creature it is. The young squat still and flat, often running their heads under a leaf, and mind only their mother's directions given from a distance, nor will your approach make them run again and betray themselves. You may even tread on them, or have your eyes on them for a minute, without discovering them. I have held them in my open hand at such a time, and still their only care, obedient to their mother and their instinct, was to squat there without fear or trembling. So perfect is this instinct, that once, when I had laid them on the leaves again, and one accidentally fell on its side, it was found with the rest in exactly the same position ten minutes afterward. They are not callow like the young of most birds, but more perfectly developed and precocious even than chickens. The remarkably adult yet innocent expression of their open and serene eyes is very memorable. All intelligence seems reflected in them. They suggest not merely the purity of infancy, but a wisdom clarified by experience. Such an eye was not born when the bird was, but is coeval with the sky it reflects. The woods do not yield another such a gem. The traveller does not often look into such a limpid well. The ignorant or reckless sportsman often shoots the

parent at such a time, and leaves these innocents to fall a prey to some prowling beast or bird, or gradually mingle with the decaying leaves which they so much resemble. It is said that when hatched by a hen they will directly disperse on some alarm, and so are lost, for they never hear the mother's call which gathers them again. These were my hens and chickens.

It is remarkable how many creatures live wild and free though secret in the woods, and still sustain themselves in the neighborhood of towns, suspected by hunters only. How retired the otter manages to live here! He grows to be four feet long, as big as a small boy, perhaps without any human being getting a glimpse of him. I formerly saw the raccoon in the woods behind where my house is built, and probably still heard their whinnying at night. Commonly I rested an hour or two in the shade at noon, after planting, and ate my lunch, and read a little by a spring which was the source of a swamp and of a brook, oozing from under Brister's Hill, half a mile from my field. The approach to this was through a succession of descending grassy hollows, full of young pitch pines, into a larger wood about the swamp. There, in a very secluded and shaded spot, under a spreading white pine, there was yet a clean, firm sward to sit on. I had dug out the spring and made a well of clear gray water, where I could dip up a pailful without roiling it, and thither I went for this purpose almost every day in mid-summer, when the pond was warmest. Thither, too, the woodcock led her brood, to probe the mud for worms, flying but a foot above them down the bank, while they ran in a troop beneath; but at last, spying me, she would leave her young and circle round and round me, nearer and nearer till within four or five feet, pretending broken wings and legs, to attract my attention, and get off her young, who would already have taken up their march, with faint, wiry peep, single file through the swamp, as she directed. Or I heard the peep of the young when I could not see the parent bird. There too the turtle doves sat over the spring, or fluttered from bough to bough of the soft white pines over my head; or the red squirrel, coursing down the nearest bough, was particularly familiar and inquisitive. You only need sit still long enough in some attractive

spot in the woods that all its inhabitants may exhibit themselves to you by turns.

I was witness to events of a less peaceful character. One day when I went out to my wood-pile, or rather my pile of stumps, I observed two large ants, the one red, the other much larger, nearly half an inch long, and black, fiercely contending with one another. Having once got hold they never let go, but struggled and wrestled and rolled on the chips incessantly. Looking farther, I was surprised to find that the chips were covered with such combatants, that it was not a *duellum*, but a *bellum*,¹ a war between two races of ants, the red always pitted against the black, and frequently two red ones to one black. The regions of these Myrmidons covered all the hills and vales in my wood-yard, and the ground was already strewn with the dead and dying, both red and black. It was the only battle which I have ever witnessed, the only battlefield I ever trod while the battle was raging, internecine war, the red republicans on the one hand, and the black imperialists on the other. On every side they were engaged in deadly combat, yet without any noise that I could hear, and human soldiers never fought so resolutely. I watched a couple that were fast locked in each other's embraces, in a little sunny valley amid the chips, now at noonday prepared to fight till the sun went down, or life went out. The smaller red champion had fastened himself like a vice to his adversary's front, and through all the tumbings on that field never for an instant ceased to gnaw at one of his feelers near the root, having already caused the other to go by the board; while the stronger black one dashed him from side to side, and, as I saw on looking nearer, had already divested him of several of his members. They fought with more pertinacity than bulldogs. Neither manifested the least disposition to retreat. It was evident that their battle-cry was "Conquer or die." In the meanwhile there came along a single red ant on the hillside of this valley, evidently full of excitement, who either had despatched his foe, or had not yet taken part in the battle; probably the latter, for he had lost none of his limbs; whose mother had charged him to return with his shield or upon it. Or perchance he was some

Achilles, who had nourished his wrath apart, and had now come to avenge or rescue his Patroclus. He saw this unequal combat from afar,—for the blacks were nearly twice the size of the red,—he drew near with rapid pace till he stood on his guard within half an inch of the combatants, then, watching his opportunity, he sprang upon the black warrior, and commenced his operations near the root of his right fore leg, leaving the foe to select among his own members, and so there were three united for life, as if a new kind of attraction had been invented which put all other locks and cements to shame. I should not have wondered by this time to find that they had then respective musical bands stationed on some eminent chip, and playing their national airs the while, to excite the slow and cheer the dying combatants. I was myself excited somewhat even as if they had been men. The more you think of it, the less the difference. And certainly there is not the fight recorded in Concord history, at least, if in the history of America, that will bear a moment's comparison with this, whether for the numbers engaged in it, or for the patriotism and heroism displayed. For numbers and for carnage it was an Austerlitz or Dresden.² Concord Fight!³ Two killed on the patriots' side, and Luther Blanchard wounded! Why here every ant was a Buttrick,—"Fine! for God's sake fire!"—and thousands shared the fate of Davis and Hosmer. There was not one hireling there. I have no doubt that it was a principle they fought for, as much as our ancestors, and not to avoid a three-penny tax on their tea; and the results of this battle will be as important and memorable to those whom it concerns as those of the battle of Bunker Hill, at least.

I took up the chip on which the three I have particularly described were struggling, carried it into my house, and placed it under a tumbler on my window-sill, in order to see the issue. Holding a microscope to the first-mentioned red ant, I saw that, though he was assiduously gnawing at the near fore leg of his enemy, having severed his remaining feeler, his own breast

² Austerlitz . . . Dresden, two of Napoleon's battles.

³ Skirmish between the American militia and the British at Concord Bridge, April 18, 1775. The Americans Davis and Hosmer were killed.

¹ war.

was all torn away, exposing what vitals he had there to the jaws of the black warrior, whose breastplate was apparently too thick for him to pierce; and the dark carbuncles of the sufferer's eyes shone with ferocity such as war only could excite. They struggled half an hour longer under the tumbler, and when I looked again the black soldier had severed the heads of his foes from their bodies, and the still living heads were hanging on either side of him like ghastly trophies at his saddle-bow, still apparently as firmly fastened as ever, and he was endeavoring with feeble struggles, being without feelers and with only the remnant of a leg, and I know not how many other wounds, to divest himself of them; which at length, after half an hour more, he accomplished. I raised the glass, and he went off over the window-sill in that crippled state. Whether he finally survived that combat, and spent the remainder of his days in some Hôtel des Invalides,¹ I do not know; but I thought that his industry would not be worth much thereafter. I never learned which party was victorious, nor the cause of the war; but I felt for the rest of that day as if I had had my feelings excited and harrowed by witnessing the struggle, the ferocity and carnage, of a human battle before my door.

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN
1801-1890

The name of John Henry Newman belongs to the history of the Church as well as to that of English literature, for much of his prose was wrought on the anvil of religious controversy. As a priest of the Church of England he fought the liberal or rationalistic tendencies which in his day were undermining the authority of the Anglican faith. That he finally left the Anglican communion to become a Catholic is evidence of his convictions. In 1879 he was made a Catholic cardinal. To Newman's change of faith English literature owes a great religious autobiography, Apologia pro Vita Sua. In that work Newman gives a frank account of his spiritual life. As Rector of the Catholic University of Dublin he delivered a number of lectures on education. These lectures—pub-

lished under the general title The Idea of a University—may still be read with great profit by anyone wishing to know the meaning of a liberal education. Newman's prose style is a model of precision, lucidity, and quiet beauty. Speaking of his writing, he said, "My one and single aim has been to do what is so difficult—viz., to express clearly and exactly my meaning." Both selections given here are from The Idea of a University. As an example of criticism as definition, Newman's essay on literature should be compared with De Quincey's "Literature of Knowledge and Literature of Power" (II, 81) and Stevenson's "A Gossip on Romance" (II, 168).

LITERATURE

Here, then, in the first place, I observe, Gentlemen, that Literature, from the derivation of the word, implies writing, not speaking; this, however, arises from the circumstance of the copiousness, variety, and public circulation of the matters of which it consists. What is spoken cannot outrun the range of the speaker's voice, and perishes in the uttering. When words are in demand to express a long course of thought, when they have to be conveyed to the ends of the earth, or perpetuated for the benefit of posterity, they must be written down, that is, reduced to the shape of literature; still, properly speaking, the terms, by which we denote this characteristic gift of man, belong to its exhibition by means of the voice, not of handwriting. It addresses itself, in its primary idea, to the ear, not to the eye. We call it the power of speech, we call it language, that is, the use of the tongue; and, even when we write, we still keep in mind what was its original instrument, for we use freely such terms in our books as "saying," "speaking," "telling," "talking," "calling"; we use the terms "phraseology" and "diction"; as if we were still addressing ourselves to the ear.

Now I insist on this, because it shows that speech, and therefore literature, which is its permanent record, is essentially a personal work. It is not some production or result, attained by the partnership of several persons, or by machinery, or by any natural process, but in its very idea it proceeds, and must proceed, from some one given individual. Two persons cannot be the authors of the sounds

¹ A hospital in Paris for aged soldiers.

which strike our ear; and, as they cannot be speaking one and the same speech, neither can they be writing one and the same lecture or discourse,—which must certainly belong to some one person or other, and is the expression of that one person's ideas and feelings,—ideas and feelings personal to himself, though others may have parallel and similar ones.—proper to himself, in the same sense as his voice, his air, his countenance, his carriage, and his action, are personal. In other words, Literature expresses, not objective truth, as it is called, but subjective; not things, but thoughts.

Now this doctrine will become clearer by considering another use of words, which does relate to objective truth, or to things, which relates to matters, not personal, not subjective to the individual, but which, even were there no individual man in the whole world to know them or to talk about them, would exist still. Such objects become the matter of Science, and words indeed are used to express them, but such words are rather symbols than language, and however many we use, and however we may perpetuate them by writing, we never could make any kind of literature out of them, or call them by that name. Such, for instance, would be Euclid's Elements; they relate to truths universal and eternal; they are not mere thoughts, but things: they exist in themselves, not by virtue of our understanding them, not in dependence upon our will, but in what is called the *nature* of things, or at least on conditions external to us. The words, then, in which they are set forth are not language, speech, literature, but rather, as I have said, symbols. And, as a proof of it, you will recollect that it is possible, nay usual, to set forth the propositions of Euclid in algebraical notation, which, as all would admit, has nothing to do with literature. What is true of mathematics is true also of every study, so far forth as it is scientific; it makes use of words as the mere vehicle of things, and is thereby withdrawn from the province of literature. Thus metaphysics, ethics, law, political economy, chemistry, theology, cease to be literature in the same degree as they are capable of a severe scientific treatment. And hence it is that Aristotle's works on the one hand, though at first sight literature, approach in character, at least a great number of them, to mere science; for

even though the things which he treats of and exhibits may not always be real and true, yet he treats them as if they were, not as if they were the thoughts of his own mind; that is, he treats them scientifically. On the other hand, Law or Natural History has before now been treated by an author with so much of colouring derived from his own mind as to become a sort of literature; this is especially seen in the instance of Theology, when it takes the shape of Pulpit Eloquence. It is seen too in historical composition, which becomes a mere specimen of chronology, or a chronicle, when divested of the philosophy, the skill, or the party and personal feelings of the particular writer. Science, then, has to do with things, literature with thoughts; science is universal, literature is personal; science uses words merely as symbols, but literature uses language in its full compass, as including phraseology, idiom, style, composition, rhythm, eloquence, and whatever other properties are included in it.

Let us then put aside the scientific use of words, when we are to speak of language and literature. Literature is the personal use or exercise of language. That this is so is further proved from the fact that one author uses it so differently from another. Language itself in its very origination would seem to be traceable to individuals. Their peculiarities have given it its character. We are often able in fact to trace particular phrases or idioms to individuals; we know the history of their rise. Slang surely, as it is called, comes of, and breathes of the personal. The connexion between the force of words in particular languages and the habits and sentiments of the nations speaking them has often been pointed out. And, while the many use language as they find it, the man of genius uses it indeed, but subjects it withal to his own purposes, and moulds it according to his own peculiarities. The throng and succession of ideas, thoughts, feelings, imaginations, aspirations, which pass within him, the abstractions, the juxtapositions, the comparisons, the discriminations, the conceptions, which are so original in him, his views of external things, his judgments upon life, manners, and history, the exercises of his wit, of his humour, of his depth, of his sagacity, all these innumerable and incessant creations, the very pulsation and throbbing of his intellect, does he image forth, to all

does he give utterance, in a corresponding language, which is as multiform as this inward mental action itself and analogous to it, the faithful expression of his intense personality, attending on his own inward world of thought as its very shadow: so that we might as well say that one man's shadow is another's as that the style of a really gifted mind can belong to any but himself. It follows him about as a shadow. His thought and feeling are personal, and so his language is personal.

Thought and speech are inseparable from each other. Matter and expression are parts of one: style is a thinking out into language. This is what I have been laying down, and this is literature; not *things*, not the verbal symbols of things; not on the other hand mere *words*; but thoughts expressed in language. Call to mind, Gentlemen, the meaning of the Greek word which expresses this special prerogative of man over the feeble intelligence of the inferior animals. It is called *Logos*: what does *Logos* mean? it stands both for *reason* and for *speech*, and it is difficult to say which it means more properly. It means both at once: why? because really they cannot be divided,—because they are in a true sense one. When we can separate light and illumination, life and motion, the convex and the concave of a curve, then will it be possible for thought to tread speech under foot, and to hope to do without it—then will it be conceivable that the vigorous and fertile intellect should renounce its own double, its instrument of expression, and the channel of its speculations and emotions.

Critics should consider this view of the subject before they lay down such canons of taste as the writer whose pages I have quoted. Such men as he is consider fine writing to be an *addition from without* to the matter treated of,—a sort of ornament superinduced, or a luxury indulged in, by those who have time and inclination for such vanities. They speak as if *one* man could do the thought, and *another* the style. We read in Persian travels of the way in which young gentlemen go to work in the East, when they would engage in correspondence with those who inspire them with hope or fear. They cannot write one sentence themselves; so they betake themselves to the pro-

fessional letter-writer. They confide to him the object they have in view. They have a point to gain from a superior, a favour to ask, an evil to deprecate; they have to approach a man in power, or to make court to some beautiful lady. The professional man manufactures words for them, as they are wanted, as a stationer sells them paper, or a schoolmaster might cut their pens. Thought and word are, in their conception, two things, and thus there is a division of labour. The man of thought comes to the man of words; and the man of words, duly instructed in the thought, dips the pen of desire into the ink of devotedness, and proceeds to spread it over the page of desolation. Then the nightingale of affection is heard to warble to the rose of loveliness, while the breeze of anxiety plays around the brow of expectation. This is what the Easterns are said to consider fine writing; and it seems pretty much the idea of the school of critics to whom I have been referring.

We have an instance in literary history of this very proceeding nearer home, in a great University, in the latter years of the last century. I have referred to it before now in a public lecture elsewhere; but it is too much in point here to be omitted. A learned Arabic scholar had to deliver a set of lectures before its doctors and professors on an historical subject in which his reading had lain. A linguist is conversant with science rather than with literature; but this gentleman felt that his lectures must not be without a style. Being of the opinion of the Orientals, with whose writings he was familiar, he determined to buy a style. He took the step of engaging a person, at a price, to turn the matter which he had got together into ornamental English. Observe, he did not wish for mere grammatical English, but for an elaborate, pretentious style. An artist was found in the person of a country curate, and the job was carried out. His lectures remain to this day, in their own place in the protracted series of annual Discourses to which they belong, distinguished amid a number of heavyish compositions by the rhetorical and ambitious diction for which he went into the market. This learned divine, indeed, and the author I have quoted, differ from each other in the estimate they respectively form of literary composition; but they agree together in this,—in considering

such composition a trick and a trade; they put it on a par with the gold plate and the flowers and the music of a banquet, which do not make the viands better, but the entertainment more pleasurable; as if language were the hired servant, the mere mistress of the reason, and not the lawful wife in her own house.

But can they really think that Homer, or Pindar, or Shakespeare, or Dryden, or Walter Scott, were accustomed to aim at diction for its own sake, instead of being inspired with their subject, and pouring forth beautiful words because they had beautiful thoughts? this is surely too great a paradox to be borne. Rather, it is the fire within the author's breast which overflows in the torrent of his burning, irresistible eloquence; it is the poetry of his inner soul, which relieves itself in the Ode or the Elegy, and his mental attitude and bearing, the beauty of his moral countenance, the force and keenness of his logic, are imaged in the tenderness, or energy, or richness of his language. Nay, according to the well-known line, "*facit indignatio versus*";¹ not the words alone, but even the rhythm, the metre, the verse, will be the contemporaneous offspring of the emotion or imagination which possesses him. "*Poeta nascitur, non fit*,"² says the proverb; and this is in numerous instances true of his poems, as well as of himself. They are born, not framed; they are a strain rather than a composition, and their perfection is the monument, not so much of his skill as of his power. And this is true of prose as well as of verse in its degree: who will not recognize in the vision of Mirza,³ a delicacy and beauty of style which is very difficult to describe, but which is felt to be in exact correspondence to the ideas of which it is the expression?

And, since the thoughts and reasonings of an author have, as I have said, a personal character, no wonder that his style is not only the image of his subject, but of his mind. That pomp of language, that full and tuneful diction, that felicitousness in the choice and exquisiteness in the collocation of words, which to pro-

saic writers seems artificial, is nothing else but the mere habit and way of a lofty intellect. Aristotle, in his sketch of the magnanimous man, tells us that his voice is deep, his motions slow, and his stature commanding. In like manner, the elocution of a great intellect is great. His language expresses, not only his great thoughts, but his great self. Certainly he might use fewer words than he uses; but he fertilizes his simplest ideas, and germinates into a multitude of details, and prolongs the march of his sentences, and sweeps round to the full diapason of his harmony, as if . . . rejoicing in his own vigour and richness of resource. I say, a narrow entic will call it verbiage, when really it is a sort of fulness of heart, parallel to that which makes the merry boy whistle as he walks, or the strong man, like the smith in the novel, flourish his club when there is no one to fight with.

Shakespeare furnishes us with frequent instances of this peculiarity, and all so beautiful, that it is difficult to select for quotation. For instance, in Macbeth:—

"Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And, with some sweet oblivious antidote,
Cleanse the foul bosom of that perilous stuff,
Which weighs upon the heart?"

Here a simple idea, by a process which belongs to the orator rather than to the poet, but still comes from the native vigour of genius, is expanded into a many-membered period. . . .

I shall then merely sum up what I have said, and come to a conclusion. Reverting, then, to my original question, what is the meaning of Letters, as contained, Gentlemen, in the designation of your Faculty, I have answered, that by Letters or Literature is meant the expression of thought in language, where by "thought" I mean the ideas, feelings, views, reasonings, and other operations of the human mind. And the Art of Letters is the method by which a speaker or writer brings out in words, worthy of his subject, and sufficient for his audience or readers, the thoughts which impress him. Literature, then, is of a personal character; it consists in the enunciations and teachings of those who have a right to speak as representatives of their

¹ Anger gives rise to poetry.

² Poets are born, not made.

³ a prose allegory by Joseph Addison (1672–1719).

kind, and in whose words their brethren find an interpretation of their own sentiments, a record of their own experience, and a suggestion for their own judgments. A great author, Gentlemen, is not one who merely has a *copia verborum*,⁴ whether in prose or verse, and can, as it were, turn on at his will any number of splendid phrases and swelling sentences; but he is one who has something to say and knows how to say it. I do not claim for him, as such, any great depth of thought, or breadth of view, or philosophy, or sagacity, or knowledge of human nature, or experience of human life, though these additional gifts he may have, and the more he has of them the greater he is; but I ascribe to him, as his characteristic gift, in a large sense the faculty of Expression. He is master of the two-fold Logos, the thought and the word, distinct, but inseparable from each other. He may, if so be, elaborate his compositions, or he may pour out his improvisations, but in either case he has but one aim, which he keeps steadily before him, and is conscientious and single-minded in fulfilling. That aim is to give forth what he has within him; and from his very earnestness it comes to pass that, whatever be the splendour of his diction or the harmony of his periods, he has with him the charm of an incommunicable simplicity. Whatever be his subject, high or low, he treats it suitably and for its own sake. If he is a poet, "*nil molitur inepte*."⁵ If he is an orator, then too he speaks, not only "*distincte*" and "*splendide*," but also "*apte*." His page is the lucid mirror of his mind and life—

*"Quo fit, ut omnis
Votivâ pateat veluti descripta tabellâ
Vita senis."*⁶

He writes passionately, because he feels keenly; forcibly, because he conceives vividly; he sees too clearly to be vague; he is too serious to be otiose; he can analyze a subject, and therefore he is rich; he embraces it as a whole and in its parts, and therefore he is consistent; he has a firm hold of it, and therefore he is luminous. When his imagination wells up, it overflows in ornament; when his heart is

touched, it thrills along his verse. He always has the right word for the right idea, and never a word too much. If he is brief, it is because few words suffice; when he is lavish of them, still each word has its mark, and aids, not embarrasses, the vigorous march of his elocution. He expresses what all feel, but all cannot say; and his sayings pass into proverbs among his people, and his phrases become household words and idioms of their daily speech, which is tessellated with the rich fragments of his language, as we see in foreign lands the marbles of Roman grandeur worked into the walls and pavements of modern palaces.

Such pre-eminently is Shakespeare among ourselves, such pre-eminently Virgil among the Latins; such in their degree are all those writers who in every nation go by the name of Classics. To particular nations they are necessarily attached from the circumstance of the variety of tongues, and the peculiarities of each; but so far they have a catholic and ecumenical⁷ character, that what they express is common to the whole race of man, and they alone are able to express it.

If then the power of speech is a gift as great as any that can be named,—if the origin of language is by many philosophers even considered to be nothing short of divine,—if by means of words the secrets of the heart are brought to light, pain of soul is relieved, hidden grief is carried off, sympathy conveyed, counsel imparted, experience recorded, and wisdom perpetuated,—if by great authors the many are drawn up into unity, national character is fixed, a people speaks, the past and the future, the East and the West are brought into communication with each other,—if such men are, in a word, the spokesmen and prophets of the human family,—it will not answer to make light of Literature or to neglect its study; rather we may be sure that, in proportion as we master it in whatever language, and imbibe its spirit, we shall ourselves become in our own measure the ministers of like benefits to others, be they many or few, be they in the obscurer or the more distinguished walks of life,—who are united to us by social ties, and are within the sphere of our personal influence.

⁷ universal.

⁴ abundance of words.

⁵ He undertakes nothing unwisely.

⁶ He so lives that his whole life may be seen as though inscribed on a votive tablet.

DEFINITION OF A GENTLEMAN

Hence it is that it is almost a definition of a gentleman to say he is one who never inflicts pain. This description is both refined and, as far as it goes, accurate. He is mainly occupied in merely removing the obstacles which hinder the free and unembarrassed action of those about him; and he concurs with their movements rather than takes the initiative himself. His benefits may be considered as parallel to what are called comforts or conveniences in arrangements of a personal nature: like an easy chair or a good fire, which do their part in dispelling cold and fatigue, though nature provides both means of rest and animal heat without them. The true gentleman in like manner carefully avoids whatever may cause a jar or a jolt in the minds of those with whom he is cast—all clashing of opinion, or collision of feeling, all restraint, or suspicion, or gloom, or resentment, his great concern being to make every one at their ease and at home. He has his eyes on all his company; he is tender towards the bashful, gentle towards the distant, and merciful towards the absurd; he can recollect to whom he is speaking; he guards against unseasonable allusions, or topics which may irritate; he is seldom prominent in conversation, and never wearisome. He makes light of favors while he does them, and seems to be receiving when he is conferring. He never speaks of himself except when compelled, never defends himself by a mere retort; he has no ears for slander or gossip, is scrupulous in imputing motives to those who interfere with him, and interprets everything for the best. He is never mean or little in his disputes, never takes unfair advantage, never mistakes personalities or sharp sayings for arguments, or insinuates evil which he dare not say out. From a long-sighted prudence he observes the maxim of the ancient sage, that we should ever conduct ourselves towards our enemy as if he were one day to be our friend. He has too much good sense to be affronted at insults; he is too well employed to remember injuries, and too indolent to bear malice. He is patient, forbearing, and resigned, on philosophical principles; he submits to pain because it is inevitable, to bereavement because it is irreparable, and to death because it is his destiny. If he engages in controversy of any

kind, his disciplined intellect preserves him from the blundering discourtesy of better, perhaps, but less educated minds, who, like blunt weapons, tear and hack instead of cutting clean, who mistake the point in argument, waste their strength on trifles, misconceive their adversary, and leave the question more involved than they find it. He may be right or wrong in his opinion, but he is too clear-headed to be unjust, he is as simple as he is forcible, and as brief as he is decisive. Nowhere shall we find greater candor, consideration, indulgence; he throws himself into the minds of his opponents, he accounts for their mistakes. He knows the weakness of human reason as well as its strength, its province and its limits. If he be an unbeliever, he will be too profound and large-minded to ridicule religion or to act against it; he is too wise to be a dogmatist or fanatic in his infidelity. He respects piety and devotion; he even supports institutions as venerable, beautiful, or useful, to which he does not assent; he honors the ministers of religion, and it contents him to decline its mysteries without assailing or denouncing them. He is a friend of religious toleration, and that, not only because his philosophy has taught him to look on all forms of faith with an impartial eye, but also from the gentleness and effeminacy of feeling, which is the attendant on civilization.

Not that he may not hold a religion too, in his own way, even when he is not a Christian. In that case his religion is one of imagination and sentiment; it is the embodiment of those ideas of the sublime, majestic, and beautiful, without which there can be no large philosophy. Sometimes he acknowledges the being of God, sometimes he invests an unknown principle or quality with the attributes of perfection. And thus deduction of his reason, or creation of his fancy, he makes the occasion of such excellent thoughts, and the starting-point of so varied and systematic a teaching, that he even seems like a disciple of Christianity itself. From the very accuracy and steadiness of his logical powers he is able to see what sentiments are consistent in those who hold any religious doctrine at all, and he appears to others to feel and to hold a whole circle of theological truths which exist in his mind no otherwise than as a number of deductions.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES
1809–1894

Oliver Wendell Holmes, conversationalist, poet, and essayist, was a physician by training, and for thirty-five years was professor of anatomy and physiology at the Harvard Medical School. But though we may still refer to him as Dr. Holmes, we think of him as the "Autocrat," a title that marks him as a man of letters, the author of The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table (1858). Holmes's early reputation was that of a poet; his later and more important reputation, chiefly that of an essayist. It should be added, of course, that he wrote fiction and biography, too. But it was not until he was in his forty-eighth year that he contributed to the newly founded Atlantic Monthly, edited by James Russell Lowell, the first of his Breakfast Table series. A record of imaginary conversations at a boarding-house table, The Autocrat touches upon a great variety of topics, among them poetry, self-made men, religion, and trotting horses. Like the later volumes in the series, the book is actually a group of genial essays in which Holmes delivers, wittily and sagely, his opinions on men and manners. A great talker, sociable by nature, and possessed of a wide range of interests, he was perfectly at home in the familiar essay. Even as a public speaker he was genial and colloquial, and as a teacher at Harvard was famous for his entertaining lectures on science. Moreover, he was the most popular member of the Saturday Club, a literary association that included such men as Emerson, Longfellow, Lowell, and Motley. Unfortunately, the Club did not have a Boswell, and so, as Holmes put it, the "golden hours passed unrecorded." But happily, as he indicates on the title page of The Autocrat, he was, in that book and in others, his own Boswell. The essay that follows is from the eleventh chapter of The Autocrat.

MY LAST WALK WITH THE
SCHOOLMISTRESS

(A PARENTHESIS)

I can't say just how many walks she and I had taken together before this one. I found the effect of going out every morning was decidedly favorable on her health. Two pleasing

dimples, the places for which were just marked when she came, played, shadowy, in her freshening cheeks when she smiled and nodded good-morning to me from the schoolhouse steps.

I am afraid I did the greater part of the talking. At any rate, if I should try to report all that I said during the first half-dozen walks we took together, I fear that I might receive a gentle hint from my friends the publishers, that a separate volume, at my own risk and expense, would be the proper method of bringing them before the public.

I would have a woman as true as Death. At the first real lie which works from the heart outward, she should be tenderly chloroformed into a better world, where she can have an angel for a governess, and feed on strange fruits which will make her all over again, even to her bones and marrow.—Whether gifted with the accident of beauty or not, she should have been molded in the rose-red clay of Love, before the breath of life made a moving mortal of her. Love capacity is a congenital endowment; and I think, after a while, one gets to know the warm-hued natures it belongs to from the pretty pipe-clay counterfeits of it.—Proud she may be, in the sense of respecting herself; but pride, in the sense of contemning others less gifted than herself, deserves the two lowest circles of a vulgar woman's Inferno, where the punishments are Smallpox and Bankruptcy.—She who nips off the end of a brittle courtesy, as one breaks the tip of an icicle, to bestow upon those whom she ought cordially and kindly to recognize, proclaims the fact that she comes not merely of low blood, but of bad blood. Consciousness of unquestioned position makes people gracious in proper measure to all; but if a woman puts on airs with her real equals, she has something about herself or her family she is ashamed of, or ought to be. Middle, and more than middle-aged people, who know family histories, generally see through it. An official of standing was rude to me once. Oh, that is the maternal grandfather,—said a wise old friend to me,—he was a boor.—Better too few words, from the woman we love, than too many: while she is silent, Nature is working for her; while she talks, she is working for herself.—Love is sparingly soluble in the words of men; therefore they speak much of it; but one

syllable of woman's speech can dissolve more of it than a man's heart can hold.

Whether I said any or all of these things to the schoolmistress or not,—whether I stole them out of Lord Bacon,—whether I cribbed them from Balzac,—whether I dipped them from the ocean of Tupperian¹ wisdom,—or whether I have just found them in my head, laid there by that solemn fowl, Experience (who, according to my observation, cackles oftener than she drops real, live eggs),—I cannot say. Wise men have said more foolish things,—and foolish men, I don't doubt, have said as wise things. Anyhow, the schoolmistress and I had pleasant walks and long talks, all of which I do not feel bound to report.

You are a stranger to me, Ma'am.—I don't doubt you would like to know all I said to the schoolmistress.—I shan't do it,—I had rather get the publishers to return the money you have invested in this. Besides, I have forgotten a good deal of it. I shall tell only what I like of what I remember.

My idea was, in the first place, to search out the picturesque spots which the city affords a sight of, to those who have eyes. I know a good many, and it was a pleasure to look at them in company with my young friend. There were the shrubs and flowers in the Franklin Place front-yards or borders; commerce is just putting his granite foot upon them. Then there are certain small seraglio gardens, into which one can get a peep through the crevices of high fences,—one in Myrtle Street, or backing on it,—here and there one at the North and South Ends. Then the great elms in Essex Street. Then the stately horse-chestnuts in that vacant lot in Chambers Street, which hold their outspread hands over your head (as I said in my poem the other day), and look as if they were whispering, "May grace, mercy, and peace be with you!" and the rest of that benediction. Nay, there are certain patches of ground, which, having lain neglected for a time, Nature, who always has her pockets full of seeds, and holes in all her pockets, has covered with hungry plebeian growths, which fight for life with each other, until some of them get broad-leaved and succulent, and you have a coarse vegetable

tapestry which Raphael would not have disdained to spread over the foreground of his masterpiece. The Professor² pretends that he found such a one in Charles Street, which, in its dare-devil impudence of rough-and-tumble vegetation, beat the pretty-behaved flower beds of Public Garden as ignominiously as a group of young tatterdemalions playing pitch-and-toss beats a row of Sunday School boys with their teacher at their head.

But then the Professor has one of his burrows in that region, and puts everything in high colors relating to it. That is his way about everything.—I hold any man cheap,—he said,—of whom nothing stronger can be uttered than that all his geese are swans.—How is that, Professor? said I,—I should have set you down for one of that sort.—Sir, said he, I am proud to say that Nature has so far enriched me, that I cannot own so much as a duck without seeing in it as pretty a swan as ever swam the basin in the garden of Luxembourg.³ And the Professor showed the whites of his eyes devoutly, like one returning thanks after a dinner of many courses.

I don't know anything sweeter than this leaking in of Nature through all the cracks in the walls and floors of cities. You heap up a million tons of hewn rocks on a square mile or two of earth which was green once. The trees look down from the hillsides and ask each other, as they stand on tiptoe, "What are these people about?" And the small herbs at their feet look up and whisper back, "We will go and see." So the small herbs pack themselves up in the least possible bundles, and wait until the wind steals to them at night, and whispers,—“Come with me.” Then they go softly with it into the great city,—one to a cleft in the pavement, one to a spout on the roof, one to a seam in the marbles over a rich gentleman's bones, and one to the grave without a stone where nothing but a man is buried,—and there they grow, looking down on the generations of men from moldy roofs, looking up from between the less-trodden pavements, looking out through iron cemetery railings. Listen to them, when there is only a light breath stirring and you will hear them saying

¹ The reference is to Martin F. Tupper (1810–1889), English poet, author of *Proverbial Philosophy*, a book of maxims in verse form.

² one of the boarders at the house where the "Autocrat," the narrator of this sketch, is said to live

³ a garden in Paris.

to each other, "Wait awhile!" The words run along the telegraph of the narrow green lines that border the roads leading from the city, until they reach the slope of the hills, and the trees repeat in low murmurs to each other, "Wait awhile!" By and by the flow of life in the streets ebbs, and the old leafy inhabitants—the smaller tribes always in front—saunter in, one by one, very careless seemingly, but very tenacious, until they swarm so that the great stones gape from each other with the crowding of their roots, and the feldspar begins to be picked out of the granite to find them food. At last the trees take up their solemn line of march, and never rest until they have encamped in the market place. Wait long enough and you will find an old doting oak hugging a huge worn block in its yellow underground arms; that was the corner stone of the statehouse. Oh, so patient she is, this imperturbable Nature!

—Let us cry!—

But all this has nothing to do with my walks and talks with the schoolmistress. I did not say that I would not tell you something about them. Let me alone, and I shall talk to you more than I ought to, probably. We never tell our secrets to people that pump for them.

Books we talked about, and education. It was her duty to know something of these, and of course she did. Perhaps I was somewhat more learned than she, but I found that the difference between her reading and mine was like that of a man's and a woman's dusting a library. The man flaps about with a bunch of feathers; the woman goes to work softly with a cloth. She does not raise half the dust, nor fill her own eyes and mouth with it,—but she goes into all the corners and attends to the leaves as much as the covers. Books are the negative pictures of thought, and the more sensitive the mind that receives their images, the more nicely the finest lines are reproduced. A woman (of the right kind), reading after a man, follows him as Ruth⁴ followed the reapers of Boaz, and her gleanings are often the finest of the wheat.

But it was in talking of life that we came most nearly together. I thought I knew something about that,—that I could speak or write about it somewhat to the purpose.

To take up this fluid earthly being of ours as

a sponge sucks up water,—to be steeped and soaked in its realities as a hide fills his pores lying seven years in a tan pit,—to have winnowed every wave of it as a mill wheel works up the stream that runs through the flume upon its float boards,—to have curled up in the keenest spasms and flattened out in the laxest languors of this breathing sickness which keeps certain parcels of matter uneasy for three or four score years,—to have fought all the devils and clasped all the angels of its delirium, and then, just at the point when the white-hot passions have cooled down to cherry red, plunge our experience into the ice-cold stream of some human language or other, one might think would end in a rhapsody with something of spring and temper in it. All this I thought my power and province.

The schoolmistress had tried life too. Once in a while one meets with a single soul greater than all the living pageant that passes before it. As the pale astronomer sits in his study, with sunken eyes and thin fingers, and weighs Uranus or Neptune as in a balance, so there are meek, slight women who have weighed all this planetary life can offer, and hold it like a bauble in the palm of their slender hands. This was one of them. Fortune had left her, sorrow had baptized her; the routine of labor and the loneliness of almost friendless city life were before her. Yet, as I looked upon her tranquil face, gradually regaining a cheerfulness that was often sprightly, as she became interested in the various matters we talked about and places we visited, I saw that eye and lip and every shifting lineament were made for love,—unconscious of their sweet office as yet, and meeting the cold aspect of Duty with the natural graces which were meant for the reward of nothing less than the Great Passion.

I never spoke one word of love to the schoolmistress in the course of these pleasant walks. It seemed to me that we talked of everything but love on that particular morning. There was, perhaps, a little more timidity and hesitancy on my part than I have commonly shown among our people at the boarding house. In fact, I considered myself the master at the breakfast-table; but, somehow, I could not command myself just then so well as usual. The truth is, I had secured a passage to Liverpool in the steamer which was to leave at noon, with the

⁴ See the Book of Ruth, Chapter II.

condition, however, of being released in case circumstances occurred to detain me. The schoolmistress knew nothing about all this, of course, as yet.

It was on the Common that we were walking. The mall, or boulevard of our Common, you know, has various branches leading from it in different directions. One of these runs downward from opposite Joy Street southward across the whole length of the Common to Boylston Street. We called it the long path, and were fond of it.

I felt very weak, indeed (though of a tolerably robust habit), as we came opposite the head of this path on that morning. I think I tried to speak twice without making myself distinctly audible. At last I got out the question,—Will you take the long path with me?—Certainly,—said the schoolmistress,—with much pleasure.—I think,—I said,—before you answer; if you take the long path with me now, I shall interpret it that we are to part no more!—The schoolmistress stepped back with a sudden movement, as if an arrow had struck her.

One of the long granite blocks used as seats was hard by,—the one you may still see close by the Gingko-tree.—Pray, sit down,—I said.—No, no,—she answered, softly; I will walk the long path with you!

The old gentleman who sits opposite met us walking, arm in arm, about the middle of the long path, and said very charmingly, "Good-morning, my dears!"

JOHN STUART MILL 1806-1873

The foremost exponent of utilitarian thought in nineteenth-century England, John Stuart Mill, believed that man has it within his power to create a better social order. To do this, man need only apply reason or common sense to political, social, and economic problems. One of the doctrines of utilitarianism was that the aim of political action should be the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Hence, Mill favored various reforms, among them popular education, woman suffrage, and cooperative agriculture. But a happier world is possible only if man enjoys intellectual and political freedom. Mill's views on political liberty as it

touches the rights of the individual in a governed society found eloquent expression in his essay On Liberty (1859), his best-known work. The selection that follows is from the first chapter of that essay. It may be read in connection with Milton's Areopagitica (II, 22) and Aldous Huxley's "The Idea of Equality" (II, 263). Two other books by Mill, actually long essays, are Considerations on Representative Government (1861) and On the Subjection of Women (1869).

ON LIBERTY

The subject of this Essay is not the so-called Liberty of the Will, so unfortunately opposed to the misnamed doctrine of Philosophical Necessity, but Civil, or Social Liberty: the nature and limits of the power which can be legitimately exercised by society over the individual. A question seldom stated, and hardly ever discussed, in general terms, but which profoundly influences the practical controversies of the age by its latent presence, and is likely soon to make itself recognized as the vital question of the future. It is so far from being new, that, in a certain sense, it has divided mankind, almost from the remotest ages; but in the stage of progress into which the more civilized portions of the species have now entered, it presents itself under new conditions, and requires a different and more fundamental treatment.

The struggle between Liberty and Authority is the most conspicuous feature in the portions of history with which we are earliest familiar, particularly in that of Greece, Rome, and England. But in old times this contest was between subjects, or some classes of subjects, and the Government. By liberty was meant protection against the tyranny of the political rulers. The rulers were conceived (except in some of the popular governments of Greece) as in a necessarily antagonistic position to the people whom they ruled. They consisted of a governing One, or a governing tribe or caste, who derived their authority from inheritance or conquest, who, at all events, did not hold it at the pleasure of the governed, and whose supremacy men did not venture, perhaps did not desire, to contest, whatever precautions might be taken against its oppressive exercise. Their power was regarded as necessary, but also as highly dangerous; as a weapon which they would attempt to

use against their subjects, no less than against external enemies. To prevent the weaker members of the community from being preyed upon by innumerable vultures, it was needful that there should be an animal of prey stronger than the rest, commissioned to keep them down. But as the king of the vultures would be no less bent upon preying on the flock than any of the minor harpies, it was indispensable to be in a perpetual attitude of defense against his beak and claws. The aim, therefore, of patriots was to set limits to the power which the ruler should be suffered to exercise over the community; and this limitation was what they meant by liberty. It was attempted in two ways. First, by obtaining a recognition of certain immunities, called political liberties or rights, which it was to be regarded as a breach of duty in the ruler to infringe, and which, if he did infringe, specific resistance, or general rebellion, was held to be justifiable. A second, and generally a later expedient, was the establishment of constitutional checks, by which the consent of the community, or of a body of some sort, supposed to represent its interests, was made a necessary condition to some of the more important acts of the governing power. To the first of these modes of limitation, the ruling power, in most European countries, was compelled, more or less, to submit. It was not so with the second; and, to attain this, or when already in some degree possessed, to attain it more completely, became everywhere the principal object of the lovers of liberty. And so long as mankind were content to combat one enemy by another, and to be ruled by a master, on condition of being guaranteed more or less efficaciously against his tyranny, they did not carry their aspirations beyond this point.

A time, however, came, in the progress of human affairs, when men ceased to think it a necessity of nature that their governors should be an independent power, opposed in interest to themselves. It appeared to them much better that the various magistrates of the State should be their tenants or delegates, revocable at their pleasure. In that way alone, it seemed, could they have complete security that the powers of government would never be abused to their disadvantage. By degrees this new demand for elective and temporary rulers became the prominent object of the exertions of the

popular party, wherever any such party existed; and superseded, to a considerable extent, the previous efforts to limit the power of rulers. As the struggle proceeded for making the ruling power emanate from the periodical choice of the ruled, some persons began to think that too much importance had been attached to the limitation of the power itself. *That* (it might seem) was a resource against rulers whose interests were habitually opposed to those of the people. What was now wanted was that the rulers should be identified with the people; that their interest and will should be the interest and will of the nation. The nation did not need to be protected against its own will. There was no fear of its tyrannizing over itself. Let the rulers be effectually responsible to it, promptly removable by it, and it could afford to trust them with power of which it could itself dictate the use to be made. Their power was but the nation's own power, concentrated, and in a form convenient for exercise. This mode of thought, or rather perhaps of feeling, was common among the last generation of European liberalism, in the Continental section of which it still apparently predominates. Those who admit any limit to what a government may do, except in the case of such governments as they think ought not to exist, stand out as brilliant exceptions among the political thinkers of the Continent. A similar tone of sentiment might by this time have been prevalent in our own country, if the circumstances which for a time encouraged it had continued unaltered. But, in political and philosophical theories, as well as in persons, success discloses faults and infirmities which failure might have concealed from observation. The notion, that the people have no need to limit their power over themselves, might seem axiomatic, when popular government was a thing only dreamed about, or read of as having existed at some distant period of the past. Neither was that notion necessarily disturbed by such temporary aberrations as those of the French Revolution, the worst of which were the work of an usurping few, and which, in any case, belonged, not to the permanent working of popular institutions, but to a sudden and convulsive outbreak against monarchical and aristocratic despotism. In time, however, a democratic republic came to occupy a large portion of the earth's surface,

and made itself felt as one of the most powerful members of the community of nations; and elective and responsible government became subject to the observations and criticisms which wait upon a great existing fact. It was now perceived that such phrases as "self-government," and "the power of the people over themselves," do not express the true state of the case. The "people" who exercise the power are not always the same people with those over whom it is exercised; and the "self-government" spoken of is not the government of each by himself, but of each by all the rest. The will of the people, moreover, practically means the will of the most numerous or the most active *part* of the people; the majority, or those who succeed in making themselves accepted as the majority; the people, consequently, *may* desire to oppress a part of their number, and precautions are as much needed against this as against any other abuse of power. The limitation, therefore, of the power of government over individuals loses none of its importance when the holders of power are regularly accountable to the community, that is, to the strongest party therein. This view of things, recommending itself equally to the intelligence of thinkers and to the inclination of those important classes in European society to whose real or supposed interests democracy is adverse, has had no difficulty in establishing itself; and in political speculations "the tyranny of the majority" is now generally included among the evils against which society requires to be on its guard.

Like other tyrannies, the tyranny of the majority was at first, and is still vulgarly, held in dread, chiefly as operating through the acts of the public authorities. But reflecting persons perceived that when society is itself the tyrant—society collectively, over the separate individuals who compose it—its means of tyrannizing are not restricted to the acts which it may do by the hands of its political functionaries. Society can and does execute its own mandates: and if it issues wrong mandates instead of right, or any mandates at all in things with which it ought not to meddle, it practices a social tyranny more formidable than many kinds of political oppression, since, though not usually upheld by such extreme penalties, it leaves fewer means of escape, penetrating much more deeply into the details of life and

enslaving the soul itself. Protection, therefore, against the tyranny of the magistrate is not enough: there needs protection also against the tyranny of the prevailing opinion and feeling; against the tendency of society to impose, by other means than civil penalties, its own ideas and practices as rules of conduct on those who dissent from them; to fetter the development, and, if possible, prevent the formation, of any individuality not in harmony with its ways, and compel all characters to fashion themselves upon the model of its own. There is a limit to the legitimate interference of collective opinion with individual independence; and to find that limit, and maintain it against encroachment, is as indispensable to a good condition of human affairs as protection against political despotism.

But though this proposition is not likely to be contested in general terms, the practical question, where to place the limit—how to make the fitting adjustment between individual independence and social control—is a subject on which nearly everything remains to be done. All that makes existence valuable to any one depends on the enforcement of restraints upon the actions of other people. Some rules of conduct, therefore, must be imposed, by law in the first place, and by opinion on many things which are not fit subjects for the operation of law. What these rules should be is the principal question in human affairs; but if we except a few of the most obvious cases, it is one of those which least progress has been made in resolving. No two ages, and scarcely any two countries, have decided it alike; and the decision of one age or country is a wonder to another. Yet the people of any given age and country no more suspect any difficulty in it than if it were a subject on which mankind had always been agreed. The rules which obtain among themselves appear to them self-evident and self-justifying. This all but universal illusion is one of the examples of the magical influence of custom, which is not only, as the proverb says, a second nature, but is continually mistaken for the first. The effect of custom, in preventing any misgiving respecting the rules of conduct which mankind impose on one another, is all the more complete because the subject is one on which it is not generally considered necessary that reasons should be given, either by one person to others, or by each to

himself. People are accustomed to believe, and have been encouraged in the belief by some who aspire to the character of philosophers, that their feelings, on subjects of this nature, are better than reasons, and render reasons unnecessary. The practical principle which guides them to their opinions on the regulation of human conduct is the feeling in each person's mind that everybody should be required to act as he, and those with whom he sympathizes, would like them to act. No one, indeed, acknowledges to himself that his standard of judgment is his own liking; but an opinion on a point of conduct, not supported by reasons, can only count as one person's preference; and if the reasons, when given, are a mere appeal to a similar preference felt by other people, it is still only many people's liking instead of one. To an ordinary man, however, his own preference, thus supported, is not only a perfectly satisfactory reason, but the only one he generally has for any of his notions of morality, taste, or propriety, which are not expressly written in his religious creed; and his chief guide in the interpretation even of that. Men's opinions, accordingly, on what is laudable or blamable, are affected by all the multifarious causes which influence their wishes in regard to the conduct of others, and which are as numerous as those which determine their wishes on any other subject. Sometimes their reason—at other times their prejudices or superstitions: often their social affections, not seldom their antisocial ones, their envy or jealousy, their arrogance or contemptuousness: but most commonly, their desires or fears for themselves—their legitimate or illegitimate self-interest. Wherever there is an ascendant class, a large portion of the morality of the country emanates from its class interests, and its feelings of class superiority. The morality between Spartans and Helots,¹ between planters and negroes, between princes and subjects, between nobles and roturiers,² between men and women, has been for the most part the creation of these class interests and feelings: and the sentiments thus generated, react in turn upon the moral feelings of the members of the ascendant class, in their relations among themselves. Where, on the other hand,

a class, formerly ascendant, has lost its ascendancy, or where its ascendancy is unpopular, the prevailing moral sentiments frequently bear the impress of an impatient dislike of superiority. Another grand determining principle of the rules of conduct, both in act and forbearance, which have been enforced by law or opinion, has been the servility of mankind towards the supposed preferences or aversions of their temporal masters, or of their gods. This servility, though essentially selfish, is not hypocrisy; it gives rise to perfectly genuine sentiments of abhorrence; it made men burn magicians and heretics. Among so many baser influences, the general and obvious interests of society have of course had a share, and a large one, in the direction of the moral sentiments: less, however, as a matter of reason, and on their own account, than as a consequence of the sympathies and antipathies which grew out of them: and sympathies and antipathies which had little or nothing to do with the interests of society, have made themselves felt in the establishment of moralities with quite as great force.

The likings and dislikings of society, or of some powerful portion of it, are thus the main thing which has practically determined the rules laid down for general observance, under the penalties of law or opinion. And in general, those who have been in advance of society in thought and feeling have left this condition of things unassailed in principle, however they may have come into conflict with it in some of its details. They have occupied themselves rather in inquiring what things society ought to like or dislike than in questioning whether its likings or dislikings should be a law to individuals. They preferred endeavoring to alter the feelings of mankind on the particular points on which they were themselves heretical, rather than make common cause in defense of freedom, with heretics generally. The only case in which the higher ground has been taken on principle and maintained with consistency, by any but an individual here and there, is that of religious belief: a case instructive in many ways, and not least so as forming a most striking instance of the fallibility of what is called the moral sense: for the *odium theologicum*,³ in a sincere bigot, is one of the most unequivocal

¹ serfs of the Spartans.

² persons not of noble birth.

³ hatred of theologians for one another.

cases of moral feeling. Those who first broke the yoke of what called itself the Universal Church were in general as little willing to permit difference of religious opinion as that church itself. But when the heat of the conflict was over, without giving a complete victory to any party, and each church or sect was reduced to limit its hopes to retaining possession of the ground it already occupied, minorities, seeing that they had no chance of becoming majorities, were under the necessity of pleading to those whom they could not convert, for permission to differ. It is accordingly on this battlefield, almost solely, that the rights of the individual against society have been asserted on broad grounds of principle, and the claim of society to exercise authority over dissentients, openly controverted. The great writers to whom the world owes what religious liberty it possesses have mostly asserted freedom of conscience as an indefeasible right, and denied absolutely that a human being is accountable to others for his religious belief. Yet so natural to mankind is intolerance in whatever they really care about, that religious freedom has hardly anywhere been practically realized, except where religious indifference, which dislikes to have its peace disturbed by theological quarrels, has added its weight to the scale. In the minds of almost all religious persons, even in the most tolerant countries, the duty of toleration is admitted with tacit reserves. One person will bear with dissent in matters of church government, but not of dogma; another can tolerate everybody, short of a Papist or a Unitarian; another, every one who believes in revealed religion; a few extend their charity a little further, but stop at the belief in a God and in a future state. Wherever the sentiment of the majority is still genuine and intense, it is found to have abated little of its claim to be obeyed.

In England, from the peculiar circumstances of our political history, though the yoke of opinion is perhaps heavier, that of law is lighter than in most other countries of Europe; and there is considerable jealousy of direct interference, by the legislative or the executive power, with private conduct; not so much from any just regard for the independence of the individual as from the still subsisting habit of looking on the government as representing an opposite interest to the public. The majority

have not yet learnt to feel the power of the government their power, or its opinions their opinions. When they do so, individual liberty will probably be as much exposed to invasion from the government, as it already is from public opinion. But, as yet, there is a considerable amount of feeling ready to be called forth against any attempt of the law to control individuals in things in which they have not hitherto been accustomed to be controlled by it, and this with very little discrimination as to whether the matter is, or is not, within the legitimate sphere of legal control, inasmuch that the feeling, highly salutary on the whole, is perhaps quite as often misplaced as well grounded in the particular instances of its application. There is, in fact, no recognized principle by which the propriety or impropriety of government interference is customarily tested. People decide according to their personal preferences. Some, whenever they see any good to be done, or evil to be remedied, would willingly instigate the government to undertake the business; while others prefer to bear almost any amount of social evil rather than add one to the departments of human interests amenable to governmental control. And men range themselves on one or the other side in any particular case, according to this general direction of their sentiments; or according to the degree of interest which they feel in the particular thing which it is proposed that the government should do, or according to the belief they entertain that the government would, or would not, do it in the manner they prefer; but very rarely on account of any opinion to which they consistently adhere as to what things are fit to be done by a government. And it seems to me that in consequence of this absence of rule or principle, one side is at present as often wrong as the other; the interference of government is, with about equal frequency, improperly invoked and improperly condemned.

The object of this *Essay* is to assert one very simple principle, as entitled to govern absolutely the dealings of society with the individual in the way of compulsion and control, whether the means used be physical force in the form of legal penalties, or the moral coercion of public opinion. That principle is that the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with

the liberty of action of any of their number is self-protection. That the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant. He cannot rightfully be compelled to do or forbear because it will be better for him to do so, because it will make him happier, because, in the opinions of others, to do so would be wise, or even right. These are good reasons for remonstrating with him, or reasoning with him, or persuading him, or entreating him, but not for compelling him, or visiting him with any evil in case he do otherwise. To justify that, the conduct from which it is desired to deter him must be calculated to produce evil to some one else. The only part of the conduct of any one, for which he is amenable to society, is that which concerns others. In the part which merely concerns himself, his independence is, of right, absolute. Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign.

It is, perhaps, hardly necessary to say that this doctrine is meant to apply only to human beings in the maturity of their faculties. We are not speaking of children, or of young persons below the age which the law may fix as that of manhood or womanhood. Those who are still in a state to require being taken care of by others must be protected against their own actions as well as against external injury. For the same reason, we may leave out of consideration those backward states of society in which the race itself may be considered as in its nonage. The early difficulties in the way of spontaneous progress are so great that there is seldom any choice of means for overcoming them; and a ruler full of the spirit of improvement is warranted in the use of any expedients that will attain an end, perhaps otherwise unattainable. Despotism is a legitimate mode of government in dealing with barbarians, provided the end be their improvement, and the means justified by actually effecting that end. Liberty, as a principle, has no application to any state of things anterior to the time when mankind have become capable of being improved by free and equal discussion. Until then, there is nothing for them but implicit obedience to an Akbar⁴

or a Charlemagne, if they are so fortunate as to find one. But as soon as mankind have attained the capacity of being guided to their own improvement by conviction or persuasion (a period long since reached in all nations with whom we need here concern ourselves), compulsion, either in the direct form or in that of pains and penalties for non-compliance, is no longer admissible as a means to their own good, and justifiable only for the security of others.

It is proper to state that I forgo any advantage which could be derived to my argument from the idea of abstract right, as a thing independent of utility. I regard utility as the ultimate appeal on all ethical questions; but it must be utility in the largest sense, grounded on the permanent interests of man as a progressive being. Those interests, I contend, authorize the subjection of individual spontaneity to external control only in respect to those actions of each which concern the interest of other people. If any one does an act hurtful to others, there is a *prima facie* case for punishing him, by law, or, where legal penalties are not safely applicable, by general disapprobation. There are also many positive acts for the benefit of others which he may rightfully be compelled to perform; such as, to give evidence in a court of justice; to bear his fair share in the common defense, or in any other joint work necessary to the interest of the society of which he enjoys the protection; and to perform certain acts of individual beneficence, such as saving a fellow creature's life, or interposing to protect the defenseless against ill-usage, things which whenever it is obviously a man's duty to do, he may rightfully be made responsible to society for not doing. A person may cause evil to others not only by his actions but by his inaction, and in either case he is justly accountable to them for the injury. The latter case, it is true, requires a much more cautious exercise of compulsion than the former. To make any one answerable for doing evil to others is the rule; to make him answerable for not preventing evil is, comparatively speaking, the exception. Yet there are many cases clear enough and grave enough to justify that exception. In all things which regard the external relations of the individual, he is *de jure*⁵ amenable to those whose interests are con-

⁴ Emperor of Hindustan (1556-1605).

⁵ by law.

cerned, and if need be, to society as their protector. There are often good reasons for not holding him to the responsibility; but these reasons must arise from the special exigencies of the case: either because it is a kind of case in which he is on the whole likely to act better, when left to his own discretion, than when controlled in any way in which society have it in their power to control him, or because the attempt to exercise control would produce other evils, greater than those which it would prevent. When such reasons as these preclude the enforcement of responsibility, the conscience of the agent himself should step into the vacant judgment-seat and protect those interests of others which have no external protection; judging himself all the more rigidly, because the case does not admit of his being made accountable to the judgment of his fellow creatures.

But there is a sphere of action in which society, as distinguished from the individual, has, if any, only an indirect interest, comprehending all that portion of a person's life and conduct which affects only himself, or if it also affects others, only with their free, voluntary, and undeceived consent and participation. When I say only himself, I mean directly, and in the first instance: for whatever affects himself may affect others through himself, and the objection which may be grounded on this contingency will receive consideration in the sequel. This, then, is the appropriate region of human liberty. It comprises, first, the inward domain of consciousness; demanding liberty of conscience, in the most comprehensive sense; liberty of thought and feeling, absolute freedom of opinion and sentiment on all subjects, practical or speculative, scientific, moral, or theological. The liberty of expressing and publishing opinions may seem to fall under a different principle, since it belongs to that part of the conduct of an individual which concerns other people; but, being almost of as much importance as the liberty of thought itself, and resting in great part on the same reasons, is practically inseparable from it. Secondly, the principle requires liberty of tastes and pursuits; of framing the plan of our life to suit our own character; of doing as we like, subject to such consequences as may follow: without impediment from our fellow creatures, so long as what

we do does not harm them, even though they should think our conduct foolish, perverse, or wrong. Thirdly, from this liberty of each individual follows the liberty, within the same limits, of combination among individuals, freedom to unite for any purpose not involving harm to others: the persons combining being supposed to be of full age and not forced or deceived.

No society in which these liberties are not, on the whole, respected, is free, whatever may be its form of government; and none is completely free in which they do not exist absolute and unqualified. The only freedom which deserves the name is that of pursuing our own good in our own way, so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs, or impede their efforts to obtain it. Each is the proper guardian of his own health, whether bodily, or mental and spiritual. Mankind are greater gainers by suffering each other to live as seems good to themselves than by compelling each to live as seems good to the rest. . . .

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY
1811-1863

William Makepeace Thackeray is so commonly thought of as a novelist, the author of such masterpieces as Vanity Fair and Henry Esmond, that one is likely to overlook Thackeray the essayist. But as a writer of the familiar essay Thackeray is probably our most important link between Charles Lamb and Robert Louis Stevenson. The best of his genial essays, those in Roundabout Papers (1863), were first published in the Cornhill Magazine, of which Thackeray was editor. They were written not long before his death, and so he is said to have come late to the essay. But his Book of Snobs (1848), a much earlier work, is really a collection of essays, more or less familiar in manner, satirical though they are. And to those essays may be added Thackeray's lectures on the English humorists of the eighteenth century. In temperament Thackeray is likely to remind one of certain writers of that century. He is urbane, like Addison; sentimental, like Steele; satirical, like Fielding; and even cynical, on occasion, like Swift. But it is perhaps more to be noted that Thackeray loved Montaigne, the first of the personal essayists, if not the greatest. The two

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essays given here, "On Being Found Out" and "Snobs and Marriage," are from Roundabout Papers and The Book of Snobs, respectively. As an example of satire, Thackeray's essay on snobs and marriage should be compared with other essays in this volume (see the note on Swift, II, 31).

SNOBS AND MARRIAGE

Everybody of the middle rank who walks through this life with a sympathy for his companions on the same journey—at any rate, every man who has been jostling in the world for some three or four lustres—must make no end of melancholy reflections upon the fate of those victims whom Society, that is, Snobbishness, is immolating every day. With love and simplicity and natural kindness Snobbishness is perpetually at war. People dare not be happy for fear of Snobs. People dare not love for fear of Snobs. People pine away lonely under the tyranny of Snobs. Honest kindly hearts dry up and die. Gallant generous lads, blooming with hearty youth, swell into bloated old-bachelorhood, and burst and tumble over. Tender girls wither into shrunken decay, and perish solitary, from whom Snobbishness has cut off the common claim to happiness and affection with which Nature endowed us all. My heart grows sad as I see the blundering tyrant's handiwork. As I behold it I swell with cheap rage, and glow with fury against the Snob. Come down, I say, thou skulking dulness. Come down, thou stupid bully, and give up thy brutal ghost! And I arm myself with the sword and spear, and taking leave of my family, go forth to do battle with that hideous ogre and giant, that brutal despot in Snob Castle, who holds so many gentle hearts in torture and thrall.

When *Punch* is king, I declare there shall be no such thing as old maids and old bachelors. The Reverend Mr. Malthus¹ shall be burned annually, instead of Guy Fawkes.² Those who don't marry shall go into the workhouse. It shall be a sin for the poorest not to have a pretty girl to love him.

¹ Thomas Robert Malthus (1766–1834), English economist, who argued that population may outgrow the means of subsistence and that checks on population are therefore necessary.

² one of the conspirators who plotted to blow up the Houses of Parliament on November 5, 1605.

The above reflections came to mind after taking a walk with an old comrade, Jack Spiggot by name, who is just passing into the state of old-bachelorhood, after the manly and blooming youth in which I remember him. Jack was one of the handsomest fellows in England when we entered together in the Highland Buffs; but I quitted the Cuttykilts³ early, and lost sight of him for many years.

Ah! how changed he is from those days! He wears a waistband now, and has begun to dye his whiskers. His cheeks, which were red, are now mottled; his eyes, once so bright and steadfast, are the colour of peeled plovers' eggs.

'Are you married, Jack?' says I, remembering how consumedly in love he was with his cousin Letty Lovelace, when the Cuttykilts were quartered at Strathbungo some twenty years ago.

'Married? no,' says he. 'Not money enough. Hard enough to keep myself, much more a family, on five hundred a year. Come to Dickinson's; there's some of the best Madeira in London there, my boy.' So we went and talked over old times. The bill for dinner and wine consumed was prodigious, and the quantity of brandy-and-water that Jack took showed what a regular boozier he was. 'A guinea or two guineas. What the devil do I care what I spend for my dinner?' says he.

'And Letty Lovelace?' says I.

Jack's countenance fell. However he burst into a loud laugh presently. 'Letty Lovelace!' says he. 'She's Letty Lovelace still; but Gad, such a wizened old woman! She's as thin as a thread-paper; (you remember what a figure she had:) her nose has got red, and her teeth blue. She's always ill; always quarrelling with the rest of the family; always psalm-singing, and always taking pills. Gad, I had a rare escape *there*. Push round the grog, old boy.'

Straightway memory went back to the days when Letty was the loveliest of blooming young creatures: when to hear her sing was to make the heart jump into your throat; when to see her dance, was better than Montessu or Noblet (they were the Ballet Queens of those days); when Jack used to wear a locket of her hair, with a little gold chain round his neck, and, exhilarated with toddy, after a sederunt⁴ of the Cuttykilt mess, used to pull out this token, and

³ a Scotch regiment.

⁴ a sitting or session.

kiss it, and howl about it, to the great amusement of the bottle-nosed old Major and the rest of the table.

'My father and hers couldn't put their horses together,' Jack said. 'The General wouldn't come down with more than six thousand. My governor said it shouldn't be done under eight. Lovelace told him to go and be hanged, and so we parted company. They said she was in a decline. Gammon! She's forty, and as tough and as sour as this bit of lemon-peel. Don't put much into your punch, Snob my boy. No man can stand punch after wine.'

'And what are your pursuits, Jack?' says I.

'Sold out when the governor died. Mother lives at Bath. Go down there once a year for a week. Dreadful slow. Shilling whist. Four sisters—all unmarried except the youngest—awful work. Scotland in August. Italy in the winter. Cursed rheumatism. Come to London in March, and toddle about at the Club, old boy; and we won't go home till maw-awning till daylight does appear.'

'And here's the wreck of two lives!' mused the present Snobographer, after taking leave of Jack Spiggot. 'Pretty merry Letty Lovelace's rudder lost and she cast away, and handsome Jack Spiggot stranded on the shore like a drunken Trinculo.'⁵

What was it that insulted Nature (to use no higher name), and perverted her kindly intentions towards them? What cursed frost was it that nipped the love that both were bearing, and condemned the girl to sour sterility, and the lad to selfish old-bachelorhood? It was the infernal Snob tyrant who governs us all, who says, "Thou shalt not love without a lady's maid; thou shalt not marry without a carriage and horses; thou shalt have no wife in thy heart, and no children on thy knee, without a page in buttons and a French *bonne*;"⁶ thou shalt go to the devil unless thou hast a brougham; marry poor, and society shall forsake thee; thy kinsmen shall avoid thee as a criminal; thy aunts and uncles shall turn up their eyes and bemoan the sad, sad manner in which Tom or Harry has thrown himself away.' You, young woman, may sell yourself without shame, and marry old Cræsus; you, young man, may lie away your

heart and your life for a jointure. But if you are poor, woe be to you! Society, the brutal Snob autocrat, consigns you to solitary perdition. Wither, poor girl, in your garret; rot, poor bachelor, in your Club.

When I see those graceless recluses—those unnatural monks and nuns of the order of St. Beelzebub,⁷ my hatred for Snobs, and their worship, and their idols, passes all continence. Let us hew down that man-eating Juggernaut, I say, that hideous Dagon; and I glow with the heroic courage of Tom Thumb, and join battle with the giant Snob.

ON BEING FOUND OUT

At the close (let us say) of Queen Anne's reign, when I was a boy at a private and preparatory school for young gentlemen, I remember the wiseacre of a master ordering us all, one night, to march into a little garden at the back of the house, and thence to proceed one by one into a tool- or hen-house (I was but a tender little thing just put into short clothes, and can't exactly say whether the house was for tools or hens), and in that house to put our hands into a sack which stood on a bench, a candle burning beside it. I put my hand into the sack. My hand came out quite black. I went and joined the other boys in the schoolroom; and all their hands were black too.

By reason of my tender age (and there are some critics who, I hope, will be satisfied by my acknowledging that I am a hundred and fifty-six next birthday) I could not understand what was the meaning of this night excursion—this candle, this tool-house, this bag of soot. I think we little boys were taken out of our sleep to be brought to the ordeal. We came, then, and showed our little hands to the master; washed them or not—most probably, I should say, not—and so went bewildered back to bed.

Something had been stolen in the school that day; and Mr. Wiseacre having read in a book

⁷ "This, of course, is understood to apply only to those unmarried persons whom a mean and Snobish fear about money has kept from fulfilling their natural destiny. Many persons there are devoted to celibacy because they cannot help it. Of these a man would be a brute who spoke roughly. Indeed, after Miss O'Toole's conduct to the writer, he would be the last to condemn. But never mind, these are personal matters." (Thackeray's note.)

⁵ a jester in Shakespeare's *Tempest*.

⁶ a French maidservant.

of an ingenious method of finding out a thief by making him put his hand into a sack (which, if guilty, the rogue would shirk from doing), all we boys were subjected to the trial. Goodness knows what the lost object was, or who stole it. We all had black hands to show to the master. And the thief, whoever he was, was not Found Out that time.

I wonder if the rascal is alive—an elderly scoundrel he must be by this time; and a hoary old hypocrite, to whom an old school-fellow presents his kindest regards—parenthetically remarking what a dreadful place that private school was: cold, chilblains, bad dinners, not enough victuals, and caning awful!—Are you alive still, I say, you nameless villain, who escaped discovery on that day of crime? I hope you have escaped often since, old sinner. Ah, what a lucky thing it is, for you and me, my man, that we are *not* found out in all our peccadilloes; and that our backs can slip away from the master and the cane!

Just consider what life would be, if every rogue was found out, and flogged *coram populo*! What a butchery, what an indecency, what an endless swishing of the rod! Don't cry out about my misanthropy. My good friend Mealmouth, I will trouble you to tell me, do you go to church? When there, do you say, or do you not, that you are a miserable sinner? and saying so, do you believe it or disbelieve it? If you are a M. S., don't you deserve correction, and aren't you grateful if you are to be let off? I say, again, what a blessed thing it is that we are not all found out!

Just picture to yourself everybody who does wrong being found out, and punished accordingly. Fancy all the boys in all the school being whipped; and then the assistants, and then the head master (Doctor Badford let us call him). Fancy the provost-marshal being tied up, having previously superintended the correction of the whole army. After the young gentlemen have had their turn for the faulty exercises, fancy Doctor Lincolnsinn being taken up for certain faults in *his* Essay and Review. After the clergyman has cried his peccavi,² suppose we hoist up a Bishop, and give him a couple of dozen! (I see my Lord Bishop of Gloucester sitting in a very uneasy posture on

his right reverend bench.) After we have cast off the Bishop, what are we to say to the Minister who appointed him? My Lord Cinqwarden, it is painful to have to use personal correction to a boy of your age; but really . . . *Siste tandem, carnifex!*³ The butchery is too horrible. The hand drops powerless, appalled at the quantity of birch which it must cut and brandish. I am glad we are not all found out, I say again; and protest, my dear brethren, against our having our deserts.

To fancy all men found out and punished is bad enough; but imagine all women found out in the distinguished social circle in which you and I have the honour to move. Is it not a mercy that so many of these fair criminals remain unpunished and undiscovered? There is Mrs. Longbow, who is for ever practising, and who shoots poisoned arrows, too; when you meet her you don't call her liar, and charge her with the wickedness she has done, and is doing. There is Mrs. Painter, who passes for a most respectable woman, and a model in society. There is no use in saying what you really know regarding her and her goings on. There is Diana Hunter—what a little haughty prude it is; and yet *we* know stories about her which are not altogether edifying. I say it is best, for the sake of the good, that the bad should not all be found out. You don't want your children to know the history of that lady in the next box, who is so handsome, and whom they admire so. Ah me! what would life be if we were all found out, and punished for all our faults? Jack Ketch⁴ would be in permanence; and then who would hang Jack Ketch?

They talk of murderers being pretty certainly found out. Psha! I have heard an authority awfully competent vow and declare that scores and hundreds of murders are committed, and nobody is the wiser. That terrible man mentioned one or two ways of committing murder, which he maintained were quite common, and were scarcely ever found out. A man, for instance, comes home to his wife, and . . . but I pause—I know that *his* Magazine⁵ has a very large circulation. Hundreds and hundreds of

³ But desist, executioner!

⁴ the hangman.

⁵ The *Cornhill Magazine*, of which Thackeray was the first editor and in which this essay first appeared.

¹ in public.

² I have sinned.

thousands—why not say a million of people at once?—well, say a million read it. And amongst these countless readers, I might be teaching some monster how to make away with his wife without being found out, some fiend of a woman how to destroy her dear husband. I will not then tell this easy and simple way of murder, as communicated to me by a most respectable party in the confidence of a private intercourse. Suppose some gentle reader were to try this most simple and easy receipt—it seems to me almost infallible—and come to grief in consequence, and be found out and hanged? Should I ever pardon myself for having been the means of doing injury to a single one of our esteemed subscribers? The prescription whereof I speak—that is to say whereof I *don't* speak—shall be buried in this bosom. No, I am a humane man. I am not one of your Bluebeards to go and say to my wife, 'My dear! I am going away for a few days to Brighton. Here are all the keys of the house. You may open every door and closet, except the one at the end of the oak-room opposite the fireplace, with the little bronze Shakspeare on the mantelpiece (or what not).' I don't say this to a woman—unless, to be sure, I want to get rid of her—because, after such a caution, I know she'll peep into the closet. I say nothing about the closet at all. I keep the key in my pocket, and a being whom I love, but who, as I know, has many weaknesses, out of harm's way. You toss up your head, dear angel, drub on the ground with your lovely little feet, on the table with your sweet rosy fingers, and cry, 'Oh, sneerer! You don't know the depth of woman's feeling, the lofty scorn of all deceit, the entire absence of mean curiosity in the sex, or never, never would you libel us so!' Ah, Delia! dear dear Delia! It is because I fancy I *do* know something about you (not all, mind—no, no; no man knows that)—Ah, my bride, my ringdove, my rose, my poppet—choose, in fact, whatever name you like—bulbul of my grove, fountain of my desert, sunshine of my darkling life, and joy of my dungeoned existence, it is because I *do* know a little about you that I conclude to say nothing of that private closet, and keep my key in my pocket. You take away that closet-key then, and the house-key. You lock Delia in. You keep her out of harm's way and gadding, and so she never *can* be found out.

And yet by little strange accidents and coincidences how we are being found out every day. You remember that old story of the Abbé Kakatoes, who told the company at supper one night how the first confession he ever received was—from a murderer let us say. Presently enters to supper the Marquis de Croquemitaine. 'Palsambleu,^a abbé!' says the brilliant Marquis, taking a pinch of snuff, 'are you here? Gentlemen and ladies! I was the Abbé's first penitent, and I made him a confession which I promise you astonished him.'

To be sure how queerly things are found out! Here is an instance. Only the other day I was writing in these Roundabout Papers about a certain man, whom I facetiously called Baggs, and who had abused me to my friends, who of course told me. Shortly after that paper was published another friend—Sacks let us call him—scowls fiercely at me as I am sitting in perfect good-humour at the club, and passes on without speaking. A cut. A quarrel. Sacks thinks it is about him that I was writing; whereas, upon my honour and conscience, I never had him once in my mind, and was pointing my moral from quite another man. But don't you see, by this wrath of the guilty-conscience Sacks, that he had been abusing me too? He has owned himself guilty, never having been accused. He has winced when nobody thought of hitting him. I did but put the cap out, and madly butting and chafing, behold my friend rushes to put his head into it! Never mind, Sacks, you are found out; but I bear you no malice, my man.

And yet to be found out, I know from my own experience, must be painful and odious, and cruelly mortifying to the inward vanity. Suppose I am a poltroon, let us say. With fierce moustache, loud talk, plentiful oaths, and an immense stick, I keep up nevertheless a character for courage. I swear fearfully at cabmen and women; brandish my bludgeon, and perhaps knock down a little man or two with it: brag of the images which I break at the shooting-gallery, and pass amongst my friends for a whiskery fire-eater, afraid of neither man nor dragon. Ah me! Suppose some brisk little chap steps up and gives me a caning in St. James's Street, with all the heads of my friends looking

^a Zounds!

out of all the club windows. My reputation is gone. I frighten no man more. My nose is pulled by whipper-snappers, who jump up on a chair to reach it. I am found out. And in the days of my triumphs, when people were yet afraid of me, and were taken in by my swagger, I always knew that I was a lily-liver, and expected that I should be found out some day.

That certainty of being found out must haunt and depress many a bold braggadocio spirit. Let us say it is a clergyman, who can pump copious floods of tears out of his own eyes and those of his audience. He thinks to himself, 'I am but a poor swindling chattering rogue. My bills are unpaid. I have jilted several women whom I have promised to marry. I don't know whether I believe what I preach, and I know I have stolen the very sermon over which I have been snivelling. Have they found me out?' says he, as his head drops down on the cushion.

Then your writer, poet, historian, novelist, or what not? The *Beacon* says that 'Jones's work is one of the first order.' The *Lamp* declares that 'Jones's tragedy surpasses every work since the days of Him of Avon.' The *Comet* asserts that 'J.'s "Life of Goody Two-shoes" is a κτῆμα ἐς αἰῶνι,⁷ a noble and enduring monument to the fame of that admirable Englishwoman,' and so forth. But then Jones knows that he has lent the critic of the *Beacon* five pounds; that his publisher has a half-share in the *Lamp*; and that the *Comet* comes repeatedly to dine with him. It is all very well. Jones is immortal until he is found out; and then down comes the extinguisher, and the immortal is dead and buried. The idea (*dies ira*)⁸ of discovery must haunt many a man, and make him uneasy, as the trumpets are puffing in his triumph. Brown, who has a higher place than he deserves, cowers before Smith, who has found him out. What is a chorus of critics shouting 'Bravo'?—a public clapping hands and flinging garlands? Brown knows that Smith has found him out. Puff, trumpets! Wave, banners! Huzza, boys, for the immortal Brown! 'This is all very well,' B. thinks (bowing the while, smiling, laying his hand to his heart); 'but there stands Smith at the window: he has measured me; and some day the others will find me out too.' It is a very

curious sensation to sit by a man who has found you out, and who you know has found you out; or, *vice versâ*, to sit with a man whom you have found out. His talent? Bah! His virtue?

5 We know a little story or two about his virtue, and he knows we know it. We are thinking over friend Robinson's antecedents, as we grin, bow, and talk; and we are both humbugs together. Robinson a good fellow, is he? You know how
10 he behaved to Hicks? A good-natured man, is he? Pray do you remember that little story of Mrs. Robinson's black eye? How men have to work, to talk, to smile, to go to bed, and try to sleep, with this dread of being found out on
15 their consciences! Bardolph, who has robbed a church, and Nym, who has taken a purse, go to their usual haunts, and smoke their pipes with their companions. Mr. Detective Bulls-eye appears, and says, 'Oh, Bardolph,' I want you
20 about that there pyx¹⁰ business!' Mr. Bardolph knocks the ashes out of his pipe, puts out his hands to the little steel cuffs, and walks away quite meekly. He is found out. He must go. 'Good-bye, Doll Tearsheet! Good-bye, Mrs.
25 Quickly, ma'am!' The other gentlemen and ladies *de la société* look on and exchange mute adieux with the departing friends. And an assured time will come when the other gentlemen and ladies will be found out too.

30 What a wonderful and beautiful provision of nature it has been that, for the most part, our womankind are not endowed with the faculty of finding us out! *They* don't doubt, and probe, and weigh, and take your measure. Lay down
35 this paper, my benevolent friend and reader, go into your drawing-room now, and utter a joke ever so old, and I wager sixpence the ladies there will all begin to laugh. Go to Brown's house, and tell Mrs. Brown and the
40 young ladies what you think of him, and see what a welcome you will get! In like manner, let him come to your house, and tell *your* good lady his candid opinion of you, and fancy how she will receive him! Would you have your wife
45 and children know you exactly for what you are, and esteem you precisely at your worth? If so, my friend, you will live in a dreary house, and you will have but a chilly fireside. Do you suppose the people round it don't see your

⁷ The Greek phrase means a possession forever.

⁸ Day of Wrath, Judgment Day.

⁹ Bardolph . . . Doll Tearsheet . . . Mrs. Quickly: characters in Shakespeare's *King Henry IV*.

¹⁰ See *King Henry V*, III, vi, 36 ff.

homely face as under a glamour, and, as it were, with a halo of love round it? You don't fancy you *are*, as you seem to them? No such thing, my man. Put away that monstrous conceit, and be thankful that *they* have not found you out.

MATTHEW ARNOLD
1822-1888

As Thomas Huxley battled with the enemies of science, so Matthew Arnold made war on the foes of culture. By culture Arnold meant knowing "the best that has been thought and said in the world." From such knowledge come "sweetness and light"—that is, beauty and intelligence. These qualities of mind and character Arnold discovered in the Greek way of life, as exemplified in classic art and literature. But he found them lacking in the lives of his own countrymen. Instead of these "noblest of things" he saw in England the narrow-mindedness, the vulgar optimism, and the boorishness that result from the worship of machinery and worldly success. This was especially true of middle-class Englishmen, whom Arnold called Philistines. In certain of his writings Arnold addressed himself to these enemies of culture or enlightenment, first to brand them for what they were, then to attempt their rescue from the darkness in which they lived. In other words, he endeavored to make beauty and intelligence prevail in the world. The following essay is the first and most important chapter of Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), a work that reveals its author as a critic of society. The essay may be read in connection with Galsworthy's "Castles in Spain" (II, 197), Thomas Huxley's "On the Advisableness of Improving Natural Knowledge" (II, 152), and the related biography by Strachey (II, 317). Arnold is even more important in the field of literary criticism than in that of social criticism. His views on the function and nature of literary criticism are set forth in his *Essays in Criticism*, First Series (1865). His poetry is illustrated on I, 327, ff.

SWEETNESS AND LIGHT

The disparagers of culture make its motive curiosity; sometimes, indeed, they make its motive mere exclusiveness and vanity. The

culture which is supposed to plume itself on a smattering of Greek and Latin is a culture which is begotten by nothing so intellectual as curiosity; it is valued either out of sheer vanity and ignorance or else as an engine of social and class distinction, separating its holder, like a badge or title, from other people who have not got it. No serious man would call this culture, or attach any value to it, as culture, at all. To find the real ground for the very differing estimate which serious people will set upon culture, we must find some motive for culture in the terms of which may lie a real ambiguity; and such a motive the word *curiosity* gives us.

I have before now pointed out that we English do not, like foreigners, use this word in a good sense as well as in a bad sense. With us the word is always used in a somewhat disapproving sense. A liberal and intelligent eagerness about the things of the mind may be meant by a foreigner when he speaks of curiosity, but with us the word always conveys a certain notion of frivolous and unedifying activity. In the *Quarterly Review*, some little time ago, was an estimate of the celebrated French critic, M. Sainte-Beuve,¹ and a very inadequate estimate it in my judgment was. And its inadequacy consisted chiefly in this: that in our English way it left out of sight the double sense really involved in the word *curiosity*, thinking enough was said to stamp M. Sainte-Beuve with blame if it was said that he was impelled in his operations as a critic by curiosity, and omitting either to perceive that M. Sainte-Beuve himself, and many other people with him, would consider this was praiseworthy and not blameworthy, or to point out why it ought really to be accounted worthy of blame and not of praise. For as there is a curiosity about intellectual matters which is futile, and merely a disease, so there is certainly a curiosity,—a desire after the things of the mind simply for their own sakes and for the pleasure of seeing them as they are,—which is, in an intelligent being, natural and laudable. Nay, and the very desire to see things as they are, implies a balance and regulation of mind which is not often attained without fruitful effort, and which is the very opposite of the

¹ Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve (1804-1869), French critic.

blind and diseased impulse of mind which is what we mean to blame when we blame curiosity. Montesquieu² says: "The first motive which ought to impel us to study is the desire to augment the excellence of our nature, and to render an intelligent being yet more intelligent." This is the true ground to assign for the genuine scientific passion, however manifested, and for culture, viewed simply as a fruit of this passion; and it is a worthy ground, even though we let the term *curiosity* stand to describe it.

But there is of culture another view, in which not solely the scientific passion, the sheer desire to see things as they are, natural and proper in an intelligent being, appears as the ground of it. There is a view in which all the love of our neighbor, the impulses towards action, help, and beneficence, the desire for removing human error, clearing human confusion, and diminishing human misery, the noble aspiration to leave the world better and happier than we found it,—motives eminently such as are called social,—come in as part of the grounds of culture, and the main and pre-eminent part. Culture is then properly described not as having its origin in curiosity, but as having its origin in the love of perfection; it is a *study of perfection*. It moves by the force, not merely or primarily of the scientific passion for pure knowledge, but also of the moral and social passion for doing good. As, in the first view of it, we took for its worthy motto Montesquieu's words: "To render an intelligent being yet more intelligent!" so, in the second view of it there is no better motto which it can have than these words of Bishop Wilson:³ "To make reason and the will of God prevail!"

Only, whereas the passion for doing good is apt to be overhasty in determining what reason and the will of God say, because its turn is for acting rather than thinking, and it wants to be beginning to act; and whereas it is apt to take its own conceptions, which proceed from its own state of development and share in all the imperfections and immaturities of this, for a basis of action; what distinguishes

culture is, that it is possessed by the scientific passion as well as by the passion of doing good; that it demands worthy notions of reason and the will of God, and does not readily suffer its own crude conceptions to substitute themselves for them. And knowing that no action or institution can be salutary and stable which is not based on reason and the will of God, it is not so bent on acting and instituting, even with the great aim of diminishing human error and misery ever before its thoughts, but that it can remember that acting and instituting are of little use, unless we know how and what we ought to act and to institute.

This culture is more interesting and more far-reaching than that other, which is founded solely on the scientific passion for knowing. But it needs times of faith and ardor, times when the intellectual horizon is opening and widening all around us, to flourish in. And is not the close and bounded intellectual horizon within which we have long lived and moved now lifting up, and are not new lights finding free passage to shine in upon us? For a long time there was no passage for them to make their way in upon us, and then it was of no use to think of adapting the world's action to them. Where was the hope of making reason and the will of God prevail among people who had a routine which they had christened reason and the will of God, in which they were inextricably bound, and beyond which they had no power of looking? But now the iron force of adhesion to the old routine,—social, political, religious,—has wonderfully yielded; the iron force of exclusion of all which is new has wonderfully yielded. The danger now is, not that people should obstinately refuse to allow anything but their old routine to pass for reason and the will of God, but either that they should allow some novelty or other to pass for these too easily, or else that they should underrate the importance of them altogether, and think it enough to follow action for its own sake, without troubling themselves to make reason and the will of God prevail therein. Now, then, is the moment for culture to be of service, culture which believes in making reason and the will of God prevail, believes in perfection, is the study and pursuit of perfection, and is no longer debarred, by a rigid invincible exclusion of whatever is new, from getting ac-

² French political philosopher (1689–1755), author of *The Spirit of the Laws*.

³ Thomas Wilson (1663–1755), author of *Maxims*.

ceptance for its ideas, simply because they are new.

The moment this view of culture is seized, the moment it is regarded not solely as the endeavor to see things as they are, to draw towards a knowledge of the universal order which seems to be intended and aimed at in the world, and which it is a man's happiness to go along with or his misery to go counter to,—to learn, in short, the will of God,—the moment, I say, culture is considered not merely as the endeavor to *see* and *learn* this, but as the endeavor, also, to make it *prevail*, the moral, social, and beneficent character of culture becomes manifest. The mere endeavor to see and learn the truth for our own personal satisfaction is indeed a commencement for making it prevail, a preparing the way for this, which always serves this, and is wrongly, therefore, stamped with blame absolutely in itself and not only in its caricature and degeneration. But perhaps it has got stamped with blame, and disparaged with the dubious title of curiosity, because in comparison with this wider endeavor of such great and plain utility it looks selfish, petty, and unprofitable.

And religion, the greatest and most important of the efforts by which the human race has manifested its impulse to perfect itself,—religion, that voice of the deepest human experience,—does not only enjoin and sanction the aim which is the great aim of culture, the aim of setting ourselves to ascertain what perfection is and to make it prevail, but also in determining generally in what human perfection consists, religion comes to a conclusion identical with that which culture,—culture seeking the determination of this question through *all* the voices of human experience which have been heard upon it, of art, science, poetry, philosophy, history, as well as of religion, in order to give a greater fulness and certainty to its solution,—likewise teaches. Religion says: *The kingdom of God is within you*; and culture, in like manner, places human perfection in an *internal* condition, in the growth and predominance of our humanity proper, as distinguished from our animality. It places it in the ever-increasing efficacy and in the general harmonious expansion of those gifts of thought and feeling, which make the peculiar dignity, wealth, and happiness of human nature. As I have said

on a former occasion: "It is in making endless additions to itself, in the endless expansion of its powers, in endless growth in wisdom and beauty, that the spirit of the human race finds its ideal. To reach this ideal, culture is an indispensable aid, and that is the true value of culture." Not a having and a resting, but a growing and a becoming, is the character of perfection as culture conceives it; and here, too, it coincides with religion.

And because men are all members of one great whole, and the sympathy which is in human nature will not allow one member to be indifferent to the rest or to have a perfect welfare independent of the rest, the expansion of our humanity, to suit the idea of perfection which culture forms, must be a *general* expansion. Perfection, as culture conceives it, is not possible while the individual remains isolated. The individual is required, under pain of being stunted and enfeebled in his own development if he disobeys, to carry others along with him in his march towards perfection, to be continually doing all he can to enlarge and increase the volume of the human stream sweeping thitherward. And, here, once more, culture lays on us the same obligation as religion, which says, as Bishop Wilson has admirably put it, that "to promote the kingdom of God is to increase and hasten one's own happiness."

But, finally, perfection,—as culture from a thorough disinterested study of human nature and human experience learns to conceive it,—is a harmonious expansion of *all* the powers which make the beauty and worth of human nature, and is not consistent with the over-development of any one power at the expense of the rest. Here culture goes beyond religion as religion is generally conceived by us.

If culture, then, is a study of perfection, and of harmonious perfection, general perfection, and perfection which consists in becoming something rather than in having something, in an inward condition of the mind and spirit, not in an outward set of circumstances,—it is clear that culture, instead of being the frivolous and useless thing which Mr. Bright, and Mr. Frederic Harrison,⁴ and many other Liberals are apt to call it, has a very important function to fulfil

⁴ Mr. Bright . . . Harrison: John Bright (1811–1889), English parliamentarian; Frederic Harrison (1831–1923), English historian and jurist.

for mankind. And this function is particularly important in our modern world, of which the whole civilization is, to a much greater degree than the civilization of Greece and Rome, mechanical and external, and tends constantly to become more so. But above all in our own country has culture a weighty part to perform, because here that mechanical character, which civilization tends to take everywhere, is shown in the most eminent degree. Indeed nearly all the characters of perfection, as culture teaches us to fix them, meet in this country with some powerful tendency which thwarts them and sets them at defiance. The idea of perfection as an *inward* condition of the mind and spirit is at variance with the mechanical and material civilization in esteem with us, and nowhere, as I have said, so much in esteem as with us. The idea of perfection as a *general* expansion of the human family is at variance with our strong individualism, our hatred of all limits to the unrestrained swing of the individual's personality, our maxim of "every man for himself." Above all, the idea of perfection as a *harmonious* expansion of human nature is at variance with our want of flexibility, with our inaptitude for seeing more than one side of a thing, with our intense energetic absorption in the particular pursuit we happen to be following. So culture has a rough task to achieve in this country. Its preachers have, and are likely long to have, a hard time of it, and they will much oftener be regarded, for a great while to come, as elegant or spurious Jeremiahs⁵ than as friends and benefactors. That, however, will not prevent their doing in the end good service if they persevere. And, meanwhile, the mode of action they have to pursue, and the sort of habits they must fight against, ought to be made quite clear for every one to see, who may be willing to look at the matter attentively and dispassionately.

Faith in machinery is, I said, our besetting danger; often in machinery most absurdly disproportioned to the end which this machinery, if it is to do any good at all, is to serve; but always in machinery, as if it had a value in and for itself. What is freedom but machinery? what is population but machinery? what is coal but machinery? what are railroads but machin-

ery? What is wealth but machinery? what are, even, religious organizations but machinery? Now almost every voice in England is accustomed to speak of these things as if they were precious ends in themselves, and therefore had some of the characters of perfection indisputably joined to them. I have before now noticed Mr. Roebuck's⁶ stock argument for proving the greatness and happiness of England as she is, and for quite stopping the mouths of all gain-sayers. Mr. Roebuck is never weary of reiterating this argument of his, so I do not know why I should be weary of noticing it. "May not every man in England say what he likes?"—Mr. Roebuck perpetually asks; and that, he thinks, is quite sufficient, and when every man may say what he likes, our aspirations ought to be satisfied. But the aspirations of culture, which is the study of perfection, are not satisfied, unless what men say, when they may say what they like, is worth saying,—has good in it, and more good than bad. In the same way the *Times*, replying to some foreign strictures on the dress, looks, and behavior of the English abroad, urges that the English ideal is that every one should be free to do and to look just as he likes. But culture indefatigably tries, not to make what each raw person may like, the rule by which he fashions himself; but to draw ever nearer to a sense of what is indeed beautiful, graceful, and becoming, and to get the raw person to like that.

And in the same way with respect to railroads and coal. Every one must have observed the strange language current during the late discussions as to the possible failure of our supplies of coal. Our coal, thousands of people were saying, is the real basis of our national greatness; if our coal runs short, there is an end of the greatness of England. But what *is* greatness?—culture makes us ask. Greatness is a spiritual condition worthy to excite love, interest, and admiration; and the outward proof of possessing greatness is that we excite love, interest, and admiration. If England were swallowed up by the sea tomorrow, which of the two, a hundred years hence, would most excite the love, interest, and admiration of mankind,—would most, there-

⁶ John Arthur Roebuck (1801–1879), English politician. Arnold had previously attacked Roebuck's extremely liberal views.

⁵ prophets of complaint.

fore, show the evidences of having possessed greatness,—the England of the last twenty years, or the England of Elizabeth, of a time of splendid spiritual effort, but when our coal, and our industrial operations depending on coal, were very little developed? Well, then, what an unsound habit of mind it must be which makes us talk of things like coal or iron as constituting the greatness of England, and how salutary a friend is culture, bent on seeing things as they are, and thus dissipating delusions of this kind and fixing standards of perfection that are real!

Wealth, again, that end to which our prodigious works for material advantages are directed,—the commonest of commonplaces tell us how men are always apt to regard wealth as a precious end in itself: and certainly they have never been so apt thus to regard it as they are in England at the present time. Never did people believe anything more firmly than nine Englishmen out of ten at the present day believe that our greatness and welfare are proved by our being so very rich. Now, the use of culture is that it helps us, by means of its spiritual standard of perfection, to regard wealth as but machinery, and not only to say as a matter of words that we regard wealth as but machinery, but really to perceive and feel that it is so. If it were not for this purging effect wrought upon our minds by culture, the whole world, the future as well as the present, would inevitably belong to the Philistines. The people who believe most that our greatness and welfare are proved by our being very rich, and who most give their lives and thoughts to becoming rich, are just the very people whom we call Philistines.⁷ Culture says: "Consider these people, then, their way of life, their habits, their manners, the very tones of their voice; look at them attentively; observe the literature they read, the things which give them pleasure, the words which come forth out of their mouths, the thoughts which make the furniture of their minds; would any amount of wealth be worth having with the condition that one was to become just like these people by having it?" And thus culture begets a dissatisfaction which is of the highest possible

value in stemming the common tide of men's thoughts in a wealthy and industrial community, and which saves the future as one may hope, from being vulgarized, even if it cannot save the present.

Population, again, and bodily health and vigor, are things which are nowhere treated in such an unintelligent, misleading, exaggerated way as in England. Both are really machinery; yet how many people all around us do we see rest in them and fail to look beyond them! Why, one has heard people, fresh from reading certain articles of the *Times* on the Registrar-General's returns of marriages and births in this country, who would talk of our large English families in quite a solemn strain, as if they had something in itself beautiful, elevating, and meritorious in them; as if the British Philistine would have only to present himself before the Great Judge with his twelve children, in order to be received among the sheep as a matter of right!

But bodily health and vigor, it may be said, are not to be classed with wealth and population as mere machinery; they have a more real and essential value. True; but only as they are more intimately connected with a perfect spiritual condition than wealth or population are. The moment we disjoin them from the idea of a perfect spiritual condition, and pursue them, as we do pursue them, for their own sake and as ends in themselves, our worship of them becomes as mere worship of machinery, as our worship of wealth or population, and as unintelligent and vulgarizing a worship as that is. Every one with anything like an adequate idea of human perfection has distinctly marked this subordination to higher and spiritual ends of the cultivation of bodily vigor and activity. "Bodily exercise profiteth little; but godliness is profitable unto all things," says the author of the *Epistle to Timothy*. And the utilitarian Franklin* says just as explicitly:—"Eat and drink such an exact quantity as suits the constitution of thy body, *in reference to the services of the mind*." But the point of view of culture, keeping the marks of human perfection simply and broadly in view, and not assigning to this perfection, as religion or utilitarianism

⁷ a term used by Arnold to designate the English trading class.

* Benjamin Franklin (1703-1790). The quotation is from *Poor Richard's Almanac*.

assigns to it, a special and limited character, this point of view, I say, of culture is best given by these words of Epictetus:⁹ "It is a sign of ἀφύψις," says he,—that is, of a nature not finely tempered,—"to give yourselves up to things which relate to the body; to make, for instance, a great fuss about exercise, a great fuss about eating, a great fuss about drinking, a great fuss about walking, a great fuss about riding. All these things ought to be done merely by the way: the formation of the spirit and character must be our real concern." This is admirable; and, indeed, the Greek word εὐφύψις, a finely tempered nature, gives exactly the notion of perfection as culture brings us to conceive it: a harmonious perfection, a perfection in which the characters of beauty and intelligence are both present, which unites "the two noblest of things,"—as Swift, who of one of the two, at any rate, had himself all too little, most happily calls them in his *Battle of the Books*,—"the two noblest of things, *sweetness and light*." The εὐφύψις is the man who tends towards sweetness and light; the ἀφύψις, on the other hand, is our Philistine. The immense spiritual significance of the Greeks is due to their having been inspired with this central and happy idea of the essential character of human perfection; and Mr. Bright's misconception of culture, as a smattering of Greek and Latin, comes itself, after all, from this wonderful significance of the Greeks having affected the very machinery of our education, and is in itself a kind of homage to it.

In thus making sweetness and light to be characters of perfection, culture is of like spirit with poetry, follows one law with poetry. Far more than on our freedom, our population, and our industrialism, many amongst us rely upon our religious organizations to save us. I have called religion a yet more important manifestation of human nature than poetry, because it has worked on a broader scale for perfection, and with greater masses of men. But the idea of beauty and of a human nature perfect on all its sides, which is the dominant idea of poetry, is a true and invaluable idea, though it has not yet had the success that the idea of conquering the obvious faults of our animality, and of a human nature perfect on the moral side,—which is the dominant idea of religion,—has

been enabled to have; and it is destined, adding to itself the religious idea of a devout energy, to transform and govern the other.

The best art and poetry of the Greeks, in which religion and poetry are one, in which the idea of beauty and of a human nature perfect on all sides adds to itself a religious and devout energy, and works in the strength of that, is on this account of such surpassing interest and instructiveness for us, though it was, —as, having regard to the human race in general, and, indeed, having regard to the Greeks themselves, we must own,—a premature attempt, an attempt which for success needed the moral and religious fibre in humanity to be more braced and developed than it had yet been. But Greece did not err in having the idea of beauty, harmony, and complete human perfection, so present and paramount. It is impossible to have this idea too present and paramount; only, the moral fibre must be braced too. And we, because we have braced the moral fibre, are not on that account in the right way, if at the same time the idea of beauty, harmony, and complete human perfection, is wanting or misapprehended amongst us; and evidently it is wanting or misapprehended at present. And when we rely as we do on our religious organizations, which in themselves do not and cannot give us this idea, and think we have done enough if we make them spread and prevail, then, I say, we fall into our common fault of overvaluing machinery.

Nothing is more common than for people to confound the inward peace and satisfaction which follows the subduing of the obvious faults of our animality with what I may call absolute inward peace and satisfaction,—the peace and satisfaction which are reached as we draw near to complete spiritual perfection, and not merely to moral perfection, or rather to relative moral perfection. No people in the world have done more and struggled more to attain this relative moral perfection than our English race has. For no people in the world has the command to *resist the devil, to overcome the wicked one*, in the nearest and most obvious sense of those words, had such a pressing force and reality. And we have had our reward, not only in the great worldly prosperity which our obedience to this command has brought us, but also, and far more, in great in-

⁹ Roman Stoic philosopher (first century A.D.).

ward peace and satisfaction. But to me few things are more pathetic than to see people, on the strength of the inward peace and satisfaction which their rudimentary efforts towards perfection have brought them, employ, concerning their incomplete perfection and the religious organizations within which they have found it, language which properly applies only to complete perfection, and is a far-off echo of the human soul's prophecy of it. Religion itself, I need hardly say, supplies them in abundance with this grand language. And very freely do they use it; yet it is really the severest possible criticism of such an incomplete perfection as alone we have yet reached through our religious organizations.

The impulse of the English race towards moral development and self-conquest has nowhere so powerfully manifested itself as in Puritanism. Nowhere has Puritanism found so adequate an expression as in the religious organization of the Independents. The modern Independents have a newspaper, the *Nonconformist*, written with great sincerity and ability. The motto, the standard, the profession of faith which this organ of theirs carries aloft, is: "The Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion." There is sweetness and light, and an ideal of complete harmonious human perfection! One need not go to culture and poetry to find language to judge it. Religion, with its instinct for perfection, supplies language to judge it, language, too, which is in our mouths every day. "Finally, be of one mind, united in feeling," says St. Peter.¹⁰ There is an ideal which judges the Puritan ideal: "The Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion!" And religious organizations like this are what people believe in, rest in, would give their lives for! Such, I say, is the wonderful virtue of even the beginnings of perfection, of having conquered even the plain faults of our animality, that the religious organization which has helped us to do it can seem to us something precious, salutary, and to be propagated, even when it wears such a brand of imperfection on its forehead as this. And men have got such a habit of giving to the language of religion a special application, of making it a mere jargon, that for the condem-

nation which religion itself passes on the shortcomings of their religious organizations they have no ear; they are sure to cheat themselves and to explain this condemnation away. They can only be reached by the criticism which culture, like poetry, speaking a language not to be sophisticated, and resolutely testing these organizations by the ideal of a human perfection complete on all sides, applies to them.

But men of culture and poetry, it will be said, are again and again failing, and failing conspicuously, in the necessary first stage to a harmonious perfection, in the subduing of the great obvious faults of our animality, which it is the glory of these religious organizations to have helped us to subdue. True, they do often so fail. They have often been without the virtues as well as the faults of the Puritan, it has been one of their dangers that they so felt the Puritan's faults that they too much neglected the practice of his virtues. I will not, however, exculpate them at the Puritan's expense. They have often failed in morality, and morality is indispensable. And they have been punished for their failure, as the Puritan has been rewarded for his performance. They have been punished wherein they erred; but their ideal of beauty, of sweetness and light, and a human nature complete on all its sides, remains the true ideal of perfection still, just as the Puritan's ideal of perfection remains narrow and inadequate, although for what he did well he has been richly rewarded. Notwithstanding the mighty results of the Pilgrim Fathers' voyage, they and their standard of perfection are rightly judged when we figure to ourselves Shakespeare or Virgil,—souls in whom sweetness and light, and all that in human nature is most humane, were eminent,—accompanying them on their voyage, and think what intolerable company Shakespeare and Virgil would have found them! In the same way let us judge the religious organizations which we see all around us. Do not let us deny the good and happiness which they have accomplished; but do not let us fail to see clearly that their idea of human perfection is narrow and inadequate, and that the Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion will never bring humanity to its true goal. As I said with regard to wealth: Let us look at the life of those who live in and for it,—so I say with regard to the religious or-

¹⁰ See I Peter 3:8.

ganizations. Look at the life imaged in such a newspaper as the *Nonconformist*,—a life of jealousy of the Establishment, disputes, tea-meetings, openings of chapels, sermons; and then think of it as an ideal of a human life completing itself on all sides, and aspiring with all its organs after sweetness, light, and perfection!

Another newspaper, representing, like the *Nonconformist*, one of the religious organizations of this country, was a short time ago giving an account of the crowd at Epsom¹¹ on the Derby day, and of all the vice and hideousness which was to be seen in that crowd; and then the writer turned suddenly round upon Professor Huxley,¹² and asked him how he proposed to cure all this vice and hideousness without religion. I confess I felt disposed to ask the asker this question: and how do you propose to cure it with such a religion as yours? How is the ideal of a life so unlovely, so unattractive, so incomplete, so narrow, so far removed from a true and satisfying ideal of human perfection, as is the life of your religious organization as you yourself reflect it, to conquer and transform all this vice and hideousness? Indeed, the strongest plea for the study of perfection as pursued by culture, the clearest proof of the actual inadequacy of the idea of perfection held by the religious organization,—expressing, as I have said, the most widespread effort which the human race has yet made after perfection,—is to be found in the state of our life and society with these in possession of it, and having been in possession of it I know not how many hundred years. We are all of us included in some religious organization or other; we all call ourselves, in the sublime and aspiring language of religion which I have before noticed, *children of God*. Children of God;—it is an immense pretension!—and how are we to justify it? By the works which we do, and the words which we speak. And the work which we collective children of God do, our grand centre of life, our *city* which we have builded for us to dwell in, is London! London, with its unutterable external hideousness, and with its internal canker of *public egestas, privatim*

opulencia,¹³—to use the words which Sallust puts into Cato's mouth about Rome,—unequalled in the world! The word, again, which we children of God speak, the voice which most hits our collective thought, the newspaper with the largest circulation in England, nay, with the largest circulation in the whole world, is the *Daily Telegraph*! I say that when our religious organizations—which I admit to express the most considerable effort after perfection that our race has yet made—land us in no better result than this, it is high time to examine carefully their idea of perfection, to see whether it does not leave out of account sides and forces of human nature which we might turn to great use; whether it would not be more operative if it were more complete. And I say that the English reliance on our religious organizations and on their ideas of human perfection just as they stand, is like our reliance on freedom, on muscular Christianity, on population, on coal, on wealth,—mere belief in machinery, and unfruitful; and that it is wholesomely counteracted by culture, bent on seeing things as they are, and on drawing the human race onwards to a more complete, a harmonious perfection.

Culture, however, shows its single-minded love of perfection, its desire simply to make reason and the will of God prevail, its freedom from fanaticism, by its attitude towards all this machinery, even while it insists that it is machinery. Fanatics, seeing the mischief men do themselves by their blind belief in some machinery or other,—whether it is wealth and industrialism, or whether it is the cultivation of bodily strength and activity, or whether it is a political organization,—or whether it is a religious organization,—oppose with might and main the tendency to this or that political and religious organization, or to games and athletic exercises, or to wealth and industrialism, and try violently to stop it. But the flexibility which sweetness and light give, and which is one of the rewards of culture pursued in good faith, enables a man to see that a tendency may be necessary, and even, as a preparation for something in the future, salutary, and yet that the

¹¹ an English town noted for horse racing.

¹² Thomas Henry Huxley (1825–1895), English scientist, certain of whose ideas Arnold combated.

¹³ poverty among the many, wealth among the few.

generations or individuals who obey this tendency are sacrificed to it, that they fall short of the hope of perfection by following it, and that its mischiefs are to be criticised, lest it should take too firm a hold and last after it has served its purpose.

Mr. Gladstone well pointed out, in a speech at Paris,—and others have pointed out the same thing,—how necessary is the present great movement towards wealth and industrialism, in order to lay broad foundations of material well-being for the society of the future. The worst of these justifications is, that they are generally addressed to the very people engaged, body and soul, in the movement in question; at all events, that they are always seized with the greatest avidity by these people, and taken by them as quite justifying their life, and that thus they tend to harden them in their sins. Now, culture admits the necessity of the movement towards fortune-making and exaggerated industrialism, readily allows that the future may derive benefit from it, but insists, at the same time, that the passing generations of industrialists,—forming, for the most part, the stout main body of Philistinism,—are sacrificed to it. In the same way, the result of all the games and sports which occupy the passing generation of boys and young men may be the establishment of a better and sounder physical type for the future to work with. Culture does not set itself against the games and sports, it congratulates the future, and hopes it will make a good use of its improved physical basis, but it points out that our passing generation of boys and young men is, meantime, sacrificed. Puritanism was perhaps necessary to develop the moral fibre of the English race, Nonconformity to break the yoke of ecclesiastical domination over men's minds and to prepare the way for freedom of thought in the distant future; still, culture points out that the harmonious perfection of generations of Puritans and Nonconformists¹⁴ has been, in consequence, sacrificed. Freedom of speech may be necessary for the society of the future, but the young lions of the *Daily Telegraph* in the meanwhile are sacrificed. A voice for every man in his country's government may

be necessary for the society of the future, but meanwhile Mr. Beales and Mr. Bradlaugh¹⁵ are sacrificed. . . .

The pursuit of perfection, then, is the pursuit of sweetness and light. He who works for sweetness and light, works to make reason and the will of God prevail. He who works for machinery, he who works for hatred, works only for confusion. Culture looks beyond machinery, culture hates hatred; culture has one great passion, the passion for sweetness and light. It has one even yet greater¹—the passion for making them prevail. It is not satisfied till we all come to a perfect man; it knows that the sweetness and light of the few must be imperfect until the raw and unkindled masses of humanity are touched with sweetness and light. If I have not shrunk from saying that we must work for sweetness and light, so neither have I shrunk from saying that we must have a broad basis, must have sweetness and light for as many as possible. Again and again I have insisted how those are the happy moments of humanity, how those are the marking epochs of a people's life, how those are the flowering times for literature and art and all the creative power of genius, when there is a national glow of life and thought, when the whole of society is in the fullest measure permeated by thought, sensible to beauty, intelligent and alive. Only it must be real thought and real beauty; real sweetness and real light. Plenty of people will try to give the masses, as they call them, an intellectual food prepared and adapted in the way they think proper for the actual condition of the masses. The ordinary popular literature is an example of this way of working on the masses. Plenty of people will try to indoctrinate the masses with the set of ideas and judgments constituting the creed of their own profession or party. Our religious and political organizations give an example of this way of working on the masses. I condemn neither way; but culture works differently. It does not try to teach down to the level of inferior classes; it does not try to win them for this or that sect of its own, with ready-made judgments and watchwords. It seeks to do away with classes; to make the best

¹⁴ specifically, those who refused to conform to the Church of England.

¹⁵ Charles Bradlaugh, freethinker; Edmund Beales, political agitator.

that has been thought and known in the world current everywhere; to make all men live in an atmosphere of sweetness and light, where they may use ideas, as it uses them itself, freely,—nourished, and not bound by them.

This is the *social idea*; and the men of culture are the true apostles of equality. The great men of culture are those who have had a passion for diffusing, for making prevail, for carrying from one end of society to the other, the best knowledge, the best ideas of their time; who have labored to divest knowledge of all that was harsh, uncouth, difficult, abstract, professional, exclusive; to humanize it, to make it efficient outside the clique of the cultivated and learned, yet still remaining the *best* knowledge and thought of the time, and a true source, therefore, of sweetness and light. Such a man was Abélard in the Middle Ages, in spite of all his imperfections; and thence the boundless emotion and enthusiasm which Abélard¹⁶ excited. Such were Lessing and Herder in Germany at the end of the last century; and their services to Germany were in this way inestimably precious. Generations will pass, and literary monuments will accumulate, and works far more perfect than the works of Lessing and Herder will be produced in Germany; and yet the names of these two men will fill a German with a reverence and enthusiasm such as the names of the most gifted masters will hardly awaken. And why? Because they *humanized* knowledge; because they broadened the basis of life and intelligence; because they worked powerfully to diffuse sweetness and light, to make reason and the will of God prevail. With Saint Augustine they said: "Let us not leave Thee alone to make in the secret of thy knowledge, as thou didst before the creation of the firmament, the division of light from darkness; let the children of thy spirit, placed in their firmament, make their light shine upon the earth, mark the division of night and day, and announce the revolution of the times; for the old order is passed, and the new arises; the night is spent, the day is come forth; and thou shalt crown the year with thy blessing, when thou shalt send forth laborers into thy harvest sown by other hands than theirs; when thou

shalt send forth new laborers to new seed-times, whereof the harvest shall be not yet."¹⁷

5 THOMAS HENRY HUXLEY 1825–1895

Thomas Henry Huxley was a fighter in the cause of science. His weapons were words, in the use of which no man was ever more skillful, more fearless. A scientist of distinction himself, Huxley might have devoted his great energy wholly to scientific research and lived his life out in the privacy of the laboratory. But nineteenth-century science was in need of a public champion, someone to do battle with its enemies, someone to explain its method and thought to the people. Huxley became that champion and expositor, and as a popularizer of scientific knowledge he has never been equaled. In particular he defended and expounded the theory of evolution. Calling himself "Darwin's bulldog," he fought for a third of a century, as lecturer and writer, to win general acceptance of Darwin's views. Huxley's style, exceptionally clear, vigorous, and picturesque, was ideal for the purposes to which he put it. Of the selections that follow, that on education is from an address, "A Liberal Education: and Where to Find It," delivered by Huxley in 1868. Both selections appeared in published form in 1870 as part of his Lay Sermons, Addresses, and Reviews. They should be studied in connection with the essay by Bertrand Russell (see II, 233), that by Charles A. Beard (see II, 248), and Huxley's "Autobiography," II, 309.

ON THE ADVISABLENESS OF IMPROVING NATURAL KNOWLEDGE

This time two hundred years ago—in the beginning of January, 1666—those of our forefathers who inhabited this great and ancient city, took breath between the shocks of two fearful calamities: one not quite past, although its fury had abated; the other to come.

Within a few yards of the very spot on which we are assembled, so the tradition runs, that painful and deadly malady, the plague, appeared in the latter months of 1664; and,

¹⁶ Peter Abélard (1079–1142), French medieval philosopher and teacher.

¹⁷ From St. Augustine's *Confessions*, Bk. XIII, chap. xviii.

though no new visitor, smote the people of England, and especially of her capital, with a violence unknown before, in the course of the following year. The hand of a master has pictured what happened in those dismal months, and in that truest of fictions, *The History of the Plague Year*, Defoe shows death, with every accompaniment of pain and terror, stalking through the narrow streets of old London, and changing their busy hum into a silence broken only by the wailing of the mourners of fifty thousand dead; by the woeful denunciations and mad prayers of fanatics, and by the madder yells of despairing profligates.

But, about this time in 1666, the death-rate had sunk to nearly its ordinary amount, a case of plague occurred only here and there, and the richer citizens who had flown from the pest had returned to their dwellings. The remnant of the people began to toil at the accustomed round of duty, or of pleasure; and the stream of city life bid fair to flow back along its old bed, with renewed and uninterrupted vigour.

The newly kindled hope was deceitful. The great plague, indeed, returned no more; but what it had done for the Londoners, the great fire, which broke out in the autumn of 1666, did for London; and, in September of that year, a heap of ashes and the indestructible energy of the people were all that remained of the glory of five-sixths of the city within the walls.

Our forefathers had their own ways of accounting for each of these calamities. They submitted to the plague in humility and in penitence, for they believed it to be the judgment of God. But, towards the fire they were furiously indignant, interpreting it as the effect of the malice of man,—as the work of the Republicans, or of the Papists, according as their prepossessions ran in favour of loyalty or of Puritanism.

It would, I fancy, have fared but ill with one who, standing where I now stand, in what was then a thickly-peopled and fashionable part of London, should have broached to our ancestors the doctrine which I now propound to you—that all their hypotheses were alike wrong; that the plague was no more, in their sense, Divine judgment, than the fire was the work of any political, or of any religious sect; but that they were themselves the authors of both plague and

fire, and that they must look to themselves to prevent the recurrence of calamities, to all appearance so peculiarly beyond the reach of human control—so evidently the result of the wrath of God, or of the craft and subtlety of an enemy.

And one may picture to one's self how harmoniously the holy cursing of the Puritan of that day would have chimed in with the unholy cursing and the crackling wit¹ of the Rochesters and Sedleys² and with the revilings of the political fanatics, if my imaginary plain dealer had gone on to say that, if the return of such misfortunes were ever rendered impossible, it would not be in virtue of the victory of the faith of Laud,³ or of that of Milton; and, as little, by the triumph of republicanism, as by that of monarchy. But that the one thing needful for compassing this end was, that the people of England should second the efforts of an insignificant corporation, the establishment of which, a few years before the epoch of the great plague and the great fire, had been as little noticed, as they were conspicuous.

Some twenty years before the outbreak of the plague a few calm and thoughtful students banded themselves together for the purpose, as they phrased it, of "improving natural knowledge." The ends they proposed to attain cannot be stated more clearly than in the words of one of the founders of the organisation:—

"Our business was (precluding matters of theology and state affairs) to discourse and consider of philosophical enquiries, and such as related thereunto:—as Physick, Anatomy, Geometry, Astronomy, Navigation, Staticks, Magneticks, Chymicks, Mechanicks, and Natural Experiments; with the state of these studies and their cultivation at home and abroad. We then discoursed of the circulation of the blood, the valves in the veins, the *venæ lacteæ*,⁴ the lymphatic vessels, the Copernican hypothesis, the nature of comets and new stars, the satellites of Jupiter, the oval shape (as it then appeared) of

¹ See Ecclesiastes 7:6, "For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool."

² John Wilmot, second Earl of Rochester (1648–1680), and Charles Sedley (1639?–1701), noted as wits and profligates.

³ William Laud (1573–1645), Archbishop of Canterbury, an opponent of Puritanism.

⁴ lacteal veins.

Saturn, the spots on the sun and its turning on its own axis, the inequalities and selenography⁵ of the moon, the several phases of Venus and Mercury, the improvement of telescopes and grinding of glasses for that purpose, the weight of air, the possibility or impossibility of vacuities and nature's abhorrence thereof, the Torricellian⁶ experiment in quicksilver, the descent of heavy bodies and the degree of acceleration therein, with divers other things of like nature, some of which were then but new discoveries, and others not so generally known and embraced as now they are; with other things appertaining to what hath been called the New Philosophy, which from the times of Galileo⁷ at Florence, and Sir Francis Bacon (Lord Verulam) in England, hath been much cultivated in Italy, France, Germany, and other parts abroad, as well as with us in England."

The learned Dr. Wallis,⁸ writing in 1696, narrates in these words, what happened half a century before, or about 1645. The associates met at Oxford, in the rooms of Dr. Wilkins,⁹ who was destined to become a bishop; and subsequently coming together in London, they attracted the notice of the king. And it is a strange evidence of the taste for knowledge which the most obviously worthless of the Stuarts shared with his father and grandfather, that Charles the Second was not content with saying witty things about his philosophers, but did wise things with regard to them. For he not only bestowed upon them such attention as he could spare from his poodles and his mistresses, but, being in his usual state of impecuniosity, begged for them of the Duke of Ormond; and, that step being without effect, gave them Chelsea College, a charter, and a mace: crowning his favours in the best way they could be crowned, by burdening them no further with royal patronage or state interference.

Thus it was that the half-dozen young men, studious of the "New Philosophy," who met in one another's lodgings in Oxford or in London, 45

in the middle of the seventeenth century, grew in numerical and in real strength, until, in its latter part, the "Royal Society for the Improvement of Natural Knowledge" had already become famous, and had acquired a claim upon the veneration of Englishmen, which it has ever since retained, as the principal focus of scientific activity in our islands, and the chief champion of the cause it was formed to support.

It was by the aid of the Royal Society that Newton¹⁰ published his *Principia*. If all the books in the world, except the *Philosophical Transactions*, were destroyed, it is safe to say that the foundations of physical science would remain unshaken, and that the vast intellectual progress of the last two centuries would be largely, though incompletely, recorded. Nor have any signs of halting or of decrepitude manifested themselves in our own times. As in Dr. Wallis's days, so in these, "our business is, precluding theology and state affairs, to discourse and consider of philosophical enquiries." But our "Mathematick" is one which Newton would have to go to school to learn; our "Statics, Mechanicks, Magneticks, Chymicks, and Natural Experiments" constitute a mass of physical and chemical knowledge, a glimpse at which would compensate Galileo for the doings of a score of inquisitorial cardinals; our "Physick" and "Anatomy" have embraced such infinite varieties of beings, have laid open such new worlds in time and space, have grappled, not unsuccessfully, with such complex problems, that the eyes of Vesalius¹¹ and of Harvey¹² might be dazzled by the sight of the tree that has grown out of their grain of mustard seed.

The fact is perhaps rather too much, than too little, forced upon one's notice, nowadays, that all this marvellous intellectual growth has a no less wonderful expression in practical life; and that, in this respect, if in no other, the movement symbolised by the progress of the Royal Society stands without a parallel in the history of mankind.

A series of volumes as bulky as the "Transac-

¹⁰ Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727), English philosopher and mathematician.

¹¹ Andreas Vesalius (1514-1564), Belgian anatomist, among the first scientists to practice dissection.

¹² William Harvey (1578-1657), English anatomist and physician. Harvey discovered the circulation of the blood.

⁵ study of the moon.

⁶ Evangelista Torricelli (1608-1647), Italian physicist who discovered the principle of the barometer.

⁷ Italian astronomer (1564-1642), forced by the Inquisition to repudiate the Copernican hypothesis.

⁸ Oxford mathematician (1616-1703).

⁹ Bishop of Chester (1614-1672).

tions of the Royal Society" might possibly be filled with the subtle speculations of the Schoolmen; not improbably, the obtaining a mastery over the products of mediæval thought might necessitate an even greater expenditure of time and of energy than the acquirement of the "New Philosophy"; but though such work engrossed the best intellects of Europe for a longer time than has elapsed since the great fire, its effects were "writ in water," so far as our social state is concerned.

On the other hand, if the noble first President of the Royal Society could revisit the upper air and once more gladden his eyes with a sight of the familiar mace, he would find himself in the midst of a material civilisation more different from that of his day, than that of the seventeenth was from that of the first century. And if Lord Brouncker's native sagacity had not deserted his ghost, he would need no long reflection to discover that all these great ships, these railways, these telegraphs, these factories, these printing-presses, without which the whole fabric of modern English society would collapse into a mass of stagnant and starving pauperism, —that all these pillars of our State are but the ripples and the bubbles upon the surface of that great spiritual stream, the springs of which only, he and his fellows were privileged to see; and seeing, to recognise as that which it behoved them above all things to keep pure and undefiled.

It may not be too great a flight of imagination to conceive our noble *revenant*¹³ not forgetful of the great troubles of his own day, and anxious to know how often London had been burned down since his time, and how often the plague had carried off its thousands. He would have to learn that, although London contains tenfold the inflammable matter that it did in 1666; though, not content with filling our rooms with woodwork and light draperies, we must needs lead inflammable and explosive gases into every corner of our streets and houses, we never allow even a street to burn down. And if he asked how this had come about, we should have to explain that the improvement of natural knowledge has furnished us with dozens of machines for throwing water upon fires, any one of which would have furnished the ingenious Mr.

Hooke, the first "curator and experimenter" of the Royal Society, with ample materials for discourse before half a dozen meetings of that body; and that, to say truth, except for the progress of natural knowledge, we should not have been able to make even the tools by which these machines are constructed. And, further, it would be necessary to add, that although severe fires sometimes occur and inflict great damage, the loss is very generally compensated by societies, the operations of which have been rendered possible only by the progress of natural knowledge in the direction of mathematics, and the accumulation of wealth in virtue of other natural knowledge.

But the plague? My Lord Brouncker's observation would not, I fear, lead him to think that Englishmen of the nineteenth century are purer in life, or more fervent in religious faith, than the generation which could produce a Boyle,¹⁴ an Evelyn,¹⁵ and a Milton. He might find the mud of society at the bottom, instead of at the top, but I fear that the sum total would be as deserving of swift judgment as at the time of the Restoration. And it would be our duty to explain once more, and this time not without shame, that we have no reason to believe that it is the improvement of our faith, nor that of our morals, which keeps the plague from our city, but, again, that it is the improvement of our natural knowledge.

We have learned that pestilences will only take up their abode among those who have prepared unswept and ungarnished residences for them. Their cities must have narrow, unwatered streets, foul with accumulated garbage. Their houses must be ill-drained, ill-lighted, ill-ventilated. Their subjects must be ill-washed, ill-fed, ill-clothed. The London of 1665 was such a city. The cities of the East, where plague has an enduring dwelling, are such cities. We, in later times, have learned somewhat of Nature, and partly obey her. Because of this partial improvement of our natural knowledge and of that fractional obedience, we have no plague; because that knowledge is still very imperfect and that obedience yet incomplete, typhoid is our companion and cholera our visitor. But it is not presumptuous to express the belief that, when our knowledge is more com-

¹³ ghost.

¹⁴ Robert Boyle (1627–1691), English chemist.

¹⁵ John Evelyn (1620–1706), English diarist.

plete and our obedience the expression of our knowledge, London will count her centuries of freedom from typhoid and cholera, as she now gratefully reckons her two hundred years of ignorance of that plague which swooped upon her thrice in the first half of the seventeenth century.

Surely, there is nothing in these explanations which is not fully borne out by the facts? Surely, the principles involved in them are now admitted among the fixed beliefs of all thinking men? Surely, it is true that our countrymen are less subject to fire, famine, pestilence, and all the evils which result from a want of command over and due anticipation of the course of Nature, than were the countrymen of Milton; and health, wealth, and well-being are more abundant with us than with them? But no less certainly is the difference due to the improvement of our knowledge of Nature, and the extent to which that improved knowledge has been incorporated with the household words of men, and has supplied the springs of their daily actions.

Granting for a moment, then, the truth of that which the depreciators of natural knowledge are so fond of urging, that its improvement can only add to the resources of our material civilisation; admitting it to be possible that the founders of the Royal Society themselves looked for no other reward than this, I cannot confess that I was guilty of exaggeration when I hinted, that to him who had the gift of distinguishing between prominent events and important events, the origin of a combined effort on the part of mankind to improve natural knowledge might have loomed larger than the Plague and have outshone the glare of the Fire; as a something fraught with a wealth of beneficence to mankind, in comparison with which the damage done by those ghastly evils would shrink into insignificance.

It is very certain that for every victim slain by the plague, hundreds of mankind exist and find a fair share of happiness in the world by the aid of the spinning jenny. And the great fire, at its worst, could not have burned the supply of coal, the daily working of which, in the bowels of the earth, made possible by the steam pump, gives rise to an amount of wealth to which the millions lost in old London are but as an old song.

But spinning jenny and steam pump are, after all, but toys, possessing an accidental value; and natural knowledge creates multitudes of more subtle contrivances, the praises of which do not happen to be sung because they are not directly convertible into instruments for creating wealth. When I contemplate natural knowledge squandering such gifts among men, the only appropriate comparison I can find for her is to liken her to such a peasant woman as one sees in the Alps, striding ever upward, heavily burdened, and with mind bent only on her home; but yet without effort and without thought, knitting for her children. Now stockings are good and comfortable things, and the children will undoubtedly be much the better for them; but surely it would be shortsighted, to say the least of it, to depreciate this toiling mother as a mere stocking-machine—a mere provider of physical comforts?

However, there are blind leaders of the blind, and not a few of them, who take this view of natural knowledge, and can see nothing in the bountiful mother of humanity but a sort of comfort-grinding machine. According to them, the improvement of natural knowledge always has been, and always must be, synonymous with no more than the improvement of the material resources and the increase of the gratifications of men.

Natural knowledge is, in their eyes, no real mother of mankind, bringing them up with kindness, and, if need be, with sternness, in the way they should go, and instructing them in all things needful for their welfare; but a sort of fairy god-mother, ready to furnish her pets with shoes of swiftness, swords of sharpness, and omnipotent Aladdin's lamps, so that they may have telegraphs to Saturn, and see the other side of the moon, and thank God they are better than their benighted ancestors.

If this talk were true, I, for one, should not greatly care to toil in the service of natural knowledge. I think I would just as soon be quietly chipping my own flint axe, after the manner of my forefathers a few thousand years back, as be troubled with the endless malady of thought which now infests us all, for such reward. But I venture to say that such views are contrary alike to reason and to fact. Those who discourse in such fashion seem to me to be so intent upon trying to see what is above Nature,

or what is behind her, that they are blind to what stares them in the face in her.

I should not venture to speak thus strongly if my justification were not to be found in the simplest and most obvious facts,—if it needed more than an appeal to the most notorious truths to justify my assertion, that the improvement of natural knowledge, whatever direction it has taken, and however low the aims of those who may have commenced it—has not only conferred practical benefits on men, but, in so doing, has effected a revolution in their conceptions of the universe and of themselves, and has profoundly altered their modes of thinking and their views of right and wrong. I say that natural knowledge, seeking to satisfy natural wants, has found the ideas which can alone still spiritual cravings. I say that natural knowledge, in desiring to ascertain the laws of comfort, has been driven to discover those of conduct, and to lay the foundations of a new morality.

Let us take these points separately, and first, what great ideas has natural knowledge introduced into men's minds?

I cannot but think that the foundations of all natural knowledge were laid when the reason of man first came face to face with the facts of Nature; when the savage first learned that the fingers of one hand are fewer than those of both; that it is shorter to cross a stream than to head it, that a stone stops where it is unless it be moved, and that it drops from the hand which lets it go; that light and heat come and go with the sun; that sticks burn away in a fire, that plants and animals grow and die; that if he struck his fellow savage a blow he would make him angry, and perhaps get a blow in return, while if he offered him a fruit he would please him, and perhaps receive a fish in exchange. When men had acquired this much knowledge, the outlines, rude though they were, of mathematics, of physics, of chemistry, of biology, of moral, economical, and political science, were sketched. Nor did the germ of religion fail when science began to bud. Listen to words which, though new, are yet three thousand years old:—

"... When in heaven the stars about the moon
Look beautiful, when all the winds are laid,
And every height comes out, and jutting peak

And valley, and the immeasurable heavens
Break open to their highest, and all the stars
Shine, and the shepherd gladdens in his heart."¹⁶

5 If the half savage Greek could share our feelings thus far, it is irrational to doubt that he went further, to find as we do, that upon that brief gladness there follows a certain sorrow,—the little light of awakened human intelligence
10 shines so mere a spark amidst the abyss of the unknown and unknowable; seems so insufficient to do more than illuminate the imperfections that cannot be remedied, the aspirations that cannot be realized, of man's own nature. But in
15 this sadness, this consciousness of the limitation of man, this sense of an open secret which he cannot penetrate, lies the essence of all religion; and the attempt to embody it in the forms furnished by the intellect is the origin of the higher
20 theologies.

Thus it seems impossible to imagine but that the foundations of all knowledge—secular or sacred—were laid when intelligence dawned, though the superstructure remained for long
25 ages so slight and feeble as to be compatible with the existence of almost any general view respecting the mode of governance of the universe. No doubt, from the first, there were certain phenomena which, to the rudest mind,
30 presented a constancy of occurrence, and suggested that a fixed order ruled, at any rate, among them. I doubt if the grossest of Fetish worshippers ever imagined that a stone must have a god within it to make it fall, or that a
35 fruit had a god within it to make it taste sweet. With regard to such matters as these, it is hardly questionable that mankind from the first took strictly positive and scientific views.

But, with respect to all the less familiar occurrences which present themselves, uncultured man, no doubt, has always taken himself as the standard of comparison, as the centre and measure of the world; nor could he well avoid doing so. And finding that his apparently
45 uncaused will has a powerful effect in giving rise to many occurrences, he naturally enough ascribed other and greater events to other and greater volitions, and came to look upon the world and all that therein is, as the product of
50 the volitions of persons like himself, but

¹⁶ Tennyson, "Specimens of a Translation of the Iliad in Blank Verse."

stronger, and capable of being appeased or angered, as he himself might be soothed or irritated. Through such conceptions of the plan and working of the universe all mankind have passed, or are passing. And we may now consider what has been the effect of the improvement of natural knowledge on the views of men who have reached this stage, and who have begun to cultivate natural knowledge with no desire but that of "increasing God's honour and bettering man's estate."

For example, what could seem wiser, from a mere material point of view, more innocent, from a theological one, to an ancient people, than that they should learn the exact succession of the seasons, as warnings for their husbandmen; or the position of the stars, as guides to their rude navigators? But what has grown out of this search for natural knowledge of so merely useful a character? You all know the reply. Astronomy,—which of all sciences has filled men's minds with general ideas of a character most foreign to their daily experience, and has, more than any other, rendered it impossible for them to accept the beliefs of their fathers. Astronomy,—which tells them that this so vast and seemingly solid earth is but an atom among atoms, whirling, no man knows whither, through illimitable space; which demonstrates that what we call the peaceful heaven above us, is but that space, filled by an infinitely subtle matter whose particles are seething and surging, like the waves of an angry sea; which opens up to us infinite regions where nothing is known, or ever seems to have been known, but matter and force, operating according to rigid rules; which leads us to contemplate phenomena the very nature of which demonstrates that they must have had a beginning, and that they must have an end, but the very nature of which also proves that the beginning was, to our conceptions of time, infinitely remote, and that the end is as immeasurably distant.

But it is not alone those who pursue astronomy who ask for bread and receive ideas. What more harmless than the attempt to lift and distribute water by pumping it; what more absolutely and grossly utilitarian? Yet out of pumps grew the discussions about Nature's abhorrence of a vacuum; and then it was discovered that Nature does not abhor a vacuum, but that air has weight; and that notion paved the

way for the doctrine that all matter has weight, and that the force which produces weight is co-extensive with the universe,—in short, to the theory of universal gravitation and endless force. While learning how to handle gases led to the discovery of oxygen, and to modern chemistry, and to the notion of the indestructibility of matter.

Again, what simpler, or more absolutely practical, than the attempt to keep the axle of a wheel from heating when the wheel turns round very fast? How useful for carters and gig drivers to know something about this; and how good were it, if any ingenious person would find out the cause of such phenomena, and thence deduce a general remedy for them. Such an ingenious person was Count Rumford;¹⁷ and he and his successors have landed us in the theory of the persistence, or indestructibility, of force. And in the infinitely minute, as in the infinitely great, the seekers after natural knowledge of the kinds called physical and chemical, have everywhere found a definite order and succession of events which seem never to be infringed.

And how has it fared with "Physick" and Anatomy? Have the anatomist, the physiologist, or the physician, whose business it has been to devote themselves assiduously to that eminently practical and direct end, the alleviation of the sufferings of mankind,—have they been able to confine their vision more absolutely to the strictly useful? I fear they are the worst offenders of all. For if the astronomer has set before us the infinite magnitude of space, and the practical eternity of the duration of the universe; if the physical and chemical philosophers have demonstrated the infinite minuteness of its constituent parts, and the practical eternity of matter and of force; and if both have alike proclaimed the universality of a definite and predicable order and succession of events, the workers in biology have not only accepted all these, but have added more startling theses of their own. For, as the astronomers discover in the earth no centre of the universe, but an eccentric speck, so the naturalists find man to be no centre of the living world, but one amidst endless modifications of life; and as the

¹⁷ Benjamin Thompson (1753–1814), American-English inventor and scientist.

astronomer observes the mark of practically endless time set upon the arrangements of the solar system so the student of life finds the records of ancient forms of existence peopling the world for ages, which, in relation to human experience, are infinite.

Furthermore, the physiologist finds life to be as dependent for its manifestation of particular molecular arrangements as any physical or chemical phenomenon; and wherever he extends his researches, fixed order and unchanging causation reveal themselves, as plainly as in the rest of Nature.

Nor can I find that any other fate has awaited the germ of Religion. Arising, like all other kinds of knowledge, out of the action and interaction of man's mind, with that which is not man's mind, it has taken the intellectual coverings of Fetishism or Polytheism; of Theism or Atheism; of Superstition or Rationalism. With these, and their relative merits and demerits, I have nothing to do; but this it is needful for my purpose to say, that if the religion of the present differs from that of the past, it is because the theology of the present has become more scientific than that of the past, because it has not only renounced idols of wood and idols of stone, but begins to see the necessity of breaking in pieces the idols built up of books and traditions and fine-spun ecclesiastical cobwebs: and of cherishing the noblest and most human of man's emotions, by worship "for the most part of the silent sort" at the Altar of the Unknown.

Such are a few of the new conceptions implanted in our minds by the improvement of natural knowledge. Men have acquired the ideas of the practically infinite extent of the universe and of its practical eternity, they are familiar with the conception that our earth is but an infinitesimal fragment of that part of the universe which can be seen; and that, nevertheless, its duration is, as compared with our standards of time, infinite. They have further acquired the idea that man is but one of innumerable forms of life now existing on the globe, and that the present existences are but the last of an immeasurable series of predecessors. Moreover, every step they have made in natural knowledge has tended to extend and rivet in their minds the conception of a definite order of the universe—which is embodied in

what are called, by an unhappy metaphor, the laws of Nature—and to narrow the range and loosen the force of men's belief in spontaneity, or in changes other than such as arise out of that definite order itself.

Whether these ideas are well or ill founded is not the question. No one can deny that they exist, and have been the inevitable outgrowth of the improvement of natural knowledge. And if so, it cannot be doubted that they are changing the form of men's most cherished and most important convictions.

And as regards the second point—the extent to which the improvement of natural knowledge has remodelled and altered what may be termed the intellectual ethics of men,—what are among the moral convictions most fondly held by barbarous and semi-barbarous people?

They are the convictions that authority is the soundest basis of belief, that merit attaches to a readiness to believe; that the doubting disposition is a bad one, and scepticism a sin, that when good authority has pronounced what is to be believed, and faith has accepted it, reason has no further duty. There are many excellent persons who yet hold by these principles, and it is not my present business, or intention, to discuss their views. All I wish to bring clearly before your minds is the unquestionable fact, that the improvement of natural knowledge is effected by methods which directly give the lie to all these convictions, and assume the exact reverse of each to be true.

The improver of natural knowledge absolutely refuses to acknowledge authority, as such. For him, scepticism is the highest of duties; blind faith the one unpardonable sin. And it cannot be otherwise, for every great advance in natural knowledge has involved the absolute rejection of authority, the cherishing of the keenest scepticism, the annihilation of the spirit of blind faith; and the most ardent votary of science holds his firmest convictions, not because the men he most venerates hold them; not because their verity is testified by portents and wonders; but because his experience teaches him that whenever he chooses to bring these convictions into contact with their primary source, Nature—whenever he thinks fit to test them by appealing to experiment and to observation—Nature will confirm them. The

man of science has learned to believe in justification, not by faith, but by verification.

Thus, without for a moment pretending to despise the practical results of the improvement of natural knowledge, and its beneficial influence on material civilisation, it must, I think, be admitted that the great ideas, some of which I have indicated, and the ethical spirit which I have endeavoured to sketch, in the few moments which remained at my disposal, constitute the real and permanent significance of natural knowledge.

If these ideas be destined, as I believe they are, to be more and more firmly established as the world grows older; if that spirit be fated, as I believe it is, to extend itself into all departments of human thought, and to become co-extensive with the range of knowledge; if, as our race approaches its maturity, it discovers, as I believe it will, that there is but one kind of knowledge and but one method of acquiring it; then we, who are still children, may justly feel it our highest duty to recognise the advisableness of improving natural knowledge, and so to aid ourselves and our successors in our course towards the noble goal which lies before mankind.

A LIBERAL EDUCATION

By way of a beginning, let us ask ourselves, What is education? Above all things, what is our ideal of a thoroughly liberal education?—of that education which, if we could begin life again, we would give ourselves—of that education which, if we could mold the fates to our own will, we would give our children? Well, I know not what may be your conceptions upon this matter, but I will tell you mine; and I hope I shall find that our views are not very discrepant.

Suppose it were perfectly certain that the life and fortune of every one of us would, one day or other, depend upon his winning or losing a game at chess. Don't you think that we should at least consider it to be a primary duty to learn at least the names and the moves of the pieces; to have a notion of a gambit, and a keen eye for all the means of giving and getting out of check? Do you not think that we should look with a disapprobation amounting to scorn upon the father who allowed his son, or the state

which allowed its members, to grow up without knowing a pawn from a knight?

Yet it is a very plain and elementary truth that the life, the fortune, and the happiness of every one of us, and, more or less, of those who are connected with us, do depend upon our knowing something of the rules of a game infinitely more difficult and complicated than chess. It is a game which has been played for untold ages, every man and woman of us being one of the two players in a game of his or her own. The chessboard is the world, the pieces are the phenomena of the universe, the rules of the game are what we call the laws of Nature. The player on the other side is hidden from us. We know that his play is always fair, just, and patient. But also we know, to our cost, that he never overlooks a mistake, or makes the smallest allowance for ignorance. To the man who plays well, the highest stakes are paid, with that sort of over-flowing generosity with which the strong shows delight in strength. And one who plays ill is checkmated—without haste, but without remorse.

My metaphor will remind some of you of the famous picture in which Retzsch¹ has depicted Satan playing at chess with man for his soul. Substitute for the mocking fiend in that picture a calm, strong angel who is playing for love, as we say, and would rather lose than win—and I should accept it as an image of human life.

Well, what I mean by Education is learning the rules of this mighty game. In other words, education is the instruction of the intellect in the laws of Nature, under which name I include not merely things and their forces, but men and their ways; and the fashioning of the affections and of the will into an earnest and loving desire to move in harmony with those laws. For me, education means neither more nor less than this. Anything which professes to call itself education must be tried by this standard, and if it fails to stand the test, I will not call it education, whatever may be the force of authority, or of numbers, upon the other side.

It is important to remember that, in strictness, there is no such thing as an uneducated man. Take an extreme case. Suppose that an

¹ Morris Retzsch (1779–1857), a German painter.

adult man, in the full vigor of his faculties, could be suddenly placed in the world, as Adam is said to have been, and then left to do as he best might. How long would he be left uneducated? Not five minutes. Nature would begin to teach him through the eye, the ear, the touch, the properties of objects. Pain and pleasure would be at his elbow telling him to do this and avoid that; and by slow degrees the man would receive an education which, if narrow, would be thorough, real, and adequate to his circumstances, though there would be no extras and very few accomplishments.

And if to this solitary man entered a second Adam, or, better still, an Eve, a new and greater world, that of social and moral phenomena, would be revealed. Joys and woes, compared with which all others might seem but faint shadows, would spring from the new relations. Happiness and sorrow would take the place of the coarser monitors, pleasure and pain; but conduct would still be shaped by the observation of the natural consequences of actions, or, in other words, by the laws of the nature of man.

To every one of us the world was once as fresh and new as to Adam. And then, long before we were susceptible of any other modes of instruction, Nature took us in hand, and every minute of waking life brought its educational influence, shaping our actions into rough accordance with Nature's laws, so that we might not be ended untimely by too gross disobedience. Nor should I speak of this process of education as past for anyone, be he as old as he may. For every man the world is as fresh as it was at the first day, and as full of untold novelties for him who has the eyes to see them. And Nature is still continuing her patient education of us in that great university, the universe, of which we are all members—Nature having no Test-Acts.²

Those who take honors in Nature's university, who learn the laws which govern men and things and obey them, are the really great and successful men in this world. The great mass of mankind are the "Poll,"³ who pick up just

² laws making it illegal to hold public office or receive university degrees unless one subscribed to the doctrines of the Church of England.

³ a slang designation for those who receive university degrees without honor. From a Greek term meaning "mob."

enough to get through without much discredit. Those who won't learn at all are plucked,⁴ and then you can't come up again. Nature's pluck means extermination.

Thus the question of compulsory education is settled so far as Nature is concerned. Her bill on that question was framed and passed long ago. But, like all compulsory legislation, that of Nature is harsh and wasteful in its operation. Ignorance is visited as sharply as willful disobedience—incapacity meets with the same punishment as crime. Nature's discipline is not even a word and a blow, and the blow first, but the blow without the word. It is left to you to find out why your ears are boxed.

The object of what we commonly call education—that education in which man intervenes and which I shall distinguish as artificial education—is to make good these defects in Nature's methods, to prepare the child to receive Nature's education, neither incapably nor ignorantly, nor with willful disobedience, and to understand the preliminary symptoms of her pleasure, without waiting for the box on the ear. In short, all artificial education ought to be an anticipation of natural education. And a liberal education is an artificial education which has not only prepared a man to escape the great evils of disobedience to natural laws, but has trained him to appreciate and to seize upon the rewards, which Nature scatters with as free a hand as her penalties.

That man, I think, has had a liberal education who has been so trained in youth that his body is the ready servant of his will, and does with ease and pleasure all the work that, as a mechanism, it is capable of; whose intellect is a clear, cold, logic engine, with all its parts of equal strength, and in smooth working order; ready, like a steam engine, to be turned to any kind of work, and spin the gossamers as well as forge the anchors of the mind; whose mind is stored with a knowledge of the great and fundamental truths of Nature and of the laws of her operations; one who, no stunted ascetic, is full of life and fire, but whose passions are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience, who has learned to love all beauty, whether of Nature or of art, to hate all vileness, and to respect others as himself.

⁴ dropped for deficiency in studies.

Such an one and no other, I conceive, has had a liberal education; for he is, as completely as a man can be, in harmony with Nature. He will make the best of her, and she of him. They will get on together rarely—she as his ever beneficent mother; he as her mouthpiece, her conscious self, her minister and interpreter.

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS
1837–1920

As a critic William Dean Howells advocated realism in fiction; as a novelist he practiced it. He tried to catch the charm of the world's "work-worn, care-worn, brave, kindly face," and urged writers to transcribe, in the interest of truth, the commonplace rather than the extraordinary. In this he differed from his friend Mark Twain, a greater artist and a greater man. Mark Twain believed in getting the facts, to be sure, but he felt free to distort them to suit himself and for his own artistic ends. Two of his masterly "distortions" are the King and the Duke in Huckleberry Finn, creations beyond the power of a writer like Howells. And even as a realistic portrayal of American life Howells falls short for the modern reader. He leaves too much unsaid and is not frank enough in his treatment of human nature. Modern writers, it is true, have probably gone too far toward the other extreme. Anyhow, to a later generation Howells seems overly genteel and decorous, appears, indeed, to be something of a prude. Nevertheless, he does give, within the limits of "propriety," a full and accurate account of American life as he saw it and as he chose to portray it. Howells wrote something like forty novels, among them A Modern Instance (1882), The Rise of Silas Lapham (1885), and The Kentons (1902). What he has to say on decency and the American novel is from his Criticism and Fiction (1891). His discussion will bear reading in the light of Milton's views on the censorship of books (II, 22).

DECENCY AND THE AMERICAN
NOVEL

One of the great newspapers the other day invited the prominent American authors to speak their minds upon a point in the theory and practice of fiction which had already vexed some of them. It was the question of how much

or how little the American novel ought to deal with certain facts of life which are not usually talked of before young people, and especially young ladies. Of course the question was not decided, and I forget just how far the balance inclined in favor of a larger freedom in the matter. But it certainly inclined that way; one or two writers of the sex which is somehow supposed to have purity in its keeping (as if purity were a thing that did not practically concern the other sex, preoccupied with serious affairs) gave it a rather vigorous tilt to that side. In view of this fact it would not be the part of prudence to make an effort to dress the balance; and indeed I do not know that I was going to make any such effort. But there are some things to say, around and about the subject, which I should like to have some one else say, and which I may myself possibly be safe in suggesting.

One of the first of these is the fact, generally lost sight of by those who censure the Anglo-Saxon novel for its prudishness, that it is really not such a prude after all; and that if it is sometimes apparently anxious to avoid those experiences of life not spoken of before young people, this may be an appearance only. Sometimes a novel which has this shuffling air, this effect of truckling to propriety, might defend itself, if it could speak for itself, by saying that such experiences happened not to come within its scheme, and that, so far from maiming or mutilating itself in ignoring them, it was all the more faithfully representative of the tone of modern life in dealing with love that was chaste, and with passion so honest that it could be openly spoken of before the tenderest society bud at dinner. It might say that the guilty intrigue, the betrayal, the extreme flirtation even, was the exceptional thing in life, and unless the scheme of the story necessarily involved it, that it would be bad art to lug it in, and as bad taste as to introduce such topics in a mixed company. It could say very justly that the novel in our civilization now always addresses a mixed company, and that the vast majority of the company are ladies, and that very many, if not most, of these ladies are young girls. If the novel were written for men and for married women alone, as in continental Europe, it might be altogether different. But the simple fact is that it is not written for them alone among us,

and it is a question of writing, under cover of our universal acceptance, things for young girls to read which you would be put out-of-doors for saying to them, or frankly giving notice of your intention, and so cutting yourself off from the pleasure—and it is a very high and sweet one—of appealing to these vivid, responsive intelligences, which are none the less brilliant and admirable because they are innocent.

One day a novelist who liked, after the manner of other men, to repine at his hard fate, complained to his friend, a critic, that he was tired of the restriction he had put upon himself in this regard, for it is a mistake, as can be readily shown, to suppose that others impose it. "See how free those French fellows are!" he rebelled. "Shall we always be shut up to our tradition of decency?"

"Do you think it's much worse than being shut up to their tradition of indecency?" said his friend.

Then that novelist began to reflect, and he remembered how sick the invariable motive of the French novel made him. He perceived finally that, convention for convention, ours was not only more tolerable, but on the whole was truer to life, not only to its complexion, but also to its texture. No one will pretend that there is not vicious love beneath the surface of our society; if he did, the fetid explosions of the divorce trials would refute him, but if he pretended that it was in any just sense characteristic of our society, he could be still more easily refuted. Yet it exists, and it is unquestionably the material of tragedy, the stuff from which intense effects are wrought. The question, after owning this fact, is whether these intense effects are not rather cheap effects. I incline to think they are, and I will try to say why I think so, if I may do so without offence. The material itself, the mere mention of it, has an instant fascination; it arrests, it detains, till the last word is said, and while there is anything to be hinted. This is what makes a love intrigue of some sort all but essential to the popularity of any fiction. Without such an intrigue the intellectual equipment of the author must be of the highest, and then he will succeed only with the highest class of readers. But any author who will deal with a guilty love intrigue holds all readers in his hand, the highest with the lowest, as long as he hints the slightest hope of the

smallest potential naughtiness. He need not at all be a great author, he may be a very shabby wretch, if he has but the courage or the trick of that sort of thing. The critics will call him "virile" and "passionate"; decent people will be ashamed to have been lined by him; but the low average will only ask another chance of flocking into his net. If he happens to be an able writer, his really fine and costly work will be unheeded, and the lure to the appetite will be chiefly remembered. There may be other qualities which make reputations for other men, but in his case they will count for nothing. He pays this penalty for his success in that kind; and every one pays some such penalty who deals with some such material. It attaches in like manner to the triumphs of the writers who now almost form a school among us, and who may be said to have established themselves in an easy popularity simply by the study of erotic shivers and fervors. They may find their account in the popularity, or they may not; there is no question of the popularity.

But I do not mean to imply that their case covers the whole ground. So far as it goes, though, it ought to stop the mouths of those who complain that fiction is enslaved to propriety among us. It appears that of a certain kind of impropriety it is free to give us all it will, and more. But this is not what serious men and women writing fiction mean when they rebel against the limitations of their art in our civilization. They have no desire to deal with nakedness, as painters and sculptors freely do in the worship of beauty; or with certain facts of life, as the stage does, in the service of sensation. But they ask why, when the conventions of the plastic and histrionic arts liberate their followers to the portrayal of almost any phase of the physical or of the emotional nature, an American novelist may not write a story on the lines of *Anna Karenina*¹ or *Madame Bovary*.² Sappho³ they put aside, and from Zola's⁴ work they avert their eyes. They do not condemn him or Daudet,⁵ necessarily, or accuse

¹ a realistic novel by Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910).

² a naturalistic novel by Gustave Flaubert (1821-1880).

³ an ancient Greek poetess, native of Lesbos.

⁴ Emile Zola (1840-1902), French writer of naturalistic fiction.

⁵ Alphonse Daudet (1840-1897), French novelist.

their motives; they leave them out of the question: they do not want to do that kind of thing. But they do sometimes wish to do another kind, to touch one of the most serious and sorrowful problems of life in the spirit of Tolstoy and Flaubert, and they ask why they may not. At one time, they reminded us, the Anglo-Saxon novelist did deal with such problems—De Foe in his spirit, Richardson⁶ in his, Goldsmith in his. At what moment did our fiction lose this privilege? In what fatal hour did the Young Girl arise and seal the lips of Fiction, with a touch of her finger, to some of the most vital interests of life?

Whether I wished to oppose them in their aspiration for greater freedom, or whether I wished to encourage them, I should begin to answer them by saying that the Young Girl had never done anything of the kind. The manners of the novel have been improving with those of its readers; that is all. Gentlemen no longer swear or fall drunk under the table, or abduct young ladies and shut them up in lonely country-houses, or so habitually set about the ruin of their neighbors' wives, as they once did. Generally, people now call a spade an agricultural implement; they have not grown decent without having also grown a little squeamish, but they have grown comparatively decent; there is no doubt about that. They require of a novelist whom they respect unquestionable proof of his seriousness, if he proposes to deal with certain phases of life; they require a sort of scientific decorum. He can no longer expect to be received on the ground of entertainment only; he assumes a higher function, something like that of a physician or a priest, and they expect him to be bound by laws as sacred as those of such professions; they hold him solemnly pledged not to betray them or abuse their confidence. If he will accept the conditions, they give him their confidence, and he may then treat to his greater honor, and not at all to his disadvantage, of such experiences, such relations of men and women as George Eliot treats in *Adam Bede*, in *Daniel Deronda*, in *Romola*, in almost all her books; such as Hawthorne treats in the *Scarlet Letter*; such as Dickens treats in *David Copperfield*; such as

Thackeray treats in *Pendennis*, and glances at in every one of his fictions; such as most of the masters of English fiction have at some time treated more or less openly. It is quite false or quite mistaken to suppose that our novels have left untouched these most important realities of life. They have only not made them their stock in trade; they have kept a true perspective in regard to them; they have relegated them in their pictures of life to the space and place they occupy in life itself, as we know it in England and America. They have kept a correct proportion, knowing perfectly well that unless the novel is to be a map, with everything scrupulously laid down in it, a faithful record of life in far the greater extent could be made to the exclusion of guilty love and all its circumstances and consequences.

I justify them in this view not only because I hate what is cheap and meretricious, and hold in peculiar loathing the cant of the critics who require "passion" as something in itself admirable and desirable in a novel, but because I prize fidelity in the historian of feeling and character. Most of these critics who demand "passion" would seem to have no conception of any passion but one. Yet there are several other passions; the passion of grief, the passion of avarice, the passion of pity, the passion of ambition, the passion of hate, the passion of envy, the passion of devotion, the passion of friendship; and all these have a greater part in the drama of life than the passion of love, and infinitely greater than the passion of guilty love. Wittingly or unwittingly, English fiction and American fiction have recognized this truth, not fully, not in the measure it merits, but in greater degree than most other fiction.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON
1850–1894

Robert Louis Stevenson is the most important essayist in English letters since Lamb and Hazlitt. He learned to write, he said, by imitating certain great masters of the past, but he himself is scarcely imitable. For he was an artist in living as well as in words, and his zestful nature, his idealism, and his love of life, particularly as it revealed itself in romantic in-

⁶ Samuel Richardson (1689–1761), English novelist.

cident, came to full expression in his novels and tales (see II, 437). Never well in body, Stevenson journeyed far in quest of health. He was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, and died in Samoa at the early age of forty-four. But although the shadow of death lay always across his path, it was made luminous by his faith in life and his undying courage. Readers who know Stevenson only as a teller of tales, the author of *Treasure Island* and *Kidnapped*, would do well to become readers, too, of his essays as found in such of his books as *Virginibus Puerisque* and *Memories and Portraits*. As an essay in literary criticism Stevenson's "A Gossip on Romance" should be studied in connection with other critical essays in this volume. Johnson's essay on Shakespeare's plays (II, 45), Newman's "Literature" (II, 122), De Quincey's "Literature of Knowledge and Literature of Power" (II, 81), and Chesterton's "A Defense of Penny Dreadfuls" (II, 210). Stevenson said that he might have called "*Pulvis et Umbra*" a Darwinian sermon. Compare the attitude toward science expressed in that essay with the view expressed by Beard in "*The Idea of Progress*" (II, 248).

A CHRISTMAS SERMON

By the time this paper appears, I shall have been talking for twelve months, and it is thought I should take my leave in a formal and seasonable manner. Valedictory eloquence is rare, and death-bed sayings have not often hit the mark of the occasion. Charles Second, wit and skeptic, a man whose life had been one long lesson in human incredulity, an easy-going comrade, a maneuvering king—remembered and embodied all his wit and skepticism along with more than his usual good-humor in the famous "I am afraid, gentlemen, I am an unconscionable time a-dying."

I

An unconscionable time a-dying—there is the picture ("I am afraid, gentlemen,") of your life and of mine. The sands run out, and the hours are "numbered and imputed," and the days go by; and when the last of these finds us, we have been a long time dying, and what else? The very length is something, if we reach that

hour of separation undishonored, and to have lived at all is doubtless (in the soldierly expression) to have served. There is a tale in Tacitus¹ of how the veterans mutinied in the German wilderness; of how they mobbed Germanicus,² clamoring to go home, and of how, seizing their general's hand, these old war-worn exiles passed his finger along their toothless gums. *Sunt lacrymar rerum*.³ this was the most eloquent of the songs of Simeon. And when a man has lived to a fair age, he bears his marks of service. He may have never been remarked upon the breach at the head of the army, at least he shall have lost his teeth on the camp bread.

The idealism of serious people in this age of ours is of a noble character. It never seems to them that they have served enough, they have a fine impatience of their virtues. It were perhaps more modest to be singly thankful that we are no worse. It is not only our enemies, those separate characters—it is we ourselves who know not what we do,—thence springs the glimmering hope that perhaps we do better than we think: that to scramble through this random business with hands reasonably clean, to have played the part of a man or woman with some reasonable fulness, to have often resisted the diabolic, and at the end to be still resisting it, is for the poor human soldier to have done right well. To ask to see some fruit of our endeavor is but a transcendental way of serving for reward, and what we take to be contempt of self is only greed of hire.

And again if we require so much of ourselves, shall we not require much of others? If we do not genially judge our own deficiencies, is it not to be feared we shall be even stern to the trespasses of others? And he who (looking back upon his own life) can see no more than that he has been unconscionably long a-dying, will he not be tempted to think his neighbor unconscionably long of getting hanged? It is probable that nearly all who think of conduct at all, think of it too much; it is certain we all think too much of sin. We are not damned for doing wrong, but for not doing right; Christ would never hear of negative morality, *thou shalt* was ever his word, with which

¹ Roman historian (55–117).

² Caesar Germanicus (15 A.D.–19 A.D.), a Roman general, victor in campaigns against the Germans.

³ Man's history has its sorrows.

he superseded *thou shalt not*. To make our idea of morality centre on forbidden acts is to defile the imagination and to introduce into our judgments of our fellow-men a secret element of gusto. If a thing is wrong for us, we should not dwell upon the thought of it; or we shall soon dwell upon it with inverted pleasure. If we cannot drive it from our minds—one thing of two: either our creed is in the wrong and we must more indulgently remodel it; or else, if our morality be in the right, we are criminal lunatics and should place our persons in restraint. A mark of such unwholesomely divided minds is the passion for interference with others: the Fox without the Tail was of this breed, but had (if his biographer⁴ is to be trusted) a certain antique civility now out of date. A man may have a flaw, a weakness, that unfits him for the duties of life, that spoils his temper, that threatens his integrity, or that betrays him into cruelty. It has to be conquered; but it must never be suffered to engross his thoughts. The true duties lie all upon the farther side, and must be attended to with a whole mind so soon as this preliminary clearing of the decks has been effected. In order that he may be kind and honest, it may be needful he should become a total abstainer; let him become so then, and the next day let him forget the circumstance. Trying to be kind and honest will require all his thoughts; a mortified appetite is never a wise companion; in so far as he has had to mortify an appetite, he will still be the worse man; and of such an one a great deal of cheerfulness will be required in judging life, and a great deal of humility in judging others.

It may be argued again that dissatisfaction with our life's endeavor springs in some degree from dulness. We require higher tasks, because we do not recognize the height of those we have. Trying to be kind and honest seems an affair too simple and too inconsequential for gentlemen of our heroic mold; we had rather set ourselves to something bold, arduous, and conclusive; we had rather found a schism or suppress a heresy, cut off a hand or mortify an appetite. But the task before us, which is to co-endure with our existence, is rather one of microscopic fineness, and the heroism required

is that of patience. There is no cutting of the Gordian knots of life; each must be smilingly unravelled.

To be honest, to be kind—to earn a little and to spend a little less, to make upon the whole a family happier for his presence, to renounce when that shall be necessary and not be embittered, to keep a few friends but these without capitulation—above all, on the same grim condition, to keep friends with himself—here is a task for all that a man has of fortitude and delicacy. He has an ambitious soul who would ask more: he has a hopeful spirit who should look in such an enterprise to be successful. There is indeed one element in human destiny that not blindness itself can controvert: whatever else we are intended to do, we are not intended to succeed; failure is the fate allotted. It is so in every art and study; it is so above all in the continent art of living well. Here is a pleasant thought for the year's end or for the end of life: Only self-deception will be satisfied, and there need be no despair for the despairer.

2

But Christmas is not only the mile-mark of another year, moving us to thoughts of self-examination: it is a season, from all its associations, whether domestic or religious, suggesting thoughts of joy. A man dissatisfied with his endeavors is a man tempted to sadness. And in the midst of the winter, when his life runs lowest and he is reminded of the empty chairs of his beloved, it is well he should be condemned to this fashion of the smiling face. Noble disappointment, noble self-denial are not to be admired, not even to be pardoned, if they bring bitterness. It is one thing to enter the kingdom of heaven maim; another to maim yourself and stay without. And the kingdom of heaven is of the childlike, of those who are easy to please, who love and who give pleasure. Mighty men of their hands, the smiters and the builders and the judges, have lived long and done sternly and yet preserved this lovely character; and among our carpet interests and two-penny concerns, the shame were indelible if we should lose it. Gentleness and cheerfulness, these come before all morality; they are the perfect duties. And it is the trouble with moral men that they have neither one nor other. It

⁴ Aesop.

was the moral man, the Pharisee, whom Christ could not away with. If your morals make you dreary, depend upon it they are wrong. I do not say "give them up," for they may be all you have; but conceal them like a vice, lest they should spoil the lives of better and simpler people.

A strange temptation attends upon man: to keep his eye on pleasures, even when he will not share in them; to aim all his morals against them. This very year a lady (singular iconoclast!) proclaimed a crusade against dolls; and the racy sermon against lust is a feature of the age. I venture to call such moralists insincere. At any excess or perversion of a natural appetite, their lyre sounds of itself with relishing denunciations; but for all displays of the truly diabolic—envy, malice, the mean lie, the mean silence, the calumnious truth, the backbiter, the petty tyrant, the peevish poisoner of family life—their standard is quite different. These are wrong, they will admit, yet somehow not so wrong; there is no zeal in their assault on them, no secret element of gusto warms up the sermon; it is for things not wrong in themselves that they reserve the choicest of their indignation. A man may naturally disclaim all moral kinship with the Reverend Mr. Zola⁵ or the hobgoblin old lady of the dolls, for these are gross and naked instances. And yet in each of us some similar element resides. The sight of a pleasure in which we cannot or else will not share moves us to a particular impatience. It may be because we are envious, or because we are sad, or because we dislike noise and romping—being so refined, or because—being so philosophic—we have an overweighing sense of life's gravity: at least, as we go on in years, we are all tempted to frown upon our neighbor's pleasures. People are nowadays so fond of resisting temptations; here is one to be resisted. They are fond of self-denial; here is a propensity, that cannot be too peremptorily denied. There is an idea abroad among moral people that they should make their neighbors good. One person I have to make good: myself. But my duty to my neighbor is much more nearly expressed by saying that I have to make him happy—if I may.

Happiness and goodness, according to canting moralists, stand in the relation of effect and cause. There was never anything less proved or less probable: our happiness is never in our own hands; we inherit our constitution; we stand buffet among friends and enemies; we may be so built as to feel a sneer or an aspersion with unusual keenness, and so circumstanced as to be unusually exposed to them; we may have nerves very sensitive to pain, and be afflicted with a disease very painful. Virtue will not help us, and it is not meant to help us. It is not even its own reward, except for the self-centered and—I had almost said—the unamiable. No man can pacify his conscience; if quiet be what he want, he shall do better to let that organ perish from disuse. And to avoid the penalties of the law, and the minor *capitis diminutio*⁶ of social ostracism, is an affair of wisdom—of cunning, if you will—and not of virtue.

In his own life, then, a man is not to expect happiness, only to profit by it gladly when it shall arise; he is on duty here; he knows not how or why, and does not need to know; he knows not for what hire, and must not ask. Somehow or other, though he does not know what goodness is, he must try to be good; somehow or other, though he cannot tell what will do it, he must try to give happiness to others. And no doubt there comes in here a frequent clash of duties. How far is he to make his neighbor happy? How far must he respect that smiling face, so easy to cloud, so hard to brighten again? And how far, on the other side, is he bound to be his brother's keeper and the prophet of his own morality? How far must he resent evil?

The difficulty is that we have little guidance; Christ's sayings on the point being hard to reconcile with each other, and (the most of them) hard to accept. But the truth of his teaching would seem to be this: in our own person and fortune, we should be ready to accept and to pardon all; it is *our* cheek we are to turn, *our* coat that we are to give away to the man who has taken *our* cloak. But when another's face is buffeted, perhaps a little of the lion will be-

⁵ Emile Zola (1840–1902), French novelist. The title "reverend" is used satirically.

⁶ loss of standing or prestige.

come us best. That we are to suffer others to be injured, and stand by, is not conceivable and surely not desirable. Revenge, says Bacon, is a kind of wild justice; its judgments at least are delivered by an insane judge, and in our own quarrel we can see nothing truly and do nothing wisely. But in the quarrel of our neighbor, let us be more bold. One person's happiness is as sacred as another's; when we cannot defend both, let us defend one with a stout heart. It is only in so far as we are doing this, that we have any right to interfere: the defence of B is our only ground of action against A. A has as good a right to go to the devil, as we to go to glory; and neither knows what he does.

The truth is that all these interventions and denunciations and militant mongerings of moral half-truths, though they be sometimes needful, though they are often enjoyable, do yet belong to an inferior grade of duties. Ill-temper and envy and revenge find here an arsenal of pious disguises; this is the playground of inverted lusts. With a little more patience and a little less temper, a gentler and wiser method might be found in almost every case; and the knot that we cut by some fine heady quarrel-scene in private life, or, in public affairs, by some denunciatory act against what we are pleased to call our neighbor's vices, might yet have been unwoven by the hand of sympathy.

4

To look back upon the past year, and see how little we have striven and to what small purpose; and how often we have been cowardly and hung back, or temerarious and rushed unwisely in; and how every day and all day long we have transgressed the law of kindness:—it may seem a paradox, but in the bitterness of these discoveries, a certain consolation resides. Life is not designed to minister to a man's vanity. He goes upon his long business most of the time with a hanging head, and all the time like a blind child. Full of rewards and pleasures as it is—so that to see the day break or the moon rise, or to meet a friend, or to hear the dinner-call when he is hungry, fills him with surprising joys—this world is yet for him no abiding city. Friendships fall through, health fails, weariness assails him; year after year, he must thumb the hardly varying record of his own weakness and folly. It is a friendly process

of detachment. When the time comes that he should go, there need be few illusions left about himself. *Here lies one who meant well, tried a little, failed much*:—surely that may be his epitaph, of which he need not be ashamed. Nor will he complain at the summons which calls a defeated soldier from the field: defeated, ay, if he were Paul or Marcus Aurelius!—but if there is still one inch of fight in his old spirit, undishonored. The faith which sustained him in his life-long blindness and life-long disappointment will scarce even be required in this last formality of laying down his arms. Give him a march with his old bones; there, out of the glorious sun-colored earth, out of the day and the dust and the ecstasy—there goes another Faithful Failure!

From a recent book of verse, where there is more than one such beautiful and manly poem, I take this memorial piece: it says better than I can, what I love to think; let it be our parting word:

“A late lark twitters from the quiet skies;
And from the west,
Where the sun, his day's work ended,
Lingers as in content,
There falls on the old, grey city
An influence luminous and serene.
A shining peace.

“The smoke ascends
In a rosy-and-golden haze. The spires
Shine, and are changed. In the valley
Shadows rise. The lark sings on. The sun,
Closing his benediction,
Sinks, and the darkening air
Thrills with a sense of the triumphing night—
Night, with her train of stars
And her great gift of sleep.

“So be my passing!
My task accomplished and the long day done,
My wages taken, and in my heart
Some late lark singing,
Let me be gathered to the quiet west,
The sundown splendid and serene,
Death.”¹

A GOSSIP ON ROMANCE

In anything fit to be called by the name of reading, the process itself should be absorbing

¹ “From *A Book of Verses*, by William Ernest Henley. D. Nutt, 1888.” (Stevenson's note.)

and voluptuous; we should gloat over a book, be rapt clean out of ourselves, and rise from the perusal, our mind filled with the busiest, kaleidoscopic dance of images, incapable of sleep or of continuous thought. The words, if the book be eloquent, should run thenceforward in our ears like the noise of breakers, and the story, if it be a story, repeat itself in a thousand coloured pictures to the eye. It was for this last pleasure that we read so closely, and loved our books so dearly, in the bright, troubled period of boyhood. Eloquence and thought, character and conversation, were but obstacles to brush aside as we dug blithely after a certain sort of incident, like a pig for truffles. For my part, I liked a story to begin with an old wayside inn where, "towards the close of the year 17—," several gentlemen in three-cocked hats were playing bowls. A friend of mine preferred the Malabar coast in a storm, with a ship beating to windward, and a scowling fellow of herculean proportions striding along the beach; he, to be sure, was a pirate. This was further afield than my home-keeping fancy loved to travel, and designed altogether for a larger canvas than the tales that I affected. Give me a highwayman and I was full to the brim; a Jacobite would do, but the highwayman was my favourite dish. I can still hear that merry clatter of the hoots along the moonlit lane; night and the coming of the day are still related in my mind with the doings of John Rann or Jerry Abershaw,¹ and the words "post-chaise," the "great North road," "ostler," and "nag" still sound in my ears like poetry. One and all, at least, and each with his particular fancy, we read storybooks in childhood, not for eloquence or character or thought, but for some quality of the brute incident. That quality was not mere bloodshed or wonder. Although each of these was welcome in its place, the charm for the sake of which we read depended on something different from either. My elders used to read novels aloud; and I can still remember four different passages which I heard, before I was ten, with the same keen and lasting pleasure. One I discovered long afterwards to be the admirable opening of *What Will He Do with It*:² it was no wonder I was pleased

with that. The other three still remain unidentified. One is a little vague; it was about a dark, tall house at night, and people groping on the stairs by the light that escaped from the open door of a sickroom. In another, a lover left a ball, and went walking in a cool, dewy park, whence he could watch the lighted windows and the figures of the dancers as they moved. This was the most sentimental impression I think I had yet received, for a child is somewhat deaf to the sentimental. In the last, a poet, who had been tragically wrangling with his wife, walked forth on the sea-beach on a tempestuous night and witnessed the horrors of a wreck.³ Different as they are, all these early favourites have a common note—they have all a touch of the romantic.

Drama is the poetry of conduct, romance the poetry of circumstance. The pleasure that we take in life is of two sorts—the active and the passive. Now we are conscious of a great command over our destiny; anon we are lifted up by circumstance, as by a breaking wave, and dashed we know not how into the future. Now we are pleased by our conduct, anon merely pleased by our surroundings. It would be hard to say which of these modes of satisfaction is the more effective, but the latter is surely the more constant. Conduct is three parts of life, they say, but I think they put it high. There is a vast deal in life and letters both which is not immoral, but simply a-moral, which either does not regard the human will at all, or deals with it in obvious and healthy relations; where the interest turns, not upon what a man shall choose to do, but on how he manages to do it; not on the passionate slips and hesitations of the conscience, but on the problems of the body and of the practical intelligence, in clean, open-air adventure, the shock of arms or the diplomacy of life. With such material as this it is impossible to build a play, for the serious theatre exists solely on moral grounds, and is a standing proof of the dissemination of the human conscience. But it is possible to build, upon this ground, the most joyous of verses, and the most lively, beautiful, and buoyant tales.

One thing in life calls for another; there is a fitness in events and places. The sight of a

¹ John Rann . . . Abershaw, famous English highwaymen.

² a novel by Bulwer-Lytton (1803–1873).

³ "Since traced by many obliging correspondents to the gallery of Charles Kingsley." (Stevenson's note.)

pleasant harbour puts it in our mind to sit there. One place suggests work, another idleness, a third early rising and long rambles in the dew. The effect of night, of any flowing water, of lighted cities, of the peep of day, of ships, of the open ocean, calls up in the mind an army of anonymous desires and pleasures. Something, we feel, should happen; we know not what, yet we proceed in quest of it. And many of the happiest hours of life fleet by us in this vain attendance on the genius of the place and moment. It is thus that tracts of young fir, and low rocks that reach into deep soundings, particularly torture and delight me. Something must have happened in such places, and perhaps ages back, to members of my race; and when I was a child I tried in vain to invent appropriate games for them, as I still try, just as vainly, to fit them with the proper story. Some places speak distinctly. Certain dank gardens cry aloud for a murder; certain old houses demand to be haunted; certain coasts are set apart for shipwreck. Other spots again seem to abide their destiny, suggestive and impenetrable, "miching mallecho."⁴ The inn at Burford Bridge, with its harbours and green garden and silent, eddying river—though it is known already as the place where Keats wrote some of his *Endymion* and Nelson parted from his Emma⁵—still seems to wait the coming of the appropriate legend. Within these ivied walls, behind these old green shutters, some further business smoulders, waiting for its hour. The old Hawes Inn at the Queen's Ferry makes a similar call upon my fancy. There it stands, apart from the town, beside the pier, in a climate of its own, half inland, half marine—in front, the ferry bubbling with the tide and the guard-ship swinging to her anchor; behind, the old garden with the trees. Americans seek it already for the sake of Lovel and Oldbuck, who dined there at the beginning of the *Antiquary*. But you need not tell me—that is not all; there is some story, unrecorded or not yet complete, which must express the meaning of that inn more fully. So it is with names and faces; so it is with incidents that are idle and inconclusive in themselves, and yet seem like the beginning of some quaint romance, which the all-careless

author leaves untold. How many of these romances have we not seen determined at their birth; how many people have met us with a look of meaning in their eye, and sunk at once into trivial acquaintances; to how many places have we not drawn near, with express intimations—"here my destiny awaits me"—and we have but dined there and passed on! I have lived both at the Hawes and Burford in a perpetual flutter, on the heels, as it seemed, of some adventure that should justify the place; but though the feeling had me to bed at night and called me again at morning in one unbroken round of pleasure and suspense, nothing befell me in either worth remark. The man or the hour had not yet come; but some day, I think, a boat shall put off from the Queen's Ferry, fraught with a dear cargo, and some frosty night a horseman, on a tragic errand, rattle with his whip upon the green shutters of the inn at Burford.⁶

Now, this is one of the natural appetites with which any lively literature has to count. The desire for knowledge, I had almost added the desire for meat, is not more deeply seated than this demand for fit and striking incident. The dullest of clowns tells, or tries to tell, himself a story, as the feeblest of children uses invention in his play; and even as the imaginative grown person, joining in the game, at once enriches it with many delightful circumstances, the great creative writer shows us the realisation and the apotheosis of the day-dreams of common men. His stories may be nourished with the realities of life, but their true mark is to satisfy the nameless longings of the reader, and to obey the ideal laws of the day-dream. The right kind of thing should fall out in the right kind of place; the right kind of thing should follow; and not only the characters talk aptly and think naturally, but all the circumstances in a tale answer one to another like notes in music. The threads of a story come from time to time together and make a picture in the web; the characters fall from time to time into some attitude to each other or to nature, which stamps the story home like an illustration. Crusoe recoiling from the footprint, Achilles shouting

⁴ sneaking mischief (*Hamlet*, III, ii, 147).

⁵ Lady Hamilton, whom Nelson loved.

⁶ "Since the above was written I have tried to launch the boat with my own hands in *Kidnapped*. Some day, perhaps, I may try a rattle at the shutters." (Stevenson's note.)

over against the Trojans, Ulysses bending the great bow, Christian running with his fingers in his ears, these are each culminating moments in the legend, and each has been printed on the mind's eye forever. Other things we may forget, we may forget the words, although they are beautiful; we may forget the author's comment, although perhaps it was ingenious and true; but these epoch-making scenes, which put the last mark of truth upon a story and fill up, at one blow, our capacity for sympathetic pleasure, we so adopt into the very bosom of our mind that neither time nor tide can efface or weaken the impression. This, then, is the plastic part of literature: to embody character, thought, or emotion in some act or attitude that shall be remarkably striking to the mind's eye. This is the highest and hardest thing to do in words, the thing which, once accomplished, equally delights the schoolboy and the sage, and makes, in its own right, the quality of epics. Compared with this, all other purposes in literature, except the purely lyrical or the purely philosophic, are bastard in nature, facile of execution, and feeble in result. It is one thing to write about the inn at Burford, or to describe scenery with the word-panters, it is quite another to seize on the heart of the suggestion and make a country famous with a legend. It is one thing to remark and to dissect, with the most cutting logic, the complications of life, and of the human spirit; it is quite another to give them body and blood in the story of Ajax or of Hamlet. The first is literature, but the second is something besides, for it is likewise art.

English people of the present day are apt, I know not why, to look somewhat down on incident, and reserve their admiration for the clink of teaspoons and the accents of the curate. It is thought clever to write a novel with no story at all, or at least with a very dull one. Reduced even to the lowest terms, a certain interest can be communicated by the art of narrative; a sense of human kinship stirred; and a kind of monotonous fitness, comparable to the words and air of *Sandy's Mull*, preserved among the infinitesimal occurrences recorded. Some people work, in this manner, with even a strong touch. Mr. Trollope's inimitable clergymen naturally arise to the mind in this connection. But even Mr. Trollope does not confine himself to chronicling small beer. Mr. Crawley's

collision with the Bishop's wife, Mr. Melmette dallying in the deserted banquet-room,⁷ are typical incidents, epically conceived, fitly embodying a crisis. Or again look at Thackeray. If Rawdon Crawley's blow were not delivered, *Vanity Fair* would cease to be a work of art. That scene is the chief ganglion of the tale, and the discharge of energy from Rawdon's fist is the reward and consolation of the reader. The end of *Esmond* is a yet wider excursion from the author's customary fields; the scene at Castlewood is pure Dumas; the great and wily English borrower has here borrowed from the great, unblushing French thief; as usual, he has borrowed admirably well, and the breaking of the sword rounds off the best of all his books with a manly, martial note. But perhaps nothing can more strongly illustrate the necessity for marking incident than to compare the living fame of *Robinson Crusoe* with the discredit of *Clarissa Harlowe*.⁸ *Clarissa* is a book of a far more startling import, worked out, on a great canvas, with inimitable courage and unflagging art. It contains wit, character, passion, plot, conversations full of spirit and insight, letter sparkling with unstrained humanity, and if the death of the heroine be somewhat frigid and artificial, the last days of the hero strike the only note of what we now call Byronism, between the Elizabethans and Byron himself. And yet a little story of a shipwrecked sailor, with not a tenth part of the style nor a thousandth part of the wisdom, exploring none of the arcana of humanity and deprived of the perennial interest of love, goes on from edition to edition, ever young, while *Clarissa* lies upon the shelves unread. A friend of mine, a Welsh blacksmith, was twenty-five years old and could neither read nor write, when he heard a chapter of *Robinson* read aloud in a farm kitchen. Up to that moment he had sat content, huddled in his ignorance, but he left that farm another man. There were day-dreams, it appeared, divine day-dreams, written and printed and bound, and to be bought for money and enjoyed at pleasure. Down he sat that day, painfully learned to read Welsh, and returned to borrow the book. It had been lost, nor could he

⁷ Mr. Crawley's collision . . . banquet-room: in *The Last Chronicle of Barset* and in *The Way We Live Now*, respectively.

⁸ a novel by Samuel Richardson (1689–1761).

find another copy but one that was in English. Down he sat once more, learned English, and at length, and with entire delight, read *Robinson*. It is like the story of a love-chase. If he had heard a letter from *Clarissa*, would he have been fired with the same chivalrous ardour? I wonder. Yet *Clarissa* has every quality that can be shown in prose, one alone excepted—pictorial or picture-making romance. While *Robinson* depends, for the most part and with the overwhelming majority of its readers, on the charm of circumstance.

In the highest achievements of the art of words, the dramatic and the pictorial, the moral and romantic interest, rise and fall together by a common and organic law. Situation is animated with passion, passion clothed upon with situation. Neither exists for itself, but each inheres indissolubly with the other. This is high art; and not only the highest art possible in words, but the highest art of all, since it combines the greatest mass and diversity of the elements of truth and pleasure. Such are epics, and the few prose tales that have the epic weight. But as from a school of works, aping the creative, incident and romance are ruthlessly discarded, so may character and drama be omitted or subordinated to romance. There is one book, for example, more generally loved than Shakespeare, that captivates in childhood, and still delights in age—I mean the *Arabian Nights*—where you shall look in vain for moral or for intellectual interest. No human face or voice greets us among that wooden crowd of kings and genies, sorcerers and beggarmen. Adventure, on the most naked terms, furnishes forth the entertainment and is found enough. Dumas approaches perhaps nearest of any modern to these Arabian authors in the purely material charm of some of his romances. The early part of *Monte Cristo*, down to the finding of the treasure, is a piece of perfect story-telling; the man never breathed who shared these moving incidents without a tremor; and yet Faria is a thing of packthread and Dantès little more than a name. The sequel is one long-drawn error, gloomy, bloody, unnatural and dull; but as for these early chapters, I do not believe there is another volume extant where you can breathe the same unmingled atmosphere of romance. It is very thin and light, to be sure, as on a high mountain; but it is brisk

and clear and sunny in proportion. I saw the other day, with envy, an old and a very clever lady setting forth on a second or third voyage into *Monte Cristo*. Here are stories which powerfully affect the reader, which can be reperused at any age, and where the characters are no more than puppets. The bony fist of the showman visibly propels them; their springs are an open secret; their faces are of wood, their bellies filled with bran; and yet we thrillingly partake of their adventures. And the point may be illustrated still further. The last interview between Lucy and Richard Feverel⁹ is pure drama; more than that, it is the strongest scene, since Shakespeare, in the English tongue. Their first meeting by the river, on the other hand, is pure romance; it has nothing to do with character; it might happen to any other boy and maiden, and be none the less delightful for the change. And yet I think he would be a bold man who should choose between these passages. Thus, in the same book, we may have two scenes, each capital in its order: in the one, human passion, deep calling unto deep, shall utter its genuine voice; in the second, according circumstances, like instruments in tune, shall build up a trivial but desirable incident, such as we love to prefigure for ourselves; and in the end, in spite of the critics, we may hesitate to give the preference to either. The one may ask more genius—I do not say it does; but at least the other dwells as clearly in the memory.

True romantic art, again, makes a romance of all things. It reaches into the highest abstraction of the ideal; it does not refuse the most pedestrian realism. *Robinson Crusoe* is as realistic as it is romantic: both qualities are pushed to an extreme, and neither suffers. Nor does romance depend upon the material importance of the incidents. To deal with strong and deadly elements, banditti, pirates, war and murder, is to conjure with great names, and, in the event of failure, to double the disgrace. The arrival of Haydn and Consuelo at the Canon's villa is a very trifling incident;¹⁰ yet we may read a dozen boisterous stories from beginning to end, and not receive so fresh and stirring an

⁹ characters in *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, by George Meredith (1828–1909).

¹⁰ in *Consuelo*, a novel by George Sand (1804–1876).

impression of adventure. It was the scene of Crusoe at the wreck, if I remember rightly, that so bewitched my blacksmith. Nor is the fact surprising. Every single article the castaway recovers from the hulk is "a joy forever" to the man who reads of them. They are the things that should be found, and the bare enumeration stirs the blood. I found a glimmer of the same interest the other day in a new book, *The Sailor's Sweetheart*, by Mr. Clark Russell. The whole business of the brig *Morning Star* is very rightly felt and spiritedly written; but the clothes, the books and the money satisfy the reader's mind like things to eat. We are dealing here with the old cut-and-dry, legitimate interest of treasure trove. But even treasure trove can be made dull. There are few people who have not groaned under the plethora of goods that fell to the lot of the *Swiss Family Robinson*, that dreary family. They found article after article, creature after creature, from milk kine to pieces of ordnance, a whole consignment, but no informing taste had presided over the selection, there was no smack or relish in the voice; and these riches left the fancy cold. The box of goods in Verne's *Mysterious Island* is another case in point; there was no gusto and no glamour about that; it might have come from a shop. But the two hundred and seventy-eight Australian sovereigns on board the *Morning Star* fell upon me like a surprise that I had expected; whole vistas of secondary stories, besides the one in hand, radiated forth from that discovery, as they radiate from a striking particular in life; and I was made for the moment as happy as a reader has the right to be.

To come at all at the nature of this quality of romance, we must bear in mind the peculiarity of our attitude to any art. No art produces illusion; in the theatre we never forget that we are in the theatre; and while we read a story, we sit wavering between two minds, now merely clapping our hands at the merit of the performance, now condescending to take an active part in fancy with the characters. This last is the triumph of romantic story-telling: when the reader consciously plays at being the hero, the scene is a good scene. Now, in character-studies the pleasure that we take is critical; we watch, we approve, we smile at incongruities, we are moved to sudden heats of sympathy with courage, suffering or virtue. But the

characters are still themselves, they are not us; the more clearly they are depicted, the more widely do they stand away from us, the more imperiously do they thrust us back into our place as a spectator. I cannot identify myself with Rawdon Crawley or with Eugène de Rastignac,¹¹ for I have scarce a hope or fear in common with them. It is not character but incident that woos us out of our reserve. Something happens as we desire to have it happen to ourselves, some situation, that we have long dallied with in fancy, is realized in the story with enticing and appropriate details. Then we forget the characters, then we push the hero aside, then we plunge into the tale in our own person and bathe in fresh experience; and then, and then only, do we say we have been reading a romance. It is not only pleasurable things that we imagine in our day-dreams; there are lights in which we are willing to contemplate even the idea of our own death; ways in which it seems as if it would amuse us to be cheated, wounded or calumniated. It is thus possible to construct a story, even of tragic import, in which every incident, detail and trick of circumstance shall be welcome to the reader's thoughts. Fiction is to the grown man what play is to the child; it is there that he changes the atmosphere and tenor of his life; and when the game so chimes with his fancy that he can join in it with all his heart, when it pleases him with every turn, when he loves to recall it and dwells upon its recollection with entire delight, fiction is called romance.

Walter Scott is out and away the king of the romantics. *The Lady of the Lake* has no indisputable claim to be a poem beyond the inherent fitness and desirability of the tale. It is just such a story as a man would make up for himself, walking, in the best health and temper, through just such scenes as it is laid in. Hence it is that a charm dwells undefinable among these slovenly verses, as the unseen cuckoo fills the mountains with his note; hence, even after we have flung the book aside, the scenery and adventures remain present to the mind, a new and green possession, not unworthy of that beautiful name, *The Lady of the Lake*, or that direct, romantic opening,—one of the most

¹¹ Crawley . . . Rastignac: characters in Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* and in Balzac's *Père Goriot*, respectively.

spirited and poetical in literature,—“The stag at eve had drunk his fill.” The same strength and the same weaknesses adorn and disfigure the novels. In that ill-written, ragged book, *The Pirate*, the figure of Cleveland—cast up by the sea on the resounding foreland of Dunrossness—moving, with the blood on his hands and the Spanish words on his tongue, among the simple islanders—singing a serenade under the window of his Shetland mistress—is conceived in the very highest manner of romantic invention. The words of his song, “Through groves of palm,” sung in such a scene and by such a lover, clench, as in a nutshell, the emphatic contrast upon which the tale is built. In *Guy Mannering*, again, every incident is delightful to the imagination; and the scene when Harry Bertram lands at Ellangowan is a model instance of romantic method.

“‘I remember the tune well,’ he says, ‘though I cannot guess what should at present so strongly recall it to my memory.’ He took his flageolet from his pocket and played a simple melody. Apparently the tune awoke the corresponding associations of a damsel. . . . She immediately took up the song—

“‘Are these the links of Forth,’ she said;
‘Or are they the crooks of Dee,
Or the bonny woods of Warroch Head
That I so fain would see?’

“‘By heaven!’ said Bertram, ‘it is the very ballad.’”

On this quotation two remarks fall to be made. First, as an instance of modern feeling for romance, this famous touch of the flageolet and the old song is selected by Miss Braddon¹² for omission. Miss Braddon’s idea of a story, like Mrs. Todger’s¹³ idea of a wooden leg, were something strange to have expounded. As a matter of personal experience, Meg’s appearance to old Mr. Bertram on the road, the ruins of Dorncleugh, the scene of the flageolet, and the Dominic’s recognition of Harry, are the four strong notes that continue to ring in the mind after the book is laid aside. The second point is still more curious. The reader will observe a mark of excision in the passage as quoted by me. Well, here is how it runs in the original: “a

¹² Mary Elizabeth Braddon (1837–1915), a novelist.

¹³ a character in Dickens’s *Martin Chuzzlewit*.

damsel, who, close behind a fine spring about half-way down the descent, and which had once supplied the castle with water, was engaged in bleaching linen.” A man who gave in such copy would be discharged from the staff of a daily paper. Scott has forgotten to prepare the reader for the presence of the “damsel”; he has forgotten to mention the spring and its relation to the ruin; and now, face to face with his omission, instead of trying back and starting fair, crams all this matter, tail foremost, into a single shambling sentence. It is not merely bad English, or bad style; it is abominably bad narrative besides.

Certainly the contrast is remarkable; and it is one that throws a strong light upon the subject of this paper. For here we have a man of the finest creative instinct touching with perfect certainty and charm the romantic junctures of his story; and we find him utterly careless, almost, it would seem, incapable, in the technical matter of style, and not only frequently weak, but frequently wrong in points of drama. In character parts, indeed, and particularly in the Scotch, he was delicate, strong and truthful; but the trite, obliterated features of too many of his heroes have already wearied two generations of readers. At times his characters will speak with something far beyond propriety with a true heroic note; but on the next page they will be wading wearily forward with an ungrammatical and undramatic rigmarole of words. The man who could conceive and write the character of Elspeth of the Craighburnfoot, as Scott has conceived and written it, had not only splendid romantic, but splendid tragic gifts. How comes it, then, that he could so often fob us off with languid, inarticulate twaddle?

It seems to me that the explanation is to be found in the very quality of his surprising merits. As his books are play to the reader, so were they play to him. He conjured up the romantic with delight, but he had hardly patience to describe it. He was a great day-dreamer, a seer of fit and beautiful and humorous visions, but hardly a great artist; hardly, in the manful sense, an artist at all. He pleased himself, and so he pleases us. Of the pleasures of his art he tasted fully; but of its toils and vigils and distresses never man knew less. A great romantic—an idle child.

AN APOLOGY FOR IDLERS

"Boswell: We grow weary when idle.

"Johnson: That is, sir, because others being busy, we want company, but if we were idle, there would be no growing weary, we should all entertain one another."

Just now, when every one is bound, under pain of a decree in absence convicting them of *lèse-respectability*,¹ to enter on some lucrative profession, and labour therein with something not far short of enthusiasm, a cry from the opposite party who are content when they have enough, and like to look on and enjoy in the meanwhile, savours a little of bravado and gasconade. And yet this should not be. Idleness so called, which does not consist in doing nothing, but in doing a great deal not recognized in the dogmatic formularies of the ruling class, has as good a right to state its position as industry itself. It is admitted that the presence of people who refuse to enter in the great handicap race for sixpenny pieces, is at once an insult and a disenchantment for those who do. A fine fellow (as we see so many) takes his determination, votes for the sixpences, and in the emphatic Americanism, "goes for" them. And while such an one is ploughing distressfully up the road, it is not hard to understand his resentment, when he perceives cool persons in the meadows by the wayside, lying with a handkerchief over their ears and a glass at their elbow. Alexander is touched in a very delicate place by the disregard of Diogenes.² Where was the glory of having taken Rome for these tumultuous barbarians, who poured into the Senate house, and found the Fathers sitting silent and unmoved by their success? It is a sore thing to have laboured along and scaled the arduous hilltops, and when all is done, find humanity indifferent to your achievement. Hence physicists condemn the unphysical; financiers have only a superficial toleration for those who know little of stocks; literary persons despise the unlettered; and people of all pursuits combine to disparage those who have none.

But though this is one difficulty of the sub-

ject, it is not the greatest. You could not be put in prison for speaking against industry, but you can be sent to Coventry³ for speaking like a fool. The greatest difficulty with most subjects is to do them well, therefore, please to remember this is an apology. It is certain that much may be judiciously argued in favour of diligence; only there is something to be said against it, and that is what, on the present occasion, I have to say. To state one argument is not necessarily to be deaf to all others, and that a man has written a book of travels in Montenegro, is no reason why he should never have been to Richmond.⁴

It is surely beyond a doubt that people should be a good deal idle in youth. For though here and there a Lord Macaulay⁵ may escape from school honours with all his wits about him, most boys pay so dear for their medals that they never afterwards have a shot in their locker, and begin the world bankrupt. And the same holds true during all the time a lad is educating himself, or suffering others to educate him. It must have been a very foolish old gentleman who addressed Johnson at Oxford in these words: "Young man, ply your book diligently now, and acquire a stock of knowledge, for when years come upon you, you will find that poring upon books will be but an irksome task." The old gentleman seems to have been unaware that many other things besides reading grow irksome, and not a few become impossible, by the time a man has to use spectacles and cannot walk without a stick. Books are good enough in their own way, but they are a mighty bloodless substitute for life. It seems a pity to sit, like the Lady of Shalott, peering into a mirror, with your back turned on all the bustle and glamour of reality. And if a man reads very hard, as the old anecdote reminds us, he will have little time for thoughts.

If you look back on your own education, I am sure it will not be the full, vivid, instructive hours of truancy that you regret; you would rather cancel some lack-lustre periods between sleep and waking in the class. For my own part, I have attended a good many lectures in my time. I still remember that the spinning of a

¹ an offense against respectability.

² When Alexander, the conqueror of the world, asked Diogenes, the philosopher, how he could be of service to him, the latter replied, "By standing out of my light."

³ ostracized.

⁴ a suburb near London.

⁵ Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800-1859), English historian; see II, 84

top is a case of Kinetic Stability. I still remember that Emphyteusis⁶ is not a disease, nor Stillicide⁷ a crime. But though I would not willingly part with such scraps of science, I do not set the same store by them as by certain other odds and ends that I came by in the open street while I was playing truant. This is not the moment to dilate on that mighty place of education, which was the favourite school of Dickens and of Balzac, and turns out yearly many in-
 10 glorious masters in the Science of the Aspects of Life. Suffice it to say this: if a lad does not learn in the streets, it is because he has no faculty of learning. Nor is the truant always in the streets, for if he prefers, he may go out by the gardened suburbs into the country. He may pitch on some tuft of lilacs over a burn, and smoke innumerable pipes to the tune of the water on the stones. A bird will sing in the thicket. And there he may fall into a vein of
 20 kindly thought, and see things in a new perspective. Why, if this be not education, what is? We may conceive Mr. Worldly Wiseman⁸ accosting such an one, and the conversation that should thereupon ensue:—

"How now, young fellow, what dost thou here?"

"Truly, sir, I take mine ease."

"Is this not the hour of the class? and should'st thou not be plying thy Book with diligence, to the end thou mayest obtain knowl-
 30 edge?"

"Nay, but thus also I follow after Learning, by your leave."

"Learning, quotha! After what fashion, I
 35 pray thee? Is it mathematics?"

"No, to be sure."

"Is it metaphysics?"

"Nor that."

"Is it some language?"

"Nay, it is no language."

"Is it a trade?"

"Nor a trade neither."

"Why, then, what is't?"

"Indeed, sir, as a time may soon come for me
 45 to go upon Pilgrimage, I am desirous to note what is commonly done by persons in my case,

and where are the ugliest Sloughs and Thickets on the Road; as also, what manner of Staff is of the best service. Moreover, I lie here, by this water, to learn by root-of-heart a lesson which
 5 my master teaches me to call Peace, or Contentment."

Hereupon Mr. Worldly Wiseman was much commoved with passion, and shaking his cane with a very threatful countenance, broke forth upon this wise: "Learning, quotha!" said he; "I
 10 would have all such rogues scourged by the Hangman!"

And so he would go his way, ruffling out his cravat with a crackle of starch, like a turkey
 15 when it spreads its feathers.

Now this, of Mr. Wiseman's, is the common opinion. A fact is not called a fact, but a piece of gossip, if it does not fall into one of your scholastic categories. An inquiry must be in
 20 some acknowledged direction, with a name to go by; or else you are not inquiring at all, only lounging; and the workhouse is too good for you. It is supposed that all knowledge is at the bottom of a well, or the far end of a tel-
 25 escope. Sainte-Beuve,⁹ as he grew older, came to regard all experience as a single great book, in which to study for a few years ere we go hence; and it seemed all one to him whether you should read in Chapter xx., which is the differential calculus, or in Chapter xxxix., which is hearing the band play in the gardens. As a
 30 matter of fact, an intelligent person, looking out of his eyes and hearkening in his ears, with a smile on his face all the time, will get more true education than many another in a life of heroic vigils. There is certainly some chill and arid knowledge to be found upon the summits of formal and laborious science; but it is all
 40 round about you, and for the trouble of looking, that you will acquire the warm and palpitating facts of life. While others are filling their memory with a lumber of words, one-half of which they will forget before the week be out, your truant may learn some really useful art: to play
 45 the fiddle, to know a good cigar, or to speak with ease and opportunity to all varieties of men. Many who have "plied their book diligently," and know all about some one branch or another of accepted lore, come out of the study with an ancient and owl-like demeanour,

⁶ a contractual grant of a right to the possession of land. The right might be perpetual or for an extended period.

⁷ a continual falling or succession of drops.

⁸ a character in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.

⁹ a French critic (1804-1869).

and prove dry, stockish, and dyspeptic in all the better and brighter parts of life. Many make a large fortune, who remain underbred and pathetically stupid to the last. And meantime there goes the idler, who began life along with them—by your leave, a different picture. He has had time to take care of his health and his spirits; he has been a great deal in the open air, which is the most salutary of all things for both body and mind; and if he has never read the great Book in very recondite places, he has dipped into it and skimmed it over to excellent purpose. Might not the student afford some Hebrew roots, and the business man some of his half-crowns, for a share of the idler's knowledge of life at large, and Art of Living? Nay, and the idler has another and more important quality than these. I mean his wisdom. He who has much looked on at the childish satisfaction of other people in their hobbies, will regard his own with only a very ironical indulgence. He will not be heard among the dogmatists. He will have a great and cool allowance for all sorts of people and opinions. If he finds no out-of-the-way truths, he will identify himself with no very burning falsehood. His way takes him along a by-road, not much frequented, but very even and pleasant, which is called Common-place Lane, and leads to the Belvedere¹⁰ of Common-sense. Thence he shall command an agreeable, if no very noble prospect, and while others behold the East and West, the Devil and the Sunrise, he will be contentedly aware of a sort of morning hour upon all sublimary things, with an army of shadows running speedily and in many different directions into the great daylight of Eternity. The shadows and the generations, the shrill doctors and the plangent wars, go by into ultimate silence and emptiness; but underneath all this, a man may see, out of the Belvedere windows, much green and peaceful landscape; many firelit parlours; good people laughing, drinking, and making love as they did before the Flood or the French Revolution; and the old shepherd telling his tale under the hawthorn.

Extreme *busyness*, whether at school or college, kirk or market, is a symptom of deficient vitality; and a faculty for idleness implies a catholic appetite and a strong sense of personal

identity. There is a sort of dead-alive, hackneyed people about, who are scarcely conscious of living except in the exercise of some conventional occupation. Bring these fellows into the country, or set them aboard ship, and you will see how they pine for their desk or their study. They have no curiosity, they cannot give themselves over to random provocations, they do not take pleasure in the exercise of their faculties for its own sake, and unless Necessity lays about them with a stick, they will even stand still. It is no good speaking to such folk: they *cannot* be idle, their nature is not generous enough, and they pass those hours in a sort of coma, which are not dedicated to funous mooling in the gold-mill. When they do not require to go to the office, when they are not hungry and have no mind to drink, the whole breathing world is a blank to them. If they have to wait an hour or so for a train, they fall into a stupid trance with their eyes open. To see them, you would suppose there was nothing to look at and no one to speak with; you would imagine they were paralyzed or alienated;¹¹ and yet very possibly they are hard workers in their own way, and have good eyesight for a flaw in a deed or a turn of the market. They have been to school and college, but all the time they had their eye on the medal; they have gone about in the world and mixed with clever people, but all the time they were thinking of their own affairs. As if a man's soul were not too small to begin with, they have dwarfed and narrowed theirs by a life of all work and no play; until here they are at forty, with a listless attention, a mind vacant of all material of amusement, and not one thought to rub against another, while they wait for the train. Before he was breeched, he might have clambered on the boxes; when he was twenty, he would have stared at the girls, but now the pipe is smoked out, the snuffbox empty, and my gentleman sits bolt upright upon a bench, with lamentable eyes. This does not appeal to me as being Success in Life.

But it is not only the person himself who suffers from his busy habits, but his wife and children, his friends and relations, and down to the very people he sits with in a railway carriage or an omnibus. Perpetual devotion to what a man calls his business, is only to be sustained

¹⁰ a building commanding a fine view.

¹¹ insane.

by perpetual neglect of many other things. And it is not by any means certain that a man's business is the most important thing he has to do. To an impartial estimate it will seem clear that many of the wisest, most virtuous, and most beneficent parts that are to be played upon the Theatre of Life are filled by gratuitous performers, and pass, among the world at large, as phases of idleness. For in that Theatre, not only the walking gentlemen, singing chambermaids, and diligent fiddlers in the orchestra, but those who look on and clap their hands from the benches, do really play a part and fulfil important offices towards the general result. You are no doubt very dependent on the care of your lawyer and stockbroker, of the guards and signalmen who convey you rapidly from place to place, and the policemen who walk the streets for your protection; but is there not a thought of gratitude in your heart for certain other benefactors who set you smiling when they fall in your way, or season your dinner with good company? Colonel Newcome helped to lose his friend's money; Fred Bayham had an ugly trick of borrowing shirts; and yet they were better people to fall among than Mr. Barnes.¹² And though Falstaff was neither sober nor very honest, I think I could name one or two long-faced Barabbases¹³ whom the world could better have done without. Hazlitt mentions that he was more sensible of obligation to Northcote,¹⁴ who had never done him anything he could call a service, than to his whole circle of ostentatious friends; for he thought a good companion emphatically the greatest benefactor. I know there are people in the world who cannot feel grateful unless the favour has been done them at the cost of pain and difficulty. But this is a churlish disposition. A man may send you six sheets of letter-paper covered with the most entertaining gossip, or you may pass half an hour pleasantly, perhaps profitably, over an article of his; do you think the service would be greater, if he had made the manuscript in his heart's blood, like a compact with the devil? Do you really fancy you should be more beholden to your correspondent, if he had been damning

you all the while for your importunity? Pleasures are more beneficial than duties because, like the quality of mercy, they are not strained, and they are twice blest. There must always be two to a kiss, and there may be a score in a jest; but wherever there is an element of sacrifice, the favour is conferred with pain, and, among generous people, received with confusion. There is no duty we so much underrate as the duty of being happy. By being happy, we sow anonymous benefits upon the world, which remain unknown even to ourselves, or when they are disclosed, surprise nobody so much as the benefactor. The other day, a ragged, barefoot boy ran down the street after a marble, with so jolly an air that he set every one he passed into a good humour, one of these persons, who had been delivered from more than usually black thoughts, stopped the little fellow and gave him some money with this remark: "You see what sometimes comes of looking pleased." If he had looked pleased before, he had now to look both pleased and mystified. For my part, I justify this encouragement of smiling rather than tearful children, I do not wish to pay for tears anywhere but upon the stage; but I am prepared to deal largely in the opposite commodity. A happy man or woman is a better thing to find than a five-pound note. He or she is a radiating focus of good-will; and their entrance into a room is as though another candle had been lighted. We need not care whether they could prove the forty-seventh proposition; they do a better thing than that, they practically demonstrate the great Theorem of the Livableness of Life. Consequently, if a person cannot be happy without remaining idle, idle he should remain. It is a revolutionary precept; but thanks to hunger and the workhouse, one not easily to be abused, and within practical limits, it is one of the most incontestable truths in the whole Body of Morality. Look at one of your industrious fellows for a moment, I beseech you. He sows hurry and reaps indigestion; he puts a vast deal of activity out to interest, and receives a large measure of nervous derangement in return. Either he absents himself entirely from all fellowship, and lives a recluse in a garret, with carpet slippers and a leaden inkpot; or he comes among people swiftly and bitterly, in a contraction of his whole nervous system, to discharge some temper before he

¹² Newcome . . . Bayham . . . Barnes; characters in Thackeray's novel *The Newcomes*.

¹³ See Matthew 27:16-21.

¹⁴ James Northcote (1746-1831), writer and painter.

returns to work. I do not care how much or how well he works, this fellow is an evil feature in other people's lives. They would be happier if he were dead. They could easier do without his services in the Circumlocution Office,¹⁵ than they can tolerate his fractious spirits. He poisons life at the well-head. It is better to be beggared out of hand by a scapegrace nephew, than daily hag-ridden by a peevish uncle.

And what, in God's name, is all this pother about? For what cause do they embitter their own and other people's lives? That a man should publish three or thirty articles a year, that he should finish or not finish his great allegorical picture, are questions of little interest to the world. The ranks of life are full; and although a thousand fall, there are always some to go into the breach. When they told Joan of Arc she should be at home minding women's work, she answered there were plenty to spin and wash. And so, even with your own rare gifts! When nature is "so careless of the single life,"¹⁶ why should we coddle ourselves into the fancy that our own is of exceptional importance? Suppose Shakespeare had been knocked on the head some dark night in Sir Thomas Lucy's preserves, the world would have wagged on better or worse, the pitcher gone to the well, the scythe to the corn, and the student to his book, and no one been any the wiser of the loss. There are not many works extant, if you look the alternative all over, which are worth the price of a pound of tobacco to a man of limited means. This is a sobering reflection for the proudest of our earthly vanities. Even a tobacconist may, upon consideration, find no great cause for personal vainglory in the phrase; for although tobacco is an admirable sedative, the qualities necessary for retailing it are neither rare nor precious in themselves. Alas and alas! you may take it how you will, but the services of no single individual are indispensable. Atlas was just a gentleman with a protracted nightmare! And yet you see merchants who go and labour themselves into a great fortune and thence into the bankruptcy court; scribblers who keep scribbling at little articles until their temper is a cross to all who come about them, as though Pharaoh should

set the Israelites to make a pin instead of a pyramid; and fine young men who work themselves into a decline, and are driven off in a hearse with white plumes upon it. Would you not suppose these persons had been whispered, by the Master of the Ceremonies, the promise of some momentous destiny? and that this lukewarm bullet on which they play their farces was the bull's-eye and centrepiece of all the universe? And yet it is not so. The ends for which they give away their priceless youth, for all they know, may be chimerical or hurtful; the glory and riches they expect may never come, or may find them indifferent; and they and the world they inhabit are so inconsiderable that the mind freezes at the thought.

PULVIS ET UMBRA¹

We look for some reward of our endeavours and are disappointed; not success, not happiness, not even peace of conscience, crowns our ineffectual efforts to do well. Our frailties are invincible, our virtues barren; the battle goes sore against us to the going down of the sun. The canting moralist tells us of right and wrong, and we look abroad, even on the face of our small earth, and find them change with every climate, and no country where some action is not honoured for a virtue and none where it is not branded for a vice; and we look in our experience, and find no vital congruity in the wisest rules, but at the best a municipal fitness. It is not strange if we are tempted to despair of good. We ask too much. Our religions and moralities have been trimmed to flatter us, till they are all emasculate and sentimentalized, and only please and weaken. Truth is of a rougher strain. In the harsh face of life, faith can read a bracing gospel. The human race is a thing more ancient than the ten commandments; and the bones and revolutions of the Kosmos, in whose joints we are but moss and fungus, more ancient still.

1

Of the Kosmos in the last resort, science reports many doubtful things and all of them appalling. There seems no substance to this

¹⁵ a name used for government offices by Dickens in *Little Dorrit*.

¹⁶ From Tennyson's *In Memoriam*.

¹ The title is from Horace's *Carmen Seculare* "pulvis et umbra sumus," "we are dust and ashes."

solid globe on which we stamp: nothing but symbols and ratios. Symbols and ratios² carry us and bring us forth and beat us down; gravity that swings the incommensurable suns and worlds through space, is but a figment varying inversely as the squares of distances; and the suns and world themselves, imponderable figures of abstraction. NH_3 and H_2O .³ Consideration dares not dwell upon this view; that way madness lies; science carries us into zones of speculation, where there is no habitable city for the mind of man.

But take the Kosmos with a grosser faith, as our senses give it us. We behold space sown with rotatory islands, suns and worlds and the shards and wrecks of systems: some, like the sun, still blazing; some rotting, like the earth; others, like the moon, stable in desolation. All of these we take to be made of something we call matter: a thing which no analysis can help us to conceive; to whose incredible properties no familiarity can reconcile our minds. This stuff, when not purified by the lustration of fire, rots uncleanly into something we call life, seized through all its atoms with a pediculous⁴ malady; swelling in tumours that become independent, sometimes even (by an abhorrent prodigy) locomotory; one splitting into millions, millions cohering into one, as the malady proceeds through varying stages. This vital putrescence of the dust, used as we are to it, yet strikes us with occasional disgust, and the profusion of worms in a piece of ancient turf, or the air of a marsh darkened with insects, will sometimes check our breathing so that we aspire for cleaner places. But none is clean: the moving sand is infected with lice; the pure spring, where it bursts out of the mountain, is a mere issue of worms; even in the hard rock the crystal is forming.

In two main shapes this eruption covers the countenance of the earth: the animal and the vegetable: one in some degree the inversion of the other: the second rooted to the spot; the first coming detached out of its natal mud, and scurrying abroad with the myriad feet of insects or towering into the heavens on the wings of birds: a thing so inconceivable that, if it be

well considered, the heart stops. To what passes with the anchored vermin,⁵ we have little clue: doubtless they have their joys and sorrows, their delights and killing agonies: it appears not how. But of the locomotory, to which we ourselves belong, we can tell more. These share with us a thousand miracles: the miracles of sight, of hearing, of the projection of sound, things that bridge space; the miracles of memory and reason, by which the present is conceived, and when it is gone, its image kept living in the brains of man and brute; the miracle of reproduction, with its imperious desires and staggering consequences. And to put the last touch upon this mountain mass of the revolting and the inconceivable, all these prey upon each other, lives tearing other lives in pieces, cramming them inside themselves, and by that summary process, growing fat: the vegetarian, the whale, perhaps the tree, not less than the lion of the desert; for the vegetarian is only the eater of the dumb.

Meanwhile our rotatory island loaded with predatory life, and more drenched with blood, both animal and vegetable, than ever mutinied ship, scuds through space with unimaginable speed, and turns alternate cheeks to the reverberation of a blazing world, ninety million miles away.

2

What a monstrous spectre is this man, the disease of the agglutinated dust, lifting alternate feet or lying drugged with slumber; killing, feeding, growing, bringing forth small copies of himself; grown upon with hair like grass, fitted with eyes that move and glitter in his face; a thing to set children screaming;—and yet looked at nearlier, known as his fellows know him, how surprising are his attributes! Poor soul, here for so little, cast among so many hardships, filled with desires so incommensurate and so inconsistent, savagely surrounded, savagely descended, irremediably condemned to prey upon his fellow lives: who should have blamed him had he been of a piece with his destiny and a being merely barbarous? And we look and behold him instead filled with imperfect virtues: infinitely childish, often admirably

² when considered mathematically or chemically.

³ the chemical formulas for ammonia and water.

⁴ louse-like.

⁵ the plants.

valiant, often touchingly kind; sitting down, amidst his momentary life, to debate of right and wrong and the attributes of the deity; rising up to do battle for an egg or die for an idea; singling out his friends and his mate with cordial affection; bringing forth in pain, rearing with long-suffering solicitude, his young. To touch the heart of his mystery, we find in him one thought, strange to the point of lunacy, the thought of duty; the thought of something owing to himself, to his neighbour, to his God: an ideal of decency, to which he would rise if it were possible; a limit of shame, below which, if it be possible, he will not stoop. The design in most men is one of conformity; here and there, in picked natures, it transcends itself and soars on the other side, arming martyrs with independence; but in all, in their degrees, it is a bosom thought:—Not in man alone, for we trace it in dogs and cats whom we know fairly well, and doubtless some similar point of honour sways the elephant, the oyster, and the louse, of whom we know so little:—But in man, at least, it sways with so complete an empire that merely selfish things come second, even with the selfish: that appetites are starved, fears are conquered, pains supported; that almost the dullest shrinks from the reproof of a glance, although it were a child's; and all but the most cowardly stand amid the risks of war; and the more noble, having strongly conceived an act as due to their ideal, affront and embrace death. Strange enough if, with their singular origin and perverted practice, they think they are to be rewarded in some future life: stranger still, if they are persuaded of the contrary, and think this blow, which they solicit, will strike them senseless for eternity. I shall be reminded what a tragedy of misconception and misconduct man at large presents: of organised injustice, cowardly violence, and treacherous crime; and of the damning imperfections of the best. They cannot be too darkly drawn. Man is indeed marked for failure in his efforts to do right. But where the best consistently miscarry, how tenfold more remarkable that all should continue to strive; and surely we should find it both touching and inspiring, that in a field from which success is banished, our race should not cease to labour.

If the first view of this creature, stalking in his rotatory isle, be a thing to shake the courage

of the stoutest, on this nearer sight, he startles us with an admiring wonder. It matters not where we look, under what climate we observe him, in what stage of society, in what depth of ignorance, burthened with what erroneous morality; by camp-fires in Assiniboia,⁶ the snow powdering his shoulders, the wind plucking his blanket, as he sits, passing the ceremonial calumet⁷ and uttering his grave opinions like a Roman senator; in ships at sea, a man inured to hardship and vile pleasures, his brightest hope a fiddle in a tavern and a bedizened trull who sells herself to rob him, and he for all that simple, innocent, cheerful, kindly like a child, constant to toil, brave to drown, for others, in the slums of cities, moving among indifferent millions to mechanical employments, without hope of change in the future, with scarce a pleasure in the present, and yet true to his virtues, honest up to his lights, kind to his neighbours, tempted perhaps in vain by the bright gin-palace, perhaps long-suffering with the drunken wife that ruins him; in India (a woman this time) kneeling with broken cries and streaming tears, as she drowns her child in the sacred river;⁸ in the brothel, the discard of society, living mainly on strong drink, fed with affronts, a fool, a thief, the comrade of thieves, and even here keeping the point of honour and the touch of pity, often repaying the world's scorn with service, often standing firm upon a scruple, and at a certain cost, rejecting riches:—everywhere some virtue cherished or affected, everywhere some decency of thought and carriage, everywhere the ensign of man's intellectual goodness:—ah! if I could show you this! if I could show you these men and women, all the world over, in every stage of history, under every abuse of error, under every circumstance of failure, without hope, without help, without thanks, still obscurely fighting the lost fight of virtue, still clinging, in the brothel or on the scaffold, to some rag of honour, the poor jewel of their souls! They may seek to escape, and yet they cannot; it is not alone their privilege and glory, but their doom; they are condemned to some nobility; all their lives long,

⁶ a former province in Canada.

⁷ the pipe of peace of the North American Indians.

⁸ the Ganges, in which children were drowned to appease the angry gods.

the desire of good is at their heels, the implacable hunter.

Of all earth's meteors, here at least is the most strange and consoling: that this ennobled lemur, this hair-crowned bubble of the dust, this inheritor of a few years and sorrows, should yet deny himself his rare delights, and add to his frequent pains, and live for an ideal, however misconceived. Nor can we stop with man. A new doctrine,⁹ received with screams a little while ago by canting moralists, and still not properly worked into the body of our thoughts, lights us a step farther into the heart of this rough but noble universe. For nowadays the pride of man denies in vain his kinship with the original dust. He stands no longer like a thing apart. Close at his heels we see the dog, prince of another genus: and in him too, we see dumbly testified the same cultus of an unattainable ideal, the same constancy in failure. Does it stop with the dog? We look at our feet where the ground is blackened with the swarming ant: a creature so small, so far from us in the hierarchy of brutes, that we can scarce trace and scarce comprehend his doings; and here also, in his ordered politics and rigorous justice, we see confessed the law of duty and the fact of individual sin. Does it stop, then, with the ant? Rather this desire of well-doing and this doom of frailty run through all the grades of life: rather is this earth, from the frosty top of Everest to the next margin of the internal fire, one stage of ineffectual virtues and one temple of pious tears and perseverance. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together. It is the common and the godlike law of life. The browsers, the biters, the barkers, the hairy coats of field and forest, the squirrel in the oak, the thousand-footed creeper in the dust, as they share with us the gift of life, share with us the love of an ideal: strive like us—like us are tempted to grow weary of the struggle—to do well; like us receive at times unmerited refreshment, visitings of support, returns of courage; and are condemned like us to be crucified between that double law of the members and the will. Are they like us, I wonder, in the timid hope of some reward, some sugar with the drug? do they, too, stand aghast at unrewarded virtues, at the sufferings of those

whom, in our partiality, we take to be just, and the prosperity of such as, in our blindness, we call wicked? It may be, and yet God knows what they should look for. Even while they look, even while they repent, the foot of man treads them by thousands in the dust, the yelping hounds burst upon their trail, the bullet speeds, the knives are heating in the den of the vivisectionist; or the dew falls, and the generation of a day is blotted out. For these are creatures, compared with whom our weakness is strength, our ignorance wisdom, our brief span eternity.

And as we dwell, we living things, in our isle of terror and under the imminent hand of death, God forbid it should be man the erected, the reasoner, the wise in his own eyes—God forbid it should be man that wearies in well-doing, that despairs of unrewarded effort, or utters the language of complaint. Let it be enough for faith, that the whole creation groans in mortal frailty, strives with unconquerable constancy: surely not all in vain.

WILLIAM JAMES 1842–1910

William James, elder brother of the novelist Henry James, is regarded as one of America's two greatest philosophers, the other, of course, being Ralph Waldo Emerson. And because of his unusual gifts as a writer, James merits, hardly less than Emerson, a place in American letters. Unlike many thinkers, James has the ability to make abstractions clear, to reduce them to understandable terms through illustration and example. It is as if James's vivid, concrete expression derives from his pragmatic philosophy, the view, namely, that the truth of an idea, such as free will or fate, is to be seen in its practical consequences. "The pragmatist clings to facts and concreteness," he said; and, again, "Pragmatism is uncomfortable away from facts." James's most widely read books are The Will to Believe and Other Essays (1897), The Varieties of Religious Experience (1902), and Pragmatism (1907).

HABIT

"Habit a second nature! Habit is ten times nature," the Duke of Wellington is said to have exclaimed; and the degree to which this is true

⁹ the doctrine of evolution.

no one can probably appreciate as well as one who is a veteran soldier himself. The daily drill and the years of discipline end by fashioning a man completely over again, as to most of the possibilities of his conduct.

"There is a story, which is credible enough, though it may not be true, of a practical joker, who, seeing a discharged veteran carrying home his dinner, suddenly called out, 'Attention!' whereupon the man instantly brought his hands down, and lost his mutton and potatoes in the gutter. The drill had been thorough, and its effects had become embodied in the man's nervous structure."¹

Riderless cavalry-horses, at many a battle, have been seen to come together and go through their customary evolutions at the sound of the bugle-call. Most trained domestic animals, dogs and oxen, and omnibus- and car-horses, seem to be machines almost pure and simple, undoubtingly, unhesitatingly doing from minute to minute the duties they have been taught, and giving no sign that the possibility of an alternative ever suggests itself to their mind. Men grown old in prison have asked to be readmitted after being once set free. In a railroad accident to a traveling menagerie in the United States sometime in 1884, a tiger, whose cage had broken open, is said to have emerged, but presently crept back again, as if too much bewildered by his new responsibilities, so that he was without difficulty secured.

Habit is thus the enormous fly-wheel of society, its most precious conservative agent. It alone is what keeps us all within the bounds of ordinance, and saves the children of fortune from the envious uprisings of the poor. It alone prevents the hardest and most repulsive walks of life from being deserted by those brought up to tread them. It keeps the fisherman and the deck-hand at sea through the winter; it holds the miner in his darkness, and nails the countryman to his log-cabin and his lonely farm through all the months of snow; it protects us from invasion by the natives of the desert and the frozen zone. It dooms us all to fight out the battle of life upon the lines of our nurture or our early choice, and to make the best of a pursuit that disagrees, because there is no other for

which we are fitted, and it is too late to begin again. It keeps different social strata from mixing. Already at the age of twenty-five you see the professional mannerism settling down on the young commercial traveler, on the young doctor, on the young minister, on the young counsellor-at-law. You see the little lines of cleavage running through the character, the tricks of thought, the prejudices, the ways of the "shop," in a word, from which the man can by-and-by no more escape than his coat-sleeve can suddenly fall into a new set of folds. On the whole, it is best he should not escape. It is well for the world that in most of us, by the age of thirty, the character has set like plaster, and will never soften again.

If the period between twenty and thirty is the critical one in the formation of intellectual and professional habits, the period below twenty is more important still for the fixing of *personal* habits, properly so called, such as vocalization and pronunciation, gesture, motion, and address. Hardly ever is a language learned after twenty spoken without a foreign accent; hardly ever can a youth transferred to the society of his betters unlearn the nasality and other vices of speech bred in him by the associations of his growing years. Hardly ever, indeed, no matter how much money there be in his pocket, can he even learn to *dress* like a gentleman-born. The merchants offer their wares as eagerly to him as to the veriest "swell," but he simply *cannot* buy the right things. An invisible law, as strong as gravitation, keeps him within his orbit, arrayed this year as he was the last; and how his better-bred acquaintances contrive to get the things they wear will be for him a mystery till his dying day.

The great thing, in all education, is to *make our nervous system our ally instead of our enemy*. It is to fund and capitalize our acquisitions, and live at ease upon the interest of the fund. *For this we must make automatic and habitual, as early as possible, as many useful actions as we can*, and guard against the growing into ways that are likely to be disadvantageous to us, as we should guard against the plague. The more of the details of our daily life we can hand over to the effortless custody of automatism, the more our higher powers of mind will be set free for their own proper work. There is no more miserable human being than

¹ "Huxley's *Elementary Lessons in Physiology*, Lesson XII." (James's note.)

one in whom nothing is habitual but indecision, and for whom the lighting of every cigar, the drinking of every cup, the time of rising and going to bed every day, and the beginning of every bit of work, are subjects of express volitional deliberation. Full half the time of such a man goes to the deciding, or regretting, of matters which ought to be so ingrained in him as practically not to exist for his consciousness at all. If there be such daily duties not yet ingrained in any one of my readers, let him begin this very hour to set the matter right.

In Professor Bain's chapter on "The Moral Habits" there are some admirable practical remarks laid down. Two great maxims emerge from his treatment. The first is that in the acquisition of a new habit, or the leaving off of an old one, we must take care to *launch ourselves with as strong and decided an initiative as possible*. Accumulate all the possible circumstances which shall re-enforce the right motives; put yourself assiduously in conditions that encourage the new way; make engagements incompatible with the old; take a public pledge, if the case allows; in short, envelop your resolution with every aid you know. This will give your new beginning such a momentum that the temptation to break down will not occur as soon as it otherwise might; and every day during which a breakdown is postponed adds to the chances of its not occurring at all.

The second maxim is: *Never suffer an exception to occur till the new habit is securely rooted in your life*. Each lapse is like the letting fall of a ball of string which one is carefully winding up; a single slip undoes more than a great many turns will wind again. *Continuity* of training is the great means of making the nervous system act infallibly right. As Professor Bain says:

"The peculiarity of the moral habits, contrasting them from the intellectual acquisitions, is the presence of two hostile powers, one to be gradually raised into the ascendant over the other. It is necessary, above all things, in such a situation, never to lose a battle. Every gain on the wrong side undoes the effect of many conquests on the right. The essential precaution, therefore, is so to regulate the two opposing powers that the one may have a series of uninterrupted successes, until repetition has fortified it to such a degree as to enable it to cope with the opposition, under any circumstances. This is the theoretically best career of mental progress."

The need of securing success at the *outset* is imperative. Failure at first is apt to dampen the energy of all future attempts, whereas past experience of success nerves one to future vigor.

5 Goethe says to a man who consulted him about an enterprise but mistrusted his own powers: "Ach, you need only blow on your hands!" And the remark illustrates the effect on Goethe's spirits of his own habitually successful career.
10 Professor Baumann, from whom I borrow the anecdote, says that the collapse of barbarian nations when Europeans come among them is due to their despair of ever succeeding as the new-comers do in the larger tasks of life. Old
15 ways are broken and new ones not formed.

The question of "tapering-off," in abandoning such habits as drink and opium-indulgence, comes in here, and is a question about which experts differ within certain limits, and in regard to what may be best for an individual case. In the main, however, all expert opinion would agree that abrupt acquisition of the new habit is the best way, *if there be a real possibility of carrying it out*. We must be careful not
20 to give the will so stiff a task as to insure its defeat at the very outset; but, *provided one can stand it*, a sharp period of suffering, and then a free time, is the best thing to aim at, whether in giving up a habit like that of opium,
25 or in simply changing one's hours of rising or of work. It is surprising how soon a desire will die of inanition if it be *never* fed.

"One must first learn, unmoved, looking neither to the right nor left, to walk firmly on the straight and narrow path, before one can begin 'to make
35 one's self over again.' He who every day makes a fresh resolve is like one who, arriving at the edge of the ditch he is to leap, forever stops and returns for a fresh run. Without *unbroken* advance there
40 is no such thing as *accumulation* of the ethical forces possible, and to make this possible, and to exercise us and habituate us in it, is the sovereign blessing of regular work."²

A third maxim may be added to the preceding pair: *Seize the very first possible opportunity to act on every resolution you make, and on every emotional prompting you may experience in the direction of the habits you aspire to gain*. It is not in the moment of their forming, but in
50

²"J. Bahnsen, *Beiträge zu Charakterologie* (1867), Vol. I, p. 209." (James's note.)

the moment of their producing *motor effects*, that resolves and aspirations communicate the new "set" to the brain. As the author last quoted remarks:

"The actual presence of the practical opportunity alone furnishes the fulcrum upon which the lever can rest, by means of which the moral will may multiply its strength, and raise itself aloft. He who has no solid ground to press against will never get beyond the stage of empty gesture-making."

No matter how full a reservoir of *maxims* one may possess, and no matter how good one's *sentiments* may be, if one have not taken advantage of every concrete opportunity to *act*, one's character may remain entirely unaffected for the better. With mere good intentions, hell is proverbially paved. And this is an obvious consequence of the principles we have laid down. A "character," as J. S. Mill³ says, "is a completely fashioned will", and a will, in the sense in which he means it, is an aggregate of tendencies to act in a firm and prompt and definite way upon all the principal emergencies of life. A tendency to act only becomes effectively ingrained in us in proportion to the uninterrupted frequency with which the actions actually occur, and the brain "grows" to their use. Every time a resolve or a fine glow of feeling evaporates without bearing practical fruit is worse than a chance lost, it works so as positively to hinder future resolutions and emotions from taking the normal path of discharge. There is no more contemptible type of human character than that of the nerveless sentimentalist and dreamer, who spends his life in a weltering sea of sensibility and emotion, but who never does a manly concrete deed. Rousseau, inflaming all the mothers of France, by his eloquence, to follow Nature and nurse their babies themselves, while he sends his own children to the foundling hospital, is the classical example of what I mean. But every one of us in his measure, whenever, after glowing for an abstractly formulated Good, he practically ignores some actual case, among the squalid "other particulars" of which that same Good lurks disguised, treads straight on Rousseau's path. All Goods are disguised by the vulgarity of their

concomitants, in this work-a-day world, but woe to him who can only recognize them when he thinks them in their pure and abstract form! The habit of excessive novel-reading and theatre-going will produce true monsters in this line. The weeping of a Russian lady over the fictitious personages in the play, while her coachman is freezing to death on his seat outside, is the sort of thing that everywhere happens on a less glaring scale. Even the habit of excessive indulgence in music, for those who are neither performers themselves nor musically gifted enough to take it in a purely intellectual way, has probably a relaxing effect upon the character. One becomes filled with emotions which habitually pass without prompting to any deed, and so the merely sentimental condition is kept up. The remedy would be, never to suffer one's self to have an emotion at a concert, without expressing it afterward in *some* active way. Let the expression be the least thing in the world—speaking genially to one's aunt, or giving up one's seat in a horse-car, if nothing more heroic offers—but let it not fail to take place.

These latter cases make us aware that it is not simply *particular lines* of discharge, but also *general forms* of discharge, that seem to be grooved out by habit in the brain. Just as, if we let our emotions evaporate, they get into a way of evaporating, so there is reason to suppose that if we often flinch from making an effort, before we know it the effort-making capacity will be gone, and that, if we suffer the wandering of our attention, presently it will wander all the time. Attention and effort are, as we shall see later, but two names for the same psychic fact. To what brain-processes they correspond we do not know. The strongest reason for believing that they do depend on brain-processes at all, and are not pure acts of the spirit, is just this fact, that they seem in some degree subject to the law of habit, which is a material law. As a final practical maxim, relative to these habits of the will, we may, then, offer something like this: *Keep the faculty of effort alive in you by a little gratuitous exercise every day.* That is, be systematically ascetic or heroic in little unnecessary points, do every day or two something for no other reason than that you would rather not do it, so that when the hour of dire need draws nigh, it may find you not unnerved and untrained to stand the test. Asceticism of this

³ John Stuart Mill (1806–1873), English philosopher and economist. See II, 131.

sort is like the insurance which a man pays on his house and goods. The tax does him no good at the time, and possibly may never bring him a return. But if the fire *does* come, his having paid it will be his salvation from ruin. So with the man who has daily inured himself to habits of concentrated attention, energetic volition, and self-denial in unnecessary things. He will stand like a tower when everything rocks around him, and when his softer fellow-mortals are winnowed like chaff in the blast.

The physiological study of mental conditions is thus the most powerful ally of hortatory ethics. The hell to be endured hereafter, of which theology tells, is no worse than the hell we make for ourselves in this world by habitually fashioning our characters in the wrong way. Could the young but realize how soon they will become mere walking bundles of habits, they would give more heed to their conduct while in the plastic state. We are spinning our own fates, good or evil, and never to be undone. Every smallest stroke of virtue or of vice leaves its never so little scar. The drunken Rip Van Winkle, in Jefferson's play,⁴ excuses himself for every fresh dereliction by saying, "I won't count this time!" Well! he may not count it, and a kind Heaven may not count it; but it is being counted none the less. Down among his nerve-cells and fibres the molecules are counting it, registering and storing it up to be used against him when the next temptation comes. Nothing we ever do is, in strict scientific literalness, wiped out. Of course, this has its good side as well as its bad one. As we become permanent drunkards by so many separate drinks, so we become saints in the moral, and authorities and experts in the practical and scientific spheres, by so many separate acts and hours of work. Let no youth have any anxiety about the upshot of his education, whatever the line of it may be. If he keep faithfully busy each hour of the working-day, he may safely leave the final result to itself. He can with perfect certainty count on waking up some fine morning, to find himself one of the competent ones of his generation, in whatever pursuit he may have singled out. Silently, between all the details of his business, the *power of judging* in all that class of matter will have built itself up

within him as a possession that will never pass away. Young people should know this truth in advance. The ignorance of it has probably engendered more discouragement and faint-heartedness in youths embarking on arduous careers than all other causes put together.

ARTHUR CHRISTOPHER BENSON 1862-1925

Arthur Christopher Benson, son of Edward White Benson, Archbishop of Canterbury, lived the uneventful life of a scholar and a teacher. But his real interest lay in writing rather than in teaching, and as the author of biographies and essays he enjoyed the fruits of a quiet and dignified success. His biographies of Walter Pater, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and Edward Fitzgerald were written for the English Men of Letters series. He wrote poetry and novels, too, but as a novelist he was easily excelled by his brother, Edward Frederic Benson. Living as he did in an academic atmosphere, Benson did his most felicitous writing as the author of reflective and philosophical essays. His books of essays include Beside Still Waters (1907), Escape and Other Essays (1915), and Rambles and Reflections (1926).

ON GROWING OLDER¹

The sun flares red behind leafless elms and battlemented towers as I come in from a lonely walk beside the river; above the chimney tops hangs a thin veil of drifting smoke, blue in the golden light. The games in the Common are just coming to an end; a stream of long-coated spectators sets toward the town, mingled with the parti-colored, muddled figures of the players. I have been strolling half the afternoon along the river bank, watching the boats passing up and down; hearing the shrill cries of coxes, the measured plash of oars, the rhythmical rattle of row-locks, intermingled at intervals with the harsh grinding of the chain ferries. Five-and-twenty years ago I was rowing here myself in one of these boats, and I do not wish to renew the experience. I cannot conceive why and in what moment of feeble good-nature or

¹ From *From a College Window*. Copyrighted by G. P. Putnam's Sons. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

⁴ Joseph Jefferson (1829-1905), American actor.

misapplied patriotism I ever consented to lend a hand. I was not a good oar, and did not become a better one; I had no illusions about my performance, and any momentary complacency was generally sternly dispelled by the harsh criticism of the coach on the bank, when we rested for a moment to receive our meed of praise or blame. But though I have no sort of wish to repeat the process, to renew the slavery which I found frankly and consistently intolerable, I find myself looking on at the cheerful scene with an amusement in which mingles a shadow of pain, because I feel that I have parted with something, a certain buoyancy and elasticity of body, and perhaps spirit, of which I was not conscious at the time, but which I now realize that I must have possessed.

It is with an admiration mingled with envy that I see these youthful, shapely figures, bare-necked and bare-kneed, swinging rhythmically past. I watch a brisk crew lift a boat out of the water by a boat house; half of them duck underneath to get hold of the other side, and they march up the grating gravel in a solemn procession. I see a pair of cheerful young men, released from tubbing, execute a wild and inconsequent dance upon the water's edge; I see a solemn conference of deep import between a stroke and a coach. I see a neat, clean-limbed young man go airily up to a well-earned tea, without, I hope, a care or an anxiety in his mind, expecting and intending to spend an agreeable evening, "Oh, Jones of Trinity,² oh, Smith of Queen's,"¹ I think to myself, "*tua si bona nôris!*"⁴ Make the best of the good time, my boy, before you go off to the office, or the fourth-form room, or the country parish! Live virtuously, make honest friends, read the good old books, lay up a store of kindly recollections, of fire-lit rooms in venerable courts, of pleasant talks, of innocent festivities. Very fresh is the brisk morning air, very fragrant is the newly lighted bird's-eye, very lively is the clink of knives and forks, very keen is the savor of the roast beef that floats up to the dark rafters of the College Hall. But the days are short and the terms are few; and do not forget to be a sensible as well as a good-humored young man!"

Thackeray, in a delightful ballad, invites a

² a college of Cambridge University.

³ a college of Oxford University.

⁴ if you only knew your blessedness!

pretty page to wait till he comes to forty years; well, I have waited,—indeed, I have somewhat overshot the mark,—and to-day the sight of all this brisk life, going on just as it used to do, with the same insouciance and the same merriment, makes me wish to reflect, to gather up the fragments, to see if it is all loss, all declension, or whether there is something left, some strength in what remains behind.

I have a theory that one ought to grow older in a tranquil and appropriate way, that one ought to be perfectly contented with one's time of life, that amusements and pursuits ought to alter naturally and easily, and not be regretfully abandoned. One ought not to be dragged protesting from the scene, catching desperately at every doorway and balustrade; one should walk off smiling. It is easier said than done. It is not a pleasant moment when a man first recognizes that he is out of place in the football field, that he cannot stoop with the old agility to pick up a skinning stroke to cover-point, that dancing is rather too heating to be decorous, that he cannot walk all day without undue somnolence after dinner, or rush off after a heavy meal without indigestion. These are sad moments which we all of us reach, but which are better laughed over than fretted over. And a man who, out of sheer inability to part from boyhood, clings desperately and with apoplectic puffings to these things is an essentially grotesque figure. To listen to young men discussing one of these my belated contemporaries, and to hear one enforcing on another the amusement to be gained from watching the old buffer's manœuvres, is a lesson against undue youthfulness. One can indeed give amusement without loss of dignity, by being open to being induced to join in such things occasionally in an elderly way, without any attempt to disguise deficiencies. But that is the most that ought to be attempted. Perhaps the best way of all is to subside into the genial and interested looker-on, to be ready to applaud the game you cannot play, and to admire the dexterity you cannot rival.

What then, if any, are the gains that make up for the lack of youthful prowess? They are, I can contentedly say, many and great. In the first place, there is the loss of a quality which is productive of an extraordinary amount of pain among the young, the quality of self-con-

sciousness. How often was one's peace of mind ruined by gaucherie, by shyness, by the painful consciousness of having nothing to say, and the still more painful consciousness of having said the wrong thing in the wrong way! Of course, it was all immensely exaggerated. If one went into chapel, for instance, with a straw hat, which one had forgotten to remove, over a surplice, one had the feeling for several days that it was written in letters of fire on every wall. I was myself an ardent conversationalist in early years, and, with the charming omniscience of youth, fancied that my opinion was far better worth having than the opinions of dons encrusted with pedantry and prejudice. But if I found myself in the society of these petrified persons, by the time that I had composed a suitable remark, the slender opening had already closed, and my contribution was either not uttered at all or hopelessly belated in its appearance. Or some deep generalization drawn from the dark backward of my vast experience would be produced, and either ruthlessly ignored or contemptuously corrected by some unsympathetic elder of unyielding voice and formed opinions. And then there was the crushing sense, at the conclusion of one of these interviews, of having been put down as a tiresome and heavy young man. I fully believed in my own liveliness and sprightliness, but it seemed an impossible task to persuade my elders that these qualities were there. A good-natured, elderly friend used at times to rally me upon my shyness, and say that it all came from thinking too much about myself. It was as useless as if one told a man with a toothache that it was mere self-absorption that made him suffer. For I have no doubt that the disease of self-consciousness is incident to intelligent youth. Marie Bashkirtseff,³ in the terrible self-revealing journals which she wrote, describes a visit that she paid to someone who had expressed an interest in her and a desire to see her. She says that as she passed the threshold of the room she breathed a prayer, "O God, make me worth seeing!" How often used one to desire to make an impression, to make one's self felt and appreciated!

Well, all that uneasy craving has left me. I no longer have any particular desire for or ex-

pectation of being impressive. One likes, of course, to feel brisk and lively; but whereas in the old days I used to enter a circle with the intention of endeavoring to be felt, of giving pleasure and interest, I now go in the humble hope of receiving either. The result is that, having got rid to a great extent of this pompous and self-regarding attitude of mind, I not only find myself more at ease, but I also find other people infinitely more interesting. Instead of laying one's frigate alongside of another craft with the intention of conducting a boarding expedition, one pays a genial visit by means of the longboat with all the circumstance of courtesy and amiability. Instead of desiring to make conquests, I am glad enough to be tolerated. I dare, too, to say what I think, not alert for any symptoms of contradiction, but fully aware that my own point of view is but one of many, and quite prepared to revise it. In the old days I demanded agreement; I am now amused by divergence. In the old days I desired to convince; I am now only too thankful to be convinced of error and ignorance. I now no longer shrink from saying that I know nothing of a subject; in old days I used to make a pretence of omniscience, and had to submit irritably to being tamely unmasked. It seems to me that I must have been an unpleasant young man enough, but I humbly hope that I was not so disagreeable as might appear.

Another privilege of advancing years is the decreasing tyranny of convention. I used to desire to do the right thing, to know the right people, to play the right games. I did not reflect whether it was worth the sacrifice of personal interest; it was all-important to be in the swim. Very gradually I discovered that other people troubled their heads very little about what one did; that the right people were often the most tiresome and the most conventional, and that the only games which were worth playing were the games which one enjoyed. I used to undergo miseries in staying at uncongenial houses, in accepting shooting invitations when I could not shoot, in going to dances because the people whom I knew were going. Of course one has plenty of disagreeable duties to perform in any case; but I discovered gradually that to adopt the principle of doing disagreeable things which were supposed to be amusing and agreeable was to misunderstand the whole situation.

³ a Russian diarist (1860-1884).

Now, if I am asked to stay at a tiresome house, I refuse; I decline invitations to garden parties and public dinners and dances, because I know that they will bore me, and as to games, I never play them if I can help, because I find that they do not entertain me. Of course there are occasions when one is wanted to fill a gap, and then it is the duty of a Christian and a gentleman to conform, and to do it with a good grace.

Again, I am not at the mercy of small prejudices, as I used to be. As a young man, if I disliked the cut of a person's whiskers or the fashion of his clothes, if I considered his manner to be abrupt or unpleasing, if I was not interested in his subjects, I set him down as an impossible person, and made no further attempt to form acquaintance. Now I know that these are superficial things, and that a kind heart and an interesting personality are not inconsistent with boots of a grotesque shape and even with mutton-chop whiskers. In fact, I think that small oddities and differences have grown to have a distinct value, and form a pleasing variety. If a person's manner is unattractive, I often find that it is nothing more than a shyness or an awkwardness which disappears the moment that familiarity is established. My standard is, in fact, lower, and I am more tolerant.

I am not, I confess, wholly tolerant, but my intolerance is reserved for qualities and not for externals. I still fly swiftly from long-winded, pompous, and contemptuous persons; but if their company is unavoidable, I have at least learned to hold my tongue. The other day I was at a country house where an old and extremely tiresome General laid down the law on the subject of the Mutiny, where he had fought as a youthful subaltern. I was pretty sure that he was making the most grotesque misstatements, but I was not in a position to contradict them. Next the General was a courteous, weary old gentleman, who sat with his finger-tips pressed together, smiling and nodding at intervals. Half an hour later we were lighting our candles. The General strode fiercely up to bed, leaving a company of yawning and dispirited men behind. The old gentleman came up to me and, as he took a light, said with an inclination of his head in the direction of the parting figure, "The poor General is a good deal misinformed. I didn't choose to say any-

thing, but I know something about the subject, because I was private secretary to the Secretary for War."

That was the right attitude, I thought, for the gentlemanly philosopher. I have learned from my old friend the lesson not to choose to say anything if a turbulent and pompous person lays down the law on subjects with which I happen to be acquainted.

Again, there is another gain that results from advancing years. I think it is true that there were shaper ecstasies in youth, keener perceptions, more passionate thrills; but then the mind also dipped more swiftly and helplessly into discouragement, dreariness, and despair. I do not think that life is so rapturous, but it certainly is vastly more interesting. When I was young there were an abundance of things about which I did not care. I was all for poetry and art, I found history tedious, science tiresome, politics insupportable. Now I may thankfully say it is wholly different. The time of youth was the opening to me of many doors of life. Sometimes a door opened upon a mysterious and wonderful place, an enchanted forest, a solemn avenue, a sleeping glade; often, too, it opened into some dusty workaday place, full of busy forms bent over intolerable tasks, whizzing wheels, dark gleaming machinery, the din of the factory and the workshop. Sometimes, too, a door would open into a bare and melancholy place, a hillside strewn with stones, an interminable plain of sand; worst of all, a place would sometimes be revealed which was full of suffering, anguish, and hopeless woe, shadowed with fears and sins. From such prospects I turned with groans unutterable; but the air of the accursed place would hang about me for days. These surprises, these strange surmises, crowded in fast upon me. How different the world was from what the careless forecast of boyhood had pictured it! How strange, how beautiful, and yet how terrible!

As life went on, the beauty increased, and a calmer, quieter beauty made itself revealed; in youth I looked for strange, impressive, haunted beauties, things that might deeply stir and move; but year by year a simpler, sweeter, healthier kind of beauty made itself felt: such beauty as lies on the bare, lightly washed, faintly tinted hillside of winter, all delicate greens and browns, so far removed from the

sciousness. How often was one's peace of mind ruined by gaucherie, by shyness, by the painful consciousness of having nothing to say, and the still more painful consciousness of having said the wrong thing in the wrong way! Of course, it was all immensely exaggerated. If one went into chapel, for instance, with a straw hat, which one had forgotten to remove, over a surplice, one had the feeling for several days that it was written in letters of fire on every wall. I was myself an ardent conversationalist in early years, and, with the charming omniscience of youth, fancied that my opinion was far better worth having than the opinions of dons encrusted with pedantry and prejudice. But if I found myself in the society of these petrified persons, by the time that I had composed a suitable remark, the slender opening had already closed, and my contribution was either not uttered at all or hopelessly belated in its appearance. Or some deep generalization drawn from the dark backward of my vast experience would be produced, and either ruthlessly ignored or contemptuously corrected by some unsympathetic elder of unyielding voice and formed opinions. And then there was the crushing sense, at the conclusion of one of these interviews, of having been put down as a tiresome and heavy young man. I fully believed in my own liveliness and sprightliness, but it seemed an impossible task to persuade my elders that these qualities were there. A good-natured, elderly friend used at times to rally me upon my shyness, and say that it all came from thinking too much about myself. It was as useless as if one told a man with a toothache that it was mere self-absorption that made him suffer. For I have no doubt that the disease of self-consciousness is incident to intelligent youth. Marie Bashkirtseff,³ in the terrible self-revealing journals which she wrote, describes a visit that she paid to someone who had expressed an interest in her and a desire to see her. She says that as she passed the threshold of the room she breathed a prayer, "O God, make me worth seeing!" How often used one to desire to make an impression, to make one's self felt and appreciated!

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³ a Russian diarist (1860-1884).

days that were still my own before the day which I dreaded, and begin, in that agitated mood which used to accompany the return of consciousness after sleep, when the mind is alert but unbalanced, to anticipate the thing I feared, and feel that I could not face it. Now I tend to awake and say to myself, "Well, at any rate I have still to-day in my own hands"; and then the very day itself has an increased value from the feeling that the uncomfortable experience lies ahead. I suppose that is the secret of the placid enjoyment which the very old so often display. They seem so near the dark gate, and yet so entirely indifferent to the thought of it; so absorbed in little leisurely trifles, happy with a childlike happiness.

And thus I went slowly back to College in that gathering gloom that seldom fails to bring a certain peace to the mind. The porter sat with his feet on the fender, in his comfortable den, reading a paper. The lights were beginning to appear in the court, and the firelight flickering busily upon walls hung with all the pleasant signs of youthful life, the groups, the family photographs, the suspended oar, the cap of glory. So when I entered my book-lined rooms, and heard the kettle sing its comfortable song on the hearth, and reflected that I had a few letters to write, an interesting book to turn over, a pleasant Hall dinner to look forward to, and that, after a space of talk, an undergraduate or two were coming to talk over a leisurely piece of work, an essay or a paper, I was more than ever inclined to acquiesce in my disabilities, to purr like an elderly cat, and to feel that while I had the priceless boon of leisure, set in a framework of small duties, there was much to be said for life, and that I was a poor creature if I could not be soberly content.

Of course I know that I have missed the nearer ties of life, the hearth, the home, the companionship of a wife, the joys and interests of growing girls and boys. But if a man is fatherly and kind-hearted, he will find plenty of young men who are responsive to a paternal interest, and intensely grateful for the good-humored care of one who will listen to their troubles, their difficulties, and their dreams. I have two or three young friends who tell me what they are doing and what they hope to do. I have many correspondents who were friends

of mine as boys, who tell me from time to time how it goes with them in the bigger world, and who like in return to hear something of my own doings.

And so I sit, while the clock on the mantle-piece ticks out the pleasant minutes, and the fire winks and crumbles on the hearth, till the old gyp comes tapping at the door to learn my intentions for the evening; and then again I pass out into the court, the lighted windows of the Hall gleam with the ancient armorial glass, from staircase after staircase come troops of alert, gowned figures, while overhead, above all the pleasant stir and murmur of life, hang in the dark sky the unchanging stars.

GEORGE SANTAYANA

1863—

Born in Madrid, Spain, George Santayana came to America when he was nine years old. After his undergraduate years at Harvard he studied in Germany and then returned to Harvard, where he taught philosophy from 1889 to 1912. Although English is not his native tongue, Santayana has achieved eminence in that language as a writer on aesthetics and philosophy, and as a poet, essayist, and novelist. He describes his major philosophical work, The Life of Reason (1905), as being a study of "possible human progress." During the First World War Santayana lived in England, where he found the English way of life to be an approximation of that of the ancient Greeks. Something of a record of those years, his Soliloquies in England (1923) reveals Santayana as a thoughtful and charming essayist. The idyllic, yet moralizing, essay that follows should be compared with Edman's "Intimations of Philosophy in Early Childhood" (II, 272) and, in part, with Stevenson's "An Apology for Idlers" (II, 175).

SKYLARKS¹

There is a poet in every nice Englishman; there is a little fund of free vitality deep down in him which the exigencies of his life do not tap and which no art at his command can ren-

¹ Reprinted from *The Philosophy of Santayana*; copyright 1936 by Charles Scribner's Sons; used by permission of the publishers, and of Constable and Company, Ltd., London.

der articulate. He is able to draw upon it, and to drink in the refreshment and joy of inner freedom, only in silent or religious moments. He feels he is never so much himself as when he has shed for the time being all his ordinary preoccupations. That is why his religion is so thin or (as he might say) so pure: it has no relevance to any particular passions or events; a featureless background, distant and restful, like a pale clear sky. That is why he loves nature, and country life, and hates towns and vulgar people; those he likes he conceives emasculated, sentimentalized, and robed in white. The silent poet within him is only a lyric poet. When he returns from those draughts of rare and abstract happiness, he would find it hard to reconcile himself to the world, or to himself, did he not view both through a veil of convention and make-believe; he could not be honest about himself and retain his self-respect, he could not be clear about other people and remain kind. Yet to be kind to all, and true to his inner man, is his profound desire; because even if life, in its unvarnished truth, is a gross medley and a cruel business, it is redeemed for him, nevertheless, by the perfect beauty of soul that here and there may shine through it. Hamlet is the classic version of this imprisoned spirit; the skylark seems a symbol of what it would be in its freedom.

Poor larks! Is the proportion of dull matter in their bodies, I wonder, really less than in ours? Must they not find food and rear their young? Must they not in their measure work, watch, and tremble? Cold, hunger, and disease probably beset them more often and more bitterly than they do most of us. But we think of them selfishly, as of actors on the stage, only in the character they wear when they attract our attention. As we walk through the fields we stop to watch and to listen to them performing in the sky, and never think of their home troubles; which they, too, seem for the moment to have eluded; at least they have energy and time enough left over from those troubles for all this luxury of song. It is this glorious if temporary emancipation, this absolute defiant emphasis laid with so much sweetness on the inner life that the poet in every nice Englishman loves in the lark; it seems to reveal a brother-spirit more fortunate than oneself, almost a master and a guide.

Larks made even Shelley envious, although no man ever had less reason to envy them for their gift, either in its rapture or in its abstraction. Even the outer circumstances of Shelley's life were very favourable to inspiration and left him free to warble as much and as ardently as he chose; but perhaps he was somewhat deceived by the pathos of distance and fancied that in *Nephelococcygia*² bad birds and wicked traditions were less tyrannous than in parliamentary England. He seems to have thought that human nature was not really made for puddings and port wine and hunting and elections, nor even for rollicking at universities and reading Greek, but only for innocent lyrical ecstasies and fiery convictions that nevertheless should somehow not render people covetous or jealous or cruelly disposed, nor constrain them to prevent any one from doing anything that any one might choose to do. Perhaps in truth the cloisters of Oxford and the streets of London are quite as propitious to the flights of which human nature is really capable as English fields are to the flights of larks; there is food in them for thought. But Shelley was impatient of human nature; he was horrified to find that society is a web of merciless ambitions and jealousies, mitigated by a quite subsidiary kindness; he forgot that human life is precarious and that its only weapon against circumstances, and against rival men, is intelligent action, intelligent war. The case is not otherwise with larks, on the fundamental earthly side of their existence; yet because their flight is bodily, because it is a festive outpouring of animal vitality, not of art or reflection, it suggests to us a total freedom of the inner man, a freedom which is impossible.

In the flight of larks, however, by a rare favour of fortune, all seems to be spontaneity, courage, and trust, even within this material sphere; nothing seems to be adjustment or observation. Their life in the air is a sort of intoxication of innocence and happiness in the blind pulses of existence. They are voices of the morning, young hearts seeking experience and not remembering it; when they seem to sob they are only catching their breath. They spring from the ground as impetuously as a rocket or

² See the *Birds* of Aristophanes (c. 444–c. 380 B.C.), Greek writer of comedies. *Nephelococcygia* is a town built in the clouds by the cuckoos.

the jet of a fountain, that bursts into a shower of sparks or of dew-drops; they circle as they rise, soaring through veil after veil of luminous air, or dropping from level to level. Their song is like the gurgling of little rills of water, perpetual through its delicate variations, and throbbing with a changed volume at every change in the breeze. Their rapture seems to us seraphic, not merely because it descends to us invisibly from a luminous height, straining our eyes and necks—in itself a cheap sublimity—but rather because the lark sings so absolutely for the mad sake of singing. He is evidently making high holiday, spending his whole strength on something ultimate and utterly useless, a momentary entrancing pleasure which (being useless and ultimate) is very like an act of worship or of sacrifice. Sheer life in him has become pure. That is what we envy; that is what causes us, as we listen, to draw a deeper breath, and perhaps something like tears to come to our eyes. He seems so triumphantly to attain what all our labors end by missing, yet what alone would justify them: happiness, selflessness, a moment of life lived in the spirit. And we may be tempted to say to ourselves: Ah, if I could only forget, if I could cease to look before and after, if the pale cast of thought³ did not make a slave of me, as well as a coward!

Vital raptures such as the lark's are indeed not unknown even to man, and the suggestion of them powerfully allures the Englishman, being as he is a youth morally, still impelled to sport, still confident of carrying his whole self forward into some sort of heaven, whether in love, in politics, or in religion, without resigning to nature the things that are nature's nor hiding in God the things that are God's. Alas, a sad lesson awaits him, if he ever grows old enough to learn it. Vital raptures, unless long training or a miracle of adaptation has antecedently harmonized them with the whole orchestration of nature, necessarily come to a bad end. Dancing and singing and love and sport and religious enthusiasm are mighty ferments: happy he who vents them in their season. But if ever they are turned into duties, pumped up by force, or made the basis of anything serious, like morals

or science, they become vicious. The wild breath of inspiration is gone which hurried them across the soul like a bright cloud. Inspiration, as we may read in Plato between the lines, inspiration is animal. It comes from the depths, from that hearth of Hestia,⁴ the Earth-Mother, which conservative pagans could not help venerating as divine. Only art and reason, however, are divine in a moral sense, not because they are less natural than inspiration (for the Earth-Mother with her seeds and vapours is the root of everything) but because they mount toward the ultimate heaven of order, beauty, intellectual light, and the achievement of eternal dignities. In that dimension of being even featherless bipeds can soar and sing with a good grace. But space is not their element; airmen, now that we have them, are only a new sort of sailor. They fly for the sake of danger and of high wages; it is a boyish art, with its romantic glamour soon tarnished, and only a material reward left for all its skill and hardships. The only sublimity possible to man is intellectual, when he would be sublime in any other dimension he is merely fatuous and bombastic. By intelligence, so far as he possesses it, a man sees things as they are, transcends his senses and his passions, uproots himself from his casual station in space and time, sees all things future as if they were past, and all things past as for ever present, at once condemns and forgives himself, renounces the world and loves it. Having this inner avenue open to divinity, he would be a fool to emulate the larks in their kind of ecstasy.

His wings are his intelligence; not that they bring ultimate success to his animal will, which must end in failure, but that they lift his failure itself into an atmosphere of laughter and light, where is his proper happiness. He cannot take his fine flight, like the lark, in the morning, in mad youth, in some irresponsible burst of vitality, because life is impatient to begin: that sort of thing is the fluttering of a caged bird, a rebellion against circumstance and against commonness which is a sign of spirit, but not spirit in its self-possession, not happiness nor a school of happiness. The thought which crowns life at its summit can accompany it throughout its course, and can reconcile us to its issue. In-

³ See *Hamlet*, III, i, 85: "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought."

⁴ Greek goddess of the hearth.

telligence is Homeric in its pervasive light. It traces all the business of nature, eluding but not disturbing it, rendering it in fact more amiable than it is, and rescuing it from vanity.

Sense is like a lively child always at our elbow, saying, Look, look, what is that? Will is like an orator, indignantly demanding something different. History and fiction and religion are like poets, continually recomposing the facts into some tragic unity which is not in them. All these forms of mind are spiritual, and therefore materially superfluous and free; but their spirit is pious, it is attentive to its sources, and therefore seems to be care-laden and not so gloriously emancipated as the music of larks, or even of human musicians; yet thought is pure music in its essence, and only in its subject-matter retrospective and troubled about the facts. It must indeed be troubled about them, because in man spirit is not a mere truant, as it seems to be in the lark, but is a faithful chronicler of labour and wisdom. Man is hard-pressed; long trauancies would be fatal to him. He is tempted to indulge in them—witness his languages and pyramids and mythologies; yet his margin of safety is comparatively narrow, and he cannot afford to spend such relatively prodigious amounts of energy in mere play as the lark does with a light heart and in the grand manner. There are words to man's music; he gives names to things; he tries to catch the rhythm of his own story, or to imagine it richer and more sublime than it is. His festivals are heavy with pathos; they mark the events on which his existence turns—harvests, funerals, redemptions, wooings, and wars. When he disregards all these tiresome things, he becomes a fop or a fanatic. There is no worthy transport for him except sane philosophy—a commentary, not a dream. His intelligence is most intense and triumphant when there is least waste in his life; for if hard thinking sometimes makes the head ache, it is because it comes hard, not because it is thinking; our fuddled brain grates and repeats itself in that it *can't* think. But if your business is in order, it requires no further pains to understand it. Intelligence is the flower of war and the flower of love. Both, in the end, are comprehension. How miraculously in our happy moments we understand, how far we jump, what masses of facts we dominate at a

glance! There is no labour then, no friction or groping, no anxious jostling against what we do not know, but only joy in this intricate outspread humorous world, intoxication as ethereal as the lark's, but more descriptive. If his song is raised above the world for a moment by its wantonness and idle rapture, ours is raised above it essentially by its scope. To look before and after is human; it would not be sincere nor manly in us not to take thought for the morrow and not to pine for what is not. We must start on that basis, with our human vitality (which is art) substituted for the vegetative prayerfulness of the lily, and our human scope (which is knowledge of the world) substituted for the outpourings of larks.

On this other plane we could easily be as happy as the larks, if we were as liberal. Men when they are civilized and at ease are liberal enough in their sports, and willing to *desipere in loco*,⁵ like kittens, but it is strange how barbarous and illiberal, at least in modern times, they have remained about thought. They wish to harness thought like a waterfall, or like the blind Samson,⁶ to work for them night and day, in the treadmill of their interests or of their orthodoxy. Fie upon their stupidity and upon their slavishness! They do not see that when nature, with much travail, brings something living to birth, inevitable thought is there already, and gratis, and cannot possibly be there before. The seething of the brain is indeed as pragmatic as the habit of singing and flying, which in its inception doubtless helped the larks to survive, as even the whiteness of the lily may have done through the ministry of insects which it attracted; but even material organs are bound to utility by a very loose tie. Nature does not shake off her baroque ornaments and her vices until they prove fatal, and she never thinks of the most obvious invention or pressing reform, until some complication brings her, she knows not how, to try the experiment. Nature, having no ulterior purpose, has no need of parsimony or haste or simplicity. Much less need she be niggardly of spirit, which lays no tax upon her, and consumes no energy, but laughs aloud, a marvel and a mystery to her, in her very heart. All animal functions, whether helpful or waste-

⁵ to play or trifle at the right time.

⁶ See Judges 16:21.

ful, have this fourth dimension in the realm of spirit—the joy, or the pain, or the beauty that may be found in them. Spirit loads with a lyric intensity the flying moment in which it lives. It actually paints the lily and casts a perfume on the violet; it turns into vivid presences a thousand forms which, until its flame lighted them up, were merged in the passive order and truth of things, like the charms of Lucy by the springs of Dove, before Wordsworth discovered them. The smile of nature is not ponderable; and the changing harmonies of nature, out of which spirit springs, are like the conjunctions or eclipses of planets, facts obvious enough to sense in their specious simplicity, yet materially only momentary positions of transit for wayfarers bound each on his own errand. The songs of larks are like shooting stars that drop downwards and vanish, human intelligence is a part of the steadier music of the spheres.

JOHN DEWEY 1859–

Since the death of William James in 1910, John Dewey has been America's foremost philosopher. As a disciple of James he is a pragmatist and believes that the value or truth of an idea is to be discovered in its practical application. A true philosophy, so he feels, takes cognizance of the times, of the actual world, and represents not only an attempt to understand that world but an effort to direct social, economic, and political forces toward a good end. Although Dewey has spent much of his life as a teacher at Columbia University, he has made himself felt outside the classroom. His views on education have met with wide acceptance and with almost as wide condemnation. As one who practices what he teaches, he has fought not only for academic freedom but for civic freedom as well, and has shown the strength of his beliefs by taking part in political campaigns. A few of his many book titles will serve to indicate the scope of his theoretical and practical interests: *Critical Theory of Ethics* (1894), *German Philosophy and Politics* (1915), *The Public and Its Problems* (1927), and *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (1938). Dewey's definition of thought should be read in connection with Locke's essay on the understanding (II, 27).

WHAT IS THOUGHT?¹

No words are oftener on our lips than *thinking* and *thought*. So profuse and varied, indeed, is our use of these words that it is not easy to define just what we mean by them. The aim of this chapter is to find a single consistent meaning. Assistance may be had by considering some typical ways in which the terms are employed. In the first place *thought* is used broadly, not to say loosely. Everything that comes to mind, that "goes through our heads," is called a thought. To think of a thing is just to be conscious of it in any way whatsoever. Second, the term is restricted by excluding whatever is directly presented; we think (or think of) only such things as we do not directly see, hear, smell, or taste. Then, third, the meaning is further limited to beliefs that rest upon some kind of evidence or testimony. Of this third type, two kinds—or, rather, two degrees—must be discriminated. In some cases, a belief is accepted with slight or almost no attempt to state the grounds that support it. In other cases, the ground or basis for a belief is deliberately sought and its adequacy to support the belief examined. This process is called reflective thought; it alone is truly educative in value, and it forms, accordingly, the principal subject of this volume. We shall now briefly describe each of the four senses.

I. In its loosest sense, thinking signifies everything that, as we say, is "in our heads" or that "goes through our minds." He who offers "a penny for your thoughts" does not expect to drive any great bargain. In calling the object of his demand *thoughts*, he does not intend to ascribe to them dignity, consecutiveness, or truth. Any idle fancy, trivial recollection, or flitting impression will satisfy his demand. Daydreaming, building of castles in the air, that loose flux of casual and disconnected material that floats through our minds in relaxed moments are, in this random sense, *thinking*. More of our waking life than we should care to admit, even to ourselves, is likely to be whiled away in this inconsequential trifling with idle fancy and unsubstantial hope.

In this sense, silly folk and dullards *think*.

¹ *How We Think* by John Dewey—reprinted by special permission from D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, Mass.

The story is told of a man in slight repute for intelligence, who, desiring to be chosen select-man in his New England town, addressed a knot of neighbors in this wise: "I hear you don't believe I know enough to hold office. I wish you to understand that I am thinking about something or other most of the time." Now reflective thought is like this random coursing of things through the mind in that it consists of a succession of things thought of; but it is unlike, in that the mere chance occurrence of any chance "something or other" in an irregular sequence does not suffice. Reflection involves not simply a sequence of ideas, but a consequence—a consecutive ordering in such a way that each determines the next as its proper outcome, while each in turn leans back on its predecessors. The successive portions of the reflective thought grow out of one another and support one another; they do not come and go in a medley. Each phase is a step from something to something—technically speaking, it is a term of thought. Each term leaves a deposit which is utilized in the next term. The stream or flow becomes a train, chain, or thread.

II. Even when thinking is used in a broad sense, it is usually restricted to matters not directly perceived: to what we do not see, smell, hear, or touch. We ask the man telling a story if he saw a certain incident happen, and his reply may be, "No, I only thought of it." A note of invention, as distinct from faithful record of observation, is present. Most important in this class are successions of imaginative incidents and episodes which, having a certain coherence, hanging together on a continuous thread, lie between kaleidoscopic flights of fancy and considerations deliberately employed to establish a conclusion. The imaginative stories poured forth by children possess all degrees of internal congruity; some are disjointed, some are articulated. When connected, they stimulate reflective thought; indeed, they usually occur in minds of logical capacity. These imaginative enterprises often precede thinking of the close-knit type and prepare the way for it. But they do not aim at knowledge, at belief about facts or in truths; and thereby they are marked off from reflective thought even when they most resemble it. Those who express such thoughts do not expect credence, but rather credit for a well-constructed plot or a well-arranged climax.

They produce good stories, not—unless by chance—knowledge. Such thoughts are an efflorescence of feeling; the enhancement of a mood or sentiment is their aim; congruity of emotion, their binding tie.

III. In its next sense, thought denotes belief resting upon some basis; that is, real or supposed knowledge going beyond what is directly present. It is marked by *acceptance or rejection of something as reasonably probable or improbable*. This phase of thought, however, includes two such distinct types of belief that, even though their difference is strictly one of degree, not of kind, it becomes practically important to consider them separately. Some beliefs are accepted when their grounds have not themselves been considered, others are accepted because their grounds have been examined.

When we say, "Men used to think the world was flat," or "I thought you went to the house," we express belief: something is accepted, held to, acquiesced in, or affirmed. But such thoughts may mean a supposition accepted without reference to its real grounds. These may be adequate, they may not; but their value with reference to the support they afford the belief has not been considered.

Such thoughts grow up unconsciously and without reference to the attainment of correct belief. They are picked up—we know not how. From obscure sources and by unnoticed channels they insinuate themselves into acceptance and become unconsciously a part of our mental furniture. Tradition, instruction, imitation—all of which depend upon authority in some form, or appeal to our own advantage, or fall in with a strong passion—are responsible for them. Such thoughts are prejudices, that is, prejudgments, not judgments proper that rest upon a survey of evidence.

IV. Thoughts that result in belief have an importance attached to them which leads to reflective thought, to conscious inquiry into the nature, conditions, and bearings of the belief. To *think* of whales and camels in the clouds is to entertain ourselves with fancies, terminable at our pleasure, which do not lead to any belief in particular. But to think of the world as flat is to ascribe a quality to a real thing as its real property. This conclusion denotes a connection among things and hence is not, like imaginative

thought, plastic to our mood. Belief in the world's flatness commits him who holds it to thinking in certain specific ways of other objects, such as the heavenly bodies, antipodes, the possibility of navigation. It prescribes to him actions in accordance with his conception of these objects.

The consequences of a belief upon other beliefs and upon behavior may be so important, then, that men are forced to consider the grounds or reasons of their belief and its logical consequences. This means reflective thought—thought in its eulogistic and emphatic sense.

Men *thought* the world was flat until Columbus *thought* it to be round. The earlier thought was a belief held because men had not the energy or the courage to question what those about them accepted and taught, especially as it was suggested and seemingly confirmed by obvious and sensible facts. The thought of Columbus was a *reasoned conclusion*. It marked the close of study into facts, of scrutiny and revision of evidence, of working out the implications of various hypotheses, and of comparing these theoretical results with one another and with known facts. Because Columbus did not accept unhesitatingly the current traditional theory, because he doubted and inquired, he arrived at his thought. Skeptical of what, from long habit, seemed most certain, and credulous of what seemed impossible, he went on thinking until he could produce evidence for both his confidence and his disbelief. Even if his conclusion had finally turned out wrong, it would have been a different sort of belief from those it antagonized, because it was reached by a different method. *Active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends*, constitutes reflective thought. Any one of the first three kinds of thought may elicit this type; but once begun, it is a conscious and voluntary effort to establish belief upon a firm basis of reasons.

JOHN GALSWORTHY
1867–1933

By 1933, the year of his death, John Galsworthy, English author, had published twenty novels, as many plays, and a number of books

of essays. His most important work of fiction, The Forsyte Saga (1922), reveals him as a close student and critic of English middle-class society. Certain of his plays show him to be little short of an open propagandist for social justice, and his humanitarian sympathies led him, at times, toward sentimentalism. As an essayist he has charm and sensitivity. Among his books of essays are A Commentary (1908), The Inn of Tranquillity (1912), and A Sheaf (1916) What Galsworthy has to say in one of the following essays, "Some Platitudes Concerning Drama," is of especial interest, since he was a successful playwright. Three of his plays are Justice (1910), Loyalties (1922), and Escape (1926). His "Castles in Spain" raises questions that invite comparison of that essay with Arnold's "Sweetness and Light" (II, 143).

CASTLES IN SPAIN¹

We of the modern world, what do we dream of? What are our castles in Spain?

The thought came to me in Seville Cathedral, the stone fabric of man's greatest dream in those ages to which we have been accustomed to apply the word "dark." They who, traveling in Spain, consult their guide-books, may read these words: "On the eighth day of July in the year 1401 the Dean and Chapter of Seville assembled in the court of the elms and solemnly resolved: 'Let us build a church so great that those who come after us may think us mad to have attempted it!' . . . The church took one hundred and fifty years to build."

Men dreamed in those "dark" days, and carried out their dreams. In that silent building, incredibly beautiful, in that grove of sixty great trees of stone, whose vast trunks are jeweled by sunlight filtering through the high stained glass, in that stupendous and perfected work of art, raised by five succeeding generations to the glory of themselves and their God, one stood wondering wherein lay the superiority of ourselves, Children of Light, over those Sons of Darkness.

We, too, dream. I have seen some of the results—the Great Dam at Assuan, the Roosevelt

¹ Reprinted from *Candelabra* by John Galsworthy; copyright 1933 by John Galsworthy; used by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

Dam in Arizona, the Woolworth Building, the Forth Bridge, the Power Works at Niagara—not yet the greatest of them all, the Panama Canal (which actually took one-tenth of the time it took the Sons of Darkness to achieve Seville Cathedral). But all these were dreamed and fabricked out for immediate material benefit.

The builders of the giant mosques, the Temples of the Sun, the marvelous old churches, builded for no physical advantage in this life. They carved and wrought and slowly lifted stone on stone, to remote, and, as they thought, spiritual ends.

We moderns mine and forge, and mason up our monuments, to the immediate profit of our bodies. Have we raised anything really great in stone or brick for a mere idea, since Christopher Wren² built St. Paul's Cathedral?

Now, the Sons of Darkness and the Children of Light, both, I think, have worshipped a half-truth. In the streets of Spain, in the Indian or Egyptian village, to this day you may see the shadow of these ancient great buildings fall as if with dark weight on a miserably poor humanity. The ancients builded for to-morrow in another world; they forgot that all of us have a to-day in this. They spent riches and labor to save the souls of their hierarchy, but they kept their laborers so poor that they had no souls to save. They left astounding testimony to human genius and tenacity, majestic creations which can uplift the spirit of anyone who has eyes to see; but with all their dreams in stone to the glory of their gods, they kept simple man a beast of burden. And it never seems to have ruffled their consciousness that they purchased much of that ideal beauty with slavery, misery, and blood.

We moderns have gone another way to work, worshipping our half-truth. In place of those ideals for which the ancients worked—art, and the future life of their princes, politicians, and prelates—we moderns pursue what we call “progress.” All our stupendous achievements have this progressive notion at their back. We worship industry and trade. We think that if we make the wheels go round fast enough, mankind is bound to rise on the wings of wealth. Look after the body, we say, and the

spirit will look after itself. Whether we save a greater proportion of our bodies than the ancients did of souls, is more than doubtful. But no such trifling doubts shake our belief in “progress.”

Our modern castle in Spain is, in a word, “production,” and we have no other. It terrifies us, it paralyzes us, it is like a snake in front of a rabbit. It is like that Chinese general at whose name a million trembled. And what was his name? “Wu.”

It is machinery, of course, which has divided us from the ancients, given us a new culture and ideal.

Machinery has quietly and gradually shifted the central point of man's philosophy. Before the industrial era set in, men used to make things by hand; they were in some sort artists, with the artist's—or at least the craftsman's—pride in their work. Now they press buttons, they turn wheels; they don't make completed articles, they work with monotony at the section of an article; so many hours of machine-driving per day, the total result of which is never a man's individual achievement. “Intelligent specialism,” says an English writer, “is one thing. It consists in one man learning how to do one thing specially well. But the sort of specializing which consists in setting thousands of human beings during their whole working lives to such a soul-destroying job as fixing the bristles into a hair-brush, pasting labels on jam-pots, or nearly any one of the varieties of machine minding, is quite another thing. It is an utter negation of human nature.”

A man's real interest in life is now not in his working day, but outside of it. The old artificers drew in their culture, such as it was, from their work; in these days, culture, such as it is, is grafted on to the workman in his leisure, as a sort of antidote to wheel driving. I don't want to exaggerate—hewers, delvers, drawers of water could never have taken much pride in their work, and, on the other hand, we still have many among us to whom their work is of absorbing interest. The modern architect and engineer, for example, have a great deal of the artist in them—they have a passion for the perfection of their job, which they communicate to many of those working under them. But though they may raise in Brooklyn Bridge, or the Woolworth Building, a marvel of efficiency,

² English architect (1632–1723).

which in certain lights is also a thing of beauty, Society did not commission them to erect these wonders primarily for the sake of their beauty, or in order that Presidents Wilson and Harding might go to heaven. And, on the whole, I think there has been a great change; pride of quality has given way to pride of quantity. Men used to make things as well as they could for the pride they took in making them (and because they sometimes used the thing themselves). Now it is to their interest to turn out the cheapest, most quickly made, and lowest form of article that the public will take; and we have to rely for quality, not on the maker's pride of work, but on a grafted culture which keeps the public up to demanding a better sort of article. In old days the good thing was naturally supplied, nowadays it is artificially demanded.

Of course there is much truth in the vague modern notion that if you take care of the body the spirit will take care of itself. Only, you must really take care of the body, and not just pretend to. And the trouble about this progress of ours—which is supposed to take care of our bodies, and of which machinery is the mistress—is that it doesn't progress. We used to have the manor-house, with half a dozen hovels in its support. Now we have, say, twenty miles of handsome residences, with a hundred and twenty miles of ugly back streets, reeking with smoke and redolent of dulness, dirt, and discontent. Proportions are unchanged. The purple patches of our great towns are too often as rouge on the cheeks and salve on the lips of a corpse. Real progress would level up and gradually extinguish the disproportion between manor and hovel, residence and back street.

Let us be fantastic for a moment and conceive the civic authorities of London on the eighth day of July in the year 1922, solemnly resolving: "We will remake of London a city so beautiful and sweet to dwell in that those who come after us shall think us mad to have attempted it." It might well take five generations, but it would be real progress. Alas! Our civic authorities have not been brought up to care a button for anything so unpractical as a castle in Spain. And say what you will in favor of democracy, there is always the trouble of getting any far-sighted and unbroken policy pursued. If anyone can furnish an antidote to the wasting tendency of short immediate policies, inherent

in the system of government by bodies elected for short terms, he will be the greatest benefactor of the age. The life of a civic body is, I believe, about four years; we should want a procession of civic bodies who steadily loved castles in Spain, to make of London a stainless city of Portland stone, full of baths and flowers and singing birds—not in cages.

But, seriously, we are very unfortunate in letting our civic life be run in the main by those who were born seeing two inches before their noses, and whose education, instead of increasing, has reduced those inches to one. It seems ungrateful to criticize the practical business man whose faculties and powers, stamina and energy, make the more imaginative person gasp. One owes him, in fact, so much, that one would like to owe him more. But does his vision as a rule extend beyond keeping pace with the present? And without vision the people perish! Why, the age is so practical that the word "visionary" has actually a slighting significance. And yet the really great practical administrators have all had vision—men like Caesar, Chatham,³ Lincoln. And great men apart, there are really many naturally both practical and visionary. But in an age of specialism our method of education ever tends to develop one side of our natures at the expense of the other.

If we can't incorporate beauty in our scheme of life today, and foster the love of beauty in our children, the life of to-morrow and the children thereof must necessarily be as far from beauty as we are now. Surely it is strange to set men to direct the education, housing, and amusements of their fellow citizens, if they haven't a love of beauty, and some considerable knowledge of art! And is it really going too far to say that the present generation of business men—with, of course, many notable exceptions—have a sort of indulgent contempt for art and beauty? Would they admit that art has been the greatest of all factors in raising mankind from its old savage state? And yet it is the contemplation of beautiful visions, emotions, thoughts, and dreams, expressed beautifully in stone, metal, paint, words, and music, which has slowly, generation by generation, lifted man to his present stature, such as it is, and

³ William Pitt (1708-1778), first Earl of Chatham, English statesman.

mollified his savage nature. If it hasn't been that, ask yourselves what it has been! Religion? The uplifting part of religion is the beautiful expression of exalted feeling. The rest of religion is but superstition. Think of the thousand wars fought in the name of superstition; of the cannibal feasts, the human sacrifices; the tortures of the Inquisition; the persecutions, intolerances, and narrow cruelties perpetrated even to this day. The stories and teachings of Buddha, of Christ, of St. Francis d'Assisi, were the beautiful expressions of exalted feeling, simple, and touching the hearts of men, as all true beauty does; and so they have done their ennobling work. They belong to the cult of beauty.

Has trade, perhaps, been the mollifying influence and elevator of mankind? I think, only so far as it has widened the reach of beauty, brought beauty within the range of multitudes, by opening up the lines of communication. In that sense, no doubt, trade has helped. But trade as trade has no real elevating influence—rather the contrary.

No! Only beauty, in the largest sense of the word, the yearning for it, the contemplation of it, has civilized mankind. And yet we don't really take beauty seriously. Immediate profit rules the roost of us all in this age of ours. I leave it to the conscience of the age to decide whether that is good. For every age has a conscience, but it never comes to life till the age is on its death-bed.

The fault of all ages has been this: beauty—the knowledge and the love of it—has been kept as a preserve of the few, as the possession of a caste or clique. No great proportion of us are capable of creating or expressing beauty; but an immensely greater proportion of us are capable of appreciating it than ever have been given a real chance of so doing.

It should be our castle in Spain to clear our age of that defect, and put beauty within the reach of all. Machinery has come to stay, so that we must perforce rely on grafted culture—in other words, on education. We must teach the young now to feel and see the beauties of nature and art. The modern age is not easy to teach. But we have exceptional facilities in these days for teaching what helps to keep life dignified, besides those simple accomplishments, cooking and keeping clean; we could

bring an inkling at least of the fine arts, the architecture, literature, and music of the past to children even in the humblest schools. And why should not the children of labor have as much chance to be familiar with beauty as the children of the rich? All economic revolution or evolution is hollow unless it means more demand for beauty—greater dignity of human life. Without that it must be simply retrograde, destroying what beauty and love of it we have, with all to begin over again. What use in B's despoiling A, if B is going to use his spoils no better, probably worse, than A? A mere lap of luxury would only make B fat.

This is all platitude; and a great fuss about beauty, which cannot feed or clothe or warm the body, whatever it may do to that sentimental appanage, the spirit.

I read in a journal not long ago: "One always suspects Mr. Galsworthy of a certain deep-seated sentimentalism." I think the writer must have sold his castles in Spain at a loss. The fact is, one must be sentimental in this life to do anything except make money, and it is really better to have a castle in Spain than a villa at Newport or Cannes.

The precise definitions of beauty are without number or—value, to speak of. I just use the word to mean everything which promotes the real dignity of human life. To illustrate the width of the word beauty as I am using it, I mention what we all understand: good sportsmanship. To be a good "sportsman," a man shuns that which lowers his dignity, that which dims his idea of his own quality; and—his conception of quality derives obscurely from his sense of beauty. The dignity of human life demands in fact not only such desirable embroideries as pleasant sound, fine form, and lovely color, but health, strength, cleanliness, balance, joy in living, just conduct and kind conduct, for there is no beauty in the sight of tortured things. A man who truly loves beauty hates to think that he enjoys it at the expense of starved and stunted human beings or suffering animals. A cruel or pettifogging æstheticism has sometimes smeared the word beauty and given it a bad odor. But that is not the beauty which gleams on the heights in the sunrise. That is not our castle in Spain.

But to put aside for a moment the sentimental, and come to business. Beauty, and the

love of it, is surely the best investment modern man can make; for nothing else—most certainly not trade—will keep him from destroying the human species.

Consider what science has become in the hands of engineers and chemists, its destructive powers increase a hundred-fold with each decade; and the reproductive powers and inclinations of the human being do not vary. Recollect that nothing in the world but the love of beauty in its broad sense stands between man and the full and reckless exercise of his competitive greed; and remember the great war—a little war compared to that which, through the development of scientific destruction, we shall be able to wage next time! Remembering all this, we get an inkling of the sheer necessity there is for us to invest in beauty and the love thereof. No other investment will give us interest on our money and our money back. Unbalanced trade, science, industry, will give us a high momentary rate of interest, but only till the crash comes again, and the world goes even more bankrupt than it is at present.

The professor who has invented a rocket which will go to the moon and find out all about it (though whether it is to be boomerang enough to come back with the story, we are not told), that professor would, I venture to think, have done more real good if he had taught a school full of children to see the beauty of—moonshine.

The next war will be fought from the air with explosives and gas, and may very likely be over before war is declared. The war after that will be fought with the germs of disease, distributed by wireless or something choice of that character. The final war necessary for the complete extirpation of mankind will be fought with radium or atomic energy; and we shall have no need to examine the moon, for the earth will be as lifeless.

So much for business! To go back to sentiment, which is really what makes the wheels go round. Not even "big business" rules our instincts, and our passions. Imperialists, chemists, engineers, merchants, militarists—we are all deep-seated sentimentalists. The only question for us is: What shall we be sentimental about? Which is the fairer castle in Spain—quantity or quality?

Consider for a moment the ideals which have

been offered us instead of the pursuit of beauty, or quality, if that be a preferable word.

Take, for instance, the ideal of happiness in a future life. If there be a future life for the individual, we obviously cannot reach happiness therein without having longed for and served quality in this, without having had that kind and free and generous philosophy which belongs to the cult of beauty and alone gives peace of mind. The pursuit of beauty includes, then, whatever may be true in the ideal—happiness in a future life.

Take the ideal of material comfort in this life. But the cult of beauty, of quality, includes all that is good in this ideal, for it surely demands physical health and well-being, sane minds in sane bodies, which depend of course on a sufficiency of material comfort. All the rest of the ideal of wealth is mere fat, sagging beyond the point of balance. As a fact, modern civilization is offering us a compound between happiness in a future life, and material comfort in this, lip-serving the first, and stomach-serving the second. We get the keys of heaven from our banks, and we don't get them if we haven't a good balance. Modern civilization is, on the whole, camouflaged commercialism, wherein to do things well, *for the joy of doing them well*, is rarer than we think. We have even commercialized salvation—for so much virtue, so much salvation. Always—always—*quid pro quo*.⁴

But let us give the devil its due. Let us admit at once that in spite of everything this is still the best age on the whole that man has lived in. It is in its own way very thorough—our modern civilization. It has made advertisement into a fine art, equipped bedrooms with telephones; it diagnoses maladies with extreme punctilio. A doctor examined a young lady the other day, and among his notes were these: "Not afraid of small rooms, ghosts, or thunderstorms; not made drunk by hearing Wagner; brown hair, artistic hands; had a craving for chocolate in 1918." The age is thorough in its way. But there's a kind of deadly practicality about its production: all for to-day, none for to-morrow! The future will never think us mad for attempting what we do attempt; we build no Seville cathedrals. We don't get ahead of time.

⁴ something for something.

We have just let slip, in England, the chance to get our country life going thoroughly once more. At demobilization we might have put hundreds of thousands on the land, which needs them so badly for a dozen reasons. How many have we put? Not so many as the war took away from the land. Admitted that life on the land means hard work, burnt faces, and maybe bowed backs; it also means hearty stock for the next generation. A nation concerned only with its present is like the man who was fishing, and, feeling sleepy, propped his rod up on the bank, with the line in the water. A wag spied him sleeping, took the rod, waded across the river, propped up the rod on the opposite bank, and lay down behind a hedge to watch for the awakening. Such is the awakening in store for nations which enjoy their present and forget there is a future.

The pursuit of beauty as a national ideal, the building of that castle in Spain, is no picnic. Idlers need not apply. Consider the rank growth which must be cut down, the stumps and roots to be burned out and cleared, the swamps to be drained, before even the foundations can be laid. And—after—what long and patient labor and steadfastness of ideal before we begin to see rise a fair edifice of human life upon this earth.

Members of a practical race will say: "Well, what do you want us to do? Cut the flower and come to the fruit?" Alas! All literary men can tell people what they oughtn't to be; that's—literature. But to tell them what they ought to do is—politics, of which no literary man is guilty; for politics and literature afford the only instance known—in virtuous countries—of divorce by mutual consent. The contempt of politicians for literary men is only equalled by the contempt of literary men for politicians. It would be impertinent, then, for a literary man to suggest anything practical. Let me, however, make a few affirmations. I do believe that, on the whole, modern man is a little further from being a mere animal than the men of the Dark Ages, however great the castles in Spain those men built and left for us to look upon; but I am sure we are in far greater danger than ever they were, of a swift decline. From that decline I am convinced that only the love and cult of beauty will save us!

By the love and cult of beauty I mean a great

deal—higher and wider conception of the dignity of human life; the teaching of what beauty is, to all, not merely to the few; the cultivation of good will so that we wish and work and dream that not only ourselves but everybody may be healthy and happy; and, above all, the fostering of the habit of doing things and making things well for the joy of the work and the pleasure of achievement, rather than for the gain they will bring us. With these as the rules, the wheels of an insensate industrialism, whose one idea is to make money and get ahead of other people—careless of direction towards hell or heaven—might conceivably be spoked.

As it seemed to me, the great lack of our age is an ideal, expressed with sufficient concreteness to be like a vision, beckoning. To me there is no other ideal worthy of us, or indeed possible to us in these unsuperstitious days, save beauty—or call it, if you will, the dignity of human life. One or two writers of late have urged the need of more *spiritual* beauty in our lives. They mean what I mean, but it is unfortunate to talk of *spiritual* beauty. We must be able to smell, and see, hear, feel, and taste our ideal as well. We must know by plain evidence that it is lifting human life, that it is the heritage of all, not merely of the refined and leisured among us. The body and soul are one for the purpose of all real evolution, and I regret any term which suggests a divorce between them. But nobody, I think, can mistake what is meant by quality, or the dignity of human life. Anything which crosses and offends against that ideal is our Satan. And the only way in which each one can say "*Retro Satana*"⁵ is to leave his or her tiny corner of the universe a little more dignified, a little more lovely and lovable than he or she found it.

It may seem absurd to be writing like this in a world whose general mood at the moment is utter disillusionment and gloomy spite. The world is cross-eyed just now; when it weeps out of one eye, the tear runs down the other cheek. And it is difficult to be in love with a lady like that. I, for one, find it extremely hard not to be a cynic. Latest opinion assigns eight or ten thousand years as the outside length of time during which what we know as civilization has been at work. Still—ten thousand years is a

⁵ Get thee behind me, Satan!

considerable period of mollification. One had rashly hoped that mankind was not to be so speedily stampeded; that traditions of gentleness, fair play, chivalry, had a little more strength among Western peoples than they have been proved to have had since 1914; that mob feeling might be less, instead of, as it seems, more potent than it used to be. Only very constant self-reminding that the fault was in one's self, that one was a facile observer, a dreamer who did not look deeply enough beneath the surface; a rider before the hounds; only that, and a constant self-reminding of the individual patience, good humor, endurance, and heroism which goes so queerly hand in hand with stupidity, savagery, greed, and mob violence, can save a man from turning his back on the world with the words: "Cats and monkeys, monkeys and cats, all life is there!"

Fear is at the back of nearly all the savagery in the world; and if there be not present in the individual that potent antidote—the sense of human dignity, which is but a love of and a belief in beauty, he must infallibly succumb to fear. There are tremendous difficulties in the way of coherent progress, of all fair and far ideals under the régime of short-lived elective bodies, a régime essentially exposed to stampe through popular opinion and the emotions of the moment. Seeing the violence of which military autocracy is capable, one is liable to become too blind a devotee of democracy. But democracy has no greater enemies than her unthinking friends. Short sight is her danger, short sight verging on blindness. What will happen if democracy really goes blind? She must have an ideal, a star on which to fix her eyes—something distant and magnetic to draw her on, something to strive towards, beyond the troubled and shifting needs, passions, and prejudices of the moment. Lovers of beauty, those who wish to raise the dignity of human life, should try to give her that ideal, to equip her with the only vision which can save the world from spite and the crazy competition which leads thereto.

We of this still young century may yet leave to those who come after us at least the foundations of a castle in Spain such as the world has not yet seen; leave our successors in mood and heart to continue our work; so that one hundred and fifty years perhaps from now, human

life may really be dignified and beautiful, not just a breathless, grudging, visionless scramble from birth to death, of a night with no stars out.

5 Dreamer—deep-seated sentimentalist—the immortal Don riding his Rosinante⁶ on the bare brown uplands of Spain never saw so crazy a vision, so fickle-shining a mirage! Who knows? The world is changing. It *must* change, or perish; the forces of destruction, the inherent futilities of the present order, are too great. And there is in human nature, after all, the instinct of self-preservation, a great saving common-sense.

15 The past six years have been the result of the past six hundred years. The war was no spasmodic visitation; it was the culmination of age-long competitions. The past six years have devoured many millions of grown men, more millions of little children—prevented their birth, killed them, or withered them for life. If we begin again these crazy competitions, without regard for beauty or the dignity of human life, we shall live to see ten millions perish for every million perished in this war. We shall live to curse the day—this day when, at the end of so great a lesson, we were too sane to take it to heart; too sensible and practical and business-like and unemotional to see visions and dream
30 dreams, and build our castle in Spain.

SOME PLATITUDES CONCERNING DRAMA¹

35 A drama must be shaped so as to have a spire of meaning. Every grouping of life and character has its inherent moral; and the business of the dramatist is so to pose the group as to bring that moral poignantly to the light of day. Such is the moral that exhales from plays like *Lear*,
40 *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth*. But such is not the moral to be found in the great bulk of contemporary Drama. The moral of the average play is now, and probably has always been, the triumph at all costs of a supposed immediate

⁶ Don Quixote's steed in the novel *Don Quixote*, by Cervantes (1547–1616), Spanish novelist.

¹ Reprinted from *The Inn of Tranquillity* by John Galsworthy; copyright 1912 by Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940 by Ada Galsworthy; used by permission of the publishers and of William Heinemann Ltd.

ethical good over a supposed immediate ethical evil.

The vice of drawing these distorted morals has permeated the Drama to its spine; discoloured its art, humanity, and significance; infected its creators, actors, audience, critics; too often turned it from a picture into a caricature. A Drama which lives under the shadow of the distorted moral forgets how to be free, fair, and fine—forgets so completely that it often prides itself on having forgotten.

Now, in writing plays, there are, in this matter of the moral, three courses open to the serious dramatist. The first is: To definitely set before the public that which it wishes to have set before it, the views and codes of life by which the public lives and in which it believes. This way is the most common, successful, and popular. It makes the dramatist's position sure, and not too obviously authoritative.

The second course is: To definitely set before the public those views and codes of life by which the dramatist himself lives, those theories in which he himself believes, the more effectively if they are the opposite of what the public wishes to have placed before it, presenting them so that the audience may swallow them like powder in a spoonful of jam.

There is a third course: To set before the public no cut-and-dried codes, but the phenomena of life, selected and combined, *but not distorted*, by the dramatist's outlook, set down without fear, favour, or prejudice, leaving the public to draw such poor moral as nature may afford. This third method requires a certain detachment; it requires a sympathy with, a love of, and a curiosity as to, things for their own sake; it requires a far view, together with patient industry, for no immediately practical result.

It was once said of Shakespeare that he had never done any good to anyone, and never would. This, unfortunately, could not, in the sense in which the word "good" was then meant, be said of most modern dramatists. In truth, the good that Shakespeare did to humanity was of a remote, and, shall we say, eternal nature; something of the good that men get from having the sky and the sea to look at. And this partly because he was, in his greater plays at all events, free from the habit of drawing a distorted moral. Now, the playwright who sup-

plies to the public the facts of life distorted by the moral which it expects, does so that he may do the public what he considers an immediate good, by fortifying its prejudices; and the dramatist who supplies to the public facts distorted by his own advanced morality, does so because he considers that he will at once benefit the public by substituting for its worn-out ethics, his own. In both cases the advantage the dramatist hopes to confer on the public is immediate and practical.

But matters change, and morals change; men remain—and to set men, and the facts about them, down faithfully, so that they may draw for us the moral of their natural actions, may also possibly be of benefit to the community. It is, at all events, harder than to set men and facts down, as they ought, or ought not to be. Thus, however, is not to say that a dramatist should, or indeed can, keep himself and his temperamental philosophy out of his work. As a man lives and thinks, so will he write. But it is certain, that to the making of good drama, as to the practice of every other art, there must be brought an almost passionate love of discipline, a white-heat of self-respect, a desire to make the truest, fairest, best thing in one's power; and that to these must be added an eye that does not flinch. Such qualities alone will bring to drama the selfless character which soaks it with inevitability.

The word "pessimist" is frequently applied to the few dramatists who have been content to work in this way. It has been applied, among others, to Euripides, to Shakespeare, to Ibsen; it will be applied to many in the future. Nothing, however, is more dubious than the way in which these two words "pessimist" and "optimist" are used; for the optimist appears to be he who cannot bear the world as it is, and is forced by his nature to picture it as it ought to be, and the pessimist one who cannot only bear the world as it is, but loves it well enough to draw it faithfully. The true lover of the human race is surely he who can put up with it in all its forms, in vice as well as in virtue, in defeat no less than in victory; the true seer he who sees not only joy but sorrow, the true painter of human life one who blinks nothing. It may be that he is, also, its true benefactor.

In the whole range of the social fabric there are only two impartial persons, the scientist

and the artist, and under the latter heading such dramatists as desire to write not only for today, but for tomorrow, must strive to come.

But dramatists being as they are made—past remedy—it is perhaps more profitable to examine the various points at which their qualities and defects are shown

The plot! A good plot is that sure edifice which slowly rises out of the interplay of circumstance on temperament, and temperament on circumstance, within the enclosing atmosphere of an idea. A human being is the best plot there is; it may be impossible to see why he is a good plot, because the idea within which he was brought forth cannot be fully grasped, but it is plain that *he is a good plot*. He is organic. And so it must be with a good play. Reason alone produces no good plots, they come by original sin, sure conception, and instinctive after-power of selecting what benefits the germ. A bad plot, on the other hand, is simply a row of stakes, with a character impaled on each—characters who would have liked to live, but came to untimely grief; who started bravely, but fell on these stakes, placed beforehand in a row, and were transfixed one by one, while their ghosts stride on, squeaking and gibbering, through the play. Whether these stakes are made of facts or of ideas, according to the nature of the dramatist who planted them, their effect on the unfortunate characters is the same, the creatures were begotten to be staked, and staked they are! The demand for a good plot, not unfrequently heard, commonly signifies: "Tickle my sensations by stuffing the play with arbitrary adventures, so that I need not be troubled to take the characters seriously. Set the persons of the play to action, regardless of time, sequence, atmosphere, and probability!"

Now, true dramatic action is what characters do, at once contrary, as it were, to expectation, and yet because they have already done other things. No dramatist should let his audience know what is coming; but neither should he suffer his characters to act without making his audience feel that those actions are in harmony with temperament, and arise from previous known actions, together with the temperaments and previous known actions of the other characters in the play. The dramatist who hangs his characters to his plot, instead of hanging his

plot to his characters, is guilty of cardinal sin.

The dialogue! Good dialogue again is character, marshalled so as continually to stimulate interest or excitement. The reason good dialogue is seldom found in plays is merely that it is hard to write, for it requires not only a knowledge of what interests or excites, but such a feeling for character as brings misery to the dramatist's heart when his creations speak as they should not speak—ashes to his mouth when they say things for the sake of saying them—disgust when they are "smart."

The art of writing true dramatic dialogue is an austere art, denying itself all license, grudging every sentence devoted to the mere machinery of the play, suppressing all jokes and epigrams severed from character, relying for fun and pathos on the fun and tears of life. From start to finish good dialogue is handmade, like good lace, clear, of fine texture, furthering with each thread the harmony and strength of a design to which all must be subordinated.

But good dialogue is also spiritual action. In so far as the dramatist divorces his dialogue from spiritual action—that is to say, from progress of events or towards events which are significant of character—he is stultifying τὸ ἔργον the thing done; he may make pleasing disquisitions, he is not making drama. And in so far as he twists character to suit his moral or his plot, he is neglecting a first principle, that truth to Nature which alone invests Art with handmade quality.

The dramatist's license, in fact, ends with his design. In conception alone he is free. He may take what character or group of characters he chooses, see them with what eyes, knit them with what idea, within the limits of his temperament, but once taken, seen, and knitted, he is bound to treat them like a gentleman, with the tenderest consideration of their mainsprings. Take care of character; action and dialogue will take care of themselves! The true dramatist gives full rein to his temperament in the scope and nature of his subject; having once selected subject and characters, he is just, gentle, restrained, neither gratifying his lust for praise at the expense of his offspring, nor using them as puppets to flout his audience. Being himself the nature that brought them forth, he guides them in the course predestined at their con-

ception. So only have they a chance of defying Time, which is always lying in wait to destroy the false, topical, or fashionable—all in a word—that is not based on the permanent elements of human nature. The perfect dramatist rounds up his characters and facts within the ring-fence of a dominant idea which fulfils the craving of his spirit; having got them there, he suffers them to live their own lives.

Plot, action, character, dialogue! But there is yet another subject for a platitude. Flavour! An impalpable quality, less easily captured than the scent of a flower, the peculiar and most essential attribute of any work of art! It is the thin, poignant spirit which hovers up out of a play, and is as much its differentiating essence as is caffeine of coffee. Flavour, in fine, is the spirit of the dramatist projected into his work in a state of volatility, so that no one can exactly lay hands on it, here, there, or anywhere. This distinctive essence of a play, marking its brand, is the one thing at which the dramatist cannot work, for it is outside his consciousness. A man may have many moods, he has but one spirit; and this spirit he communicates in some subtle, unconscious way to all his work. It waxes and wanes with the currents of his vitality, but no more alters than a chestnut changes into an oak.

For, in truth, dramas are very like unto trees, springing from seedlings, shaping themselves inevitably in accordance with the laws fast hidden within themselves, drinking sustenance from the earth and air, and in conflict with the natural forces round them. So they slowly come to full growth, until, warped, stunted, or risen to fair and gracious height, they stand open to all the winds. And the trees that spring from each dramatist are of different race; he is the spirit of his own sacred grove, into which no stray tree can by any chance enter.

One more platitude. It is not unfashionable to pit one form of drama against another—holding up the naturalistic to the disadvantage of the epic; the epic to the belittlement of the fantastic; the fantastic to the detriment of the naturalistic. Little purpose is thus served. The essential truth, beauty, and irony of things may be revealed under all these forms. Vision over life and human nature can be as keen and just, the revelation as true, inspiring, delight-giving, and thought-provoking, whatever fashion be

employed—it is simply a question of doing it well enough to uncover the kernel of the nut. Whether the violet come from Russia, from Parma, or from England matters little. Close by the Greek temples at Paestum² there are violets that seem redder, and sweeter, than any ever seen—as though they have sprung up out of the footprints of some old pagan goddess; but under the April sun, in a Devonshire lane, the little blue scentless violets capture every bit as much of the spring. And so it is with drama—no matter what its form—it need only be the “real thing,” need only have caught some of the precious fluids, revelation, or delight, and imprisoned them within a chalice to which we may put our lips and continually drink.

And yet, starting from this last platitude, one may perhaps be suffered to speculate as to the particular forms that our renescent drama is likely to assume. For our drama is renescent, and nothing will stop its growth. It is not renescent because this or that man is writing, but because of a new spirit. A spirit that is no doubt in part the gradual outcome of the impact on our home-grown art, of Russian, French, and Scandinavian influences, but which in the main rises from an awakened humanity in the conscience of our time.

What, then, are to be the main channels down which the renescent English drama will float in the coming years? It is more than possible that these main channels will come to be two in number and situate far apart.

The one will be the broad and clear-cut channel of naturalism, down which will course a drama poignantly shaped, and inspired with high intention, but faithful to the seething and multiple life around us, drama such as some are inclined to term photographic, deceived by a seeming simplicity into forgetfulness of the old proverb, “*Ars est celare artem*,” and oblivious of the fact that, to be vital, to grip, such drama is in every respect as dependent on imagination, construction, selection, and elimination—the main laws of artistry—as ever was the romantic or rhapsodic play. The question of naturalistic technique will bear, indeed, much more study than has yet been given to it. The aim of the dramatist employing it is obviously to create such an illusion of actual life passing on the

² an ancient coastal city of Lucania, in south Italy.

stage as to compel the spectator to pass through an experience of his own, to think, and talk, and move with the people he sees thinking, talking, and moving in front of him. A false phrase, a single word out of tune or time, will destroy that illusion and spoil the surface as surely as a stone heaved into a still pool shatters the image seen there. But this is only the beginning of the reason why the naturalistic is the most exacting and difficult of all techniques. It is easy enough to *reproduce* the exact conversation and movements of persons in a room; it is desperately hard to *produce* the perfectly natural conversations and movements of those persons, when each natural phrase spoken and each natural movement made has not only to contribute toward the growth and perfection of a drama's soul, but also to be a revelation, phrase by phrase, movement by movement, of essential traits of character. To put it another way, naturalistic art, when alive, indeed to be alive at all, is simply the art of manipulating a procession of most delicate symbols. Its service is the swaying and focussing of men's feelings and thoughts in the various departments of human life. It will be like a steady lamp, held up from time to time, in whose light things will be seen for a space clearly and in due proportion, freed from the mists of prejudice and partisanship.

And the other of these two main channels will, I think, be a twisting and delicious stream, which will bear on its breast new barques of poetry, shaped, it may be, like prose, but a prose incarnating through its fantasy and symbolism all the deeper aspirations, yearning, doubts, and mysterious stirrings of the human spirit; a poetic prose-drama, emotionalising us by its diversity and purity of form and invention, and whose province will be to disclose the elemental soul of man and the forces of Nature, not perhaps as the old tragedies disclosed them, not necessarily in the epic mood, but always with beauty and in the spirit of discovery.

Such will, I think, be the two vital forms of our drama in the coming generation. And between these two forms there must be no crude unions; they are too far apart, the cross is too violent. For, where there is a seeming blend of lyricism and naturalism, it will on examination be found, I think, to exist only in plays whose subjects or settings—as in Synge's *Playboy of the Western World*, or in Mr. Masefield's *Nan*

—are so removed from our ken that we cannot really tell, and therefore do not care, whether an absolute illusion is maintained. The poetry which may and should exist in naturalistic drama, can only be that of perfect rightness of proportion, rhythm, shape—the poetry, in fact, that lies in all vital things. It is the ill-mating of forms that has killed a thousand plays. We want no more bastard drama, no more attempts to dress out the simple dignity of everyday life in the peacock's feathers of false lyricism, no more straw-stuffed heroes or heroines, no more rabbits and goldfish from the conjurer's pockets, nor any limelight. Let us have starlight, moonlight, sunlight, and the light of our own self-respects.

EDWARD VERRALL LUCAS 1868–1938

The name of Edward Verrall Lucas, English essayist, is closely associated in literary history with that of Charles Lamb. Lucas not only wrote essays in the manner of Lamb, if anyone may be said to write in that inimitable manner, but wrote an authoritative life of the great essayist and edited his works. As a novelist Lucas did not achieve distinction. One of the most prolific writers of his day, he published—in addition to fiction, biography, and essays—several volumes of verse and a number of travel books, known as the "Wanderer" series. His thirty volumes of essays include such titles as Character and Comedy (1907), One Day and Another (1909), Loiterer's Harvest (1913), and Lemon Verbena and Other Essays (1932).

CLOTHES OLD AND NEW¹

It is a curious experience to walk, as I did recently, behind a man dressed in one's old suit. You have a vision of yourself, or, if you will, a glimpse of your double, a reminder that you are not everybody. This being the first time I had seen the suit from the back, a vague sense of familiarity preceded recognition, and then, looking steadfastly on its pattern, I remembered

¹ Taken from *Fireside and Sunshine*, by E. V. Lucas, published by E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc. Reprinted by permission of the publishers and of Methuen & Co. Ltd.

how kindly and liberal a coat it was, and how easy and unconstrained all movements of limb had been in it, and how many years it still had before it, and I perceived sorrowfully that I had given away as noble a set of hartogs as man ever possessed. This proves how careful we should be in parting with cast-off suits. Thoreau² affirmed that old clothes should be burned; and, from the point of view of those who hold that attire ought to be autobiographical, this is true; for how can tweeds handed on from one man to another continue to be autobiographical? But Thoreau's contention was a counsel of perfection—that is to say, advice for Thoreaus—and, moreover, so few persons have autobiographies that we may as well persevere in the bestowal of old clothes.

Of all old clothes, none wears so sorry an air as the old fur-lined coat. A new fur-lined coat is magnificent. It is a symbol of luxury, the antithesis of the hair shirt. It is more than a garment; it is a fortification. An Englishman's fur coat is his castle. But when decay has set in, when it is partly bald and entirely weather-worn, then the fur coat is the wretchedest object in civilization. It is not good even for charades; although, in its luxuriant days, how versatile it was! From time to time it had been—inside out—most of the larger animals in the Zoo. Such versatility, indeed, has the fur coat that on the night of a children's party the prudent father turns the key upon it. Fur-lined coats never become hartogs; nor do overcoats. These, therefore, may be given away or sold without heart-flutterings, although the ordinary overcoat should not be parted with lightly. An old overcoat is a good fellow to accompany one to sea, to wear on deck on rough or rainy nights. But, strictly speaking, no overcoat becomes a hartog.

And what, I seem to hear you ask, what are hartogs? Old clothes that are less imposing and more comfortable than any others are hartogs. To be old is not sufficient; nor is it enough that they are easy. To be hartogs they must combine both these merits. Good clothes when they grow baggy and faded become hartogs; bad clothes, never. Inferior and ill-fitting clothes become merely "old clo." The derivation of hartogs is a secret; but all philologists and all who,

like R. L. Stevenson, have a "love of lovely words," will recognize in the term a neologue³ of singular fitness and attraction. Think about it for a minute or two, and you will realize that clothes of the kind described above could not possibly be known in any other way. They are hartogs—just hartogs, and nothing else. Old clothes of the common type one thinks of without affection, but hartogs are beloved. Any thing is good enough to cover nakedness; hartogs do more—they confer cheerfulness and irresponsibility; they fit the wearer for a freer life. Yet it must be understood that hartogs are never absolutely disreputable, never so old that one cannot meet the vicar's wife without shame.

In ordinary life the wearer of hartogs disdains coats and mackintoshes, except in extreme stress of weather. It is the winds and rains of heaven and the might of the sun that have made his hartogs what they are; the indoor life produces a very inferior result. The best hartogs are stamped by the universe itself. They are the garb of the wise traveler. You meet hartogs on Helvellyn⁴ and among the Langdale Pikes, you recognize them in the Black Forest and on the Furka;⁵ you are aware of them in the Trossachs⁶ and beneath the smooth rotundities and swelling undulations of the South Downs. Nature's best lovers woo her in hartogs.

This definition should be exhaustive enough, but still a little may be added. It should be said, for instance, that few women have enough courage to achieve hartogs. The mass dare not. There are also men who dare not, and there are men whose position is against it. Bishops probably have no hartogs.

Of all hartogs the coat is the most dearly prized. One does not feel so affectionately towards a waistcoat; little is lovable about a waistcoat; but a coat becomes a friend, a brother. Men have worn coats for decades. A satisfying coat is worth its weight in platinum, because it is so rare. The waistcoat is within the compass of any tailor; but a coat is different. Nothing is quite so disgusting as the determination of one's tailor to have his own way in the matter of the coat. You order a dozen personal

³ a new word.

⁴ a mountain in northwest England.

⁵ a mountain pass in Switzerland.

⁶ a valley in central Scotland.

² See the note on Thoreau, II, 112.

touches; you stipulate for no pads in the shoulders; for a deep collar, to turn up in wet or cold; for extra pockets inside; for no lining in the back; for no fashionable antics in the cutting. And the tailor smiles and smiles. None the less is he a villain, for when the coat comes home it is precisely what you struggled to make certain it should not be. A tailor who will obey to the letter is more than rubies. Hence the loveliness of a truly good coat.

Hats are lovable too. Boots, however, are too transient to be loved. One does not love them. At the most, a pair of boots can be hartogs for a year. Boots seem to me civilization's most conspicuous failure: they pinch, they cramp, they mar, they have every tightness but water-tightness; they are hot in summer and cold in winter; they have no durability, they are costly. They make it almost worth while to have one's feet amputated early in life. Lord Erskine said it was comforting to remember that when the hour came for all secrets to be revealed, then, at length, we should learn why shoes are always made too tight. And yet what is to be done? To go barefoot is, after all these ages of shoe leather, impossible, and sandals are chilly and socialistic. Indoors, of course, there are slippers, and latterly a very excellent kind devised of felt has been obtainable. But no good work, it has been said, has ever been done in slippers, and certainly no good walking. For outdoor life in this mutable England we have yet to discover the fitting boot. The quest of it is the business of a lifetime: a man may be said never to come within measurable distance of being well shod until he has one foot in the grave.

In winter there is nothing more comfortable than hartogs, but in summer flannels supersede them. Buoyancy, liberty, the power to do—these are put on with flannels. Flannels are as leveling almost as nakedness. On the cricket field all men are equal. Has not Lees bowled Lord Hawke these many seasons? And I doubt not but he would york⁷ even the Prince of Wales. But once, in appearance at any rate, there were distinctions. In the old days, when George Parr hit to long leg for six, and George Freeman bowled like lightning, flannels were a distinguishing sign. In those days the profes-

sional was marked by his dress for the dependent he was. He wore a colored shirt, and his whites were not white. You may see them in old photographs. My earliest recollection of county cricket is a Sussex and Surrey match twenty-five years ago, and I remember distinctly that Pooley's flannels were yellow, Jupp's gray. But now, except in a few cases, there is nothing but initials to distinguish the two classes of cricketers. A change has come over the professional, and his flannels shine like an amateur's. A stranger would find it impossible to pick out the unpaid from the paid. Professionals even wear ties, a thing unheard of in the 'sixties and not to be endured. Yet this new sartorial complexion which the game wears is good, for it emphasizes the socialism of cricket.

The opponents of the press ought to bear it in mind that no substitute for clothing is more effective than a newspaper—that is to say, no sudden substitute. An American enthusiast who recently walked round the world for a wager wore only a copy of the *New York Herald* until he had amassed, by exhibiting himself, enough money to buy clothes, and now and then come tidings of a party of tourists who have escaped from the attentions of Italian banditti or Hungarian brigands in nothing more substantial than last week's *Times*. It seems to be established that when in difficulties for clothes the first thought of civilized man is for a newspaper, just as the first thought of primitive man was for a leaf. Not the least funny story in that diverting book, *Many Cargoes*, tells of a captain who lost his "clo'es at cribbage," and was found the next day by his rescuer "in a pair of socks and last week's paper." This, as we have seen, is not a particularly novel position, but what distinguished Captain Bross from his companions in this form of misfortune was his occupation. When discovered, he was "reading the advertisements." That is true philosophy.

The completest dishabille is obtainable in the tropics. The late Henry Drummond once wrote home from Central Africa that he had nothing on but a helmet and three mosquitoes. Sydney Smith, who was the first man to pray in August for the power to take off his flesh and sit in his bones—a blessed condition, which, on paper at least, has been made possible by Professor Rontgen—described the height of bliss attain-

⁷ a term used in cricket, meaning to bowl a batsman out.

how kindly and liberal a coat it was, and how easy and unconstrained all movements of limb had been in it, and how many years it still had before it, and I perceived sorrowfully that I had given away as noble a set of hartogs as man ever possessed. This proves how careful we should be in parting with cast-off suits. Thoreau² affirmed that old clothes should be burned; and, from the point of view of those who hold that attire ought to be autobiographical, this is true; for how can tweeds handed on from one man to another continue to be autobiographical? But Thoreau's contention was a counsel of perfection—that is to say, advice for Thoreaus—and, moreover, so few persons have autobiographies that we may as well persevere in the bestowal of old clothes.

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which there is, to my mind, more utterly ridiculous exaggeration and misconception than the current boys' literature of the lowest stratum. This class of composition has presumably always existed, and must exist. It has no more claim to be good literature than the daily conversation of its readers to be fine oratory, or the lodging houses and tenements they inhabit to be sublime architecture. But people must have conversation, they must have houses, and they must have stories. The simple need for some kind of ideal world in which fictitious persons play an unhampered part is infinitely deeper and older than the rules of good art, and much more important. Every one of us in childhood has constructed such an invisible *dramatis personæ*, but it never occurred to our nurses to correct the composition by careful comparison with Balzac.² In the East the professional storyteller goes from village to village with a small carpet; and I wish sincerely that any one had the moral courage to spread that carpet and sit on it in Ludgate Circus. But it is not probable that all the tales of the carpet-bearer are little gems of original artistic workmanship. Literature and fiction are two entirely different things. Literature is a luxury; fiction is a necessity. A work of art can hardly be too short, for its climax is its merit. A story can never be too long, for its conclusion is merely to be deplored, like the last halfpenny or the last pipelight. And so, while the increase of the artistic conscience tends in more ambitious works to brevity and impressionism, voluminous industry still marks the producer of the true romantic trash. There was no end to the ballads of Robin Hood; there is no end to the volumes about Dick Deadshot and the Avenging Nine. These two heroes are deliberately conceived as immortal.

But instead of basing all discussion of the problem upon the common-sense recognition of this fact—that the youth of the lower orders always has had and always must have formless and endless romantic reading of some kind, and then going on to make provision for its wholesomeness—we begin, generally speaking, by fantastic abuse of this reading as a whole and indignant surprise that the errand-boys under

discussion do not read *The Egoist*³ and *The Master Builder*.⁴ It is the custom, particularly among magistrates, to attribute half the crimes of the Metropolis to cheap novelettes. If some grimy urchin runs away with an apple, the magistrate shrewdly points out that the child's knowledge that apples appease hunger is traceable to some curious literary researches. The boys themselves, when penitent, frequently accuse the novelettes with great bitterness, which is only to be expected from young people possessed of no little native humor. If I had forged a will, and could obtain sympathy by tracing the incident to the influence of Mr. George Moore's⁵ novels, I should find the greatest entertainment in the diversion. At any rate, it is firmly fixed in the minds of most people that gutter-boys, unlike everybody else in the community, find their principal motives for conduct in printed books.

Now it is quite clear that this objection, the objection brought by magistrates, has nothing to do with literary merit. Bad story writing is not a crime. Mr. Hall Came⁶ walks the streets openly, and cannot be put in prison for an anticlimax. The objection rests upon the theory that the tone of the mass of boys' novelettes is criminal and degraded, appealing to low cupidity and low cruelty. This is the magisterial theory, and this is rubbish.

So far as I have seen them, in connection with the dirtiest bookstalls in the poorest districts, the facts are simply these: The whole bewildering mass of vulgar juvenile literature is concerned with adventures, rambling, disconnected, and endless. It does not express any passion of any sort, for there is no human character of any sort. It runs eternally in certain grooves of local and historical type: the medieval knight, the eighteenth-century duelist, and the modern cowboy recur with the same stiff simplicity as the conventional human figures in an Oriental pattern. I can quite as easily imagine a human being kindling wild appetites by the contemplation of his Turkey carpet as by such dehumanized and naked narrative as this.

² a novel by George Meredith (1828–1909).

⁴ a play by Henrik Ibsen (1828–1906), Norwegian dramatist.

⁵ George Moore (1852–1933), English novelist.

⁶ a popular English novelist (1853–1931).

³ Honoré de Balzac (1799–1850), French novelist.

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alists. But the average man or boy writes daily in these great gaudy diaries of his soul, which we call Penny Dreadfuls, a plainer and better gospel than any of those iridescent ethical paradoxes that the fashionable change as often as their bonnets. It may be a very limited aim in morality to shoot a "many-faced and fickle traitor," but at least it is a better aim than to be a many-faced and fickle traitor, which is a simple summary of a good many modern systems from Mr. d'Annunzio's downwards. So long as the coarse and thin texture of mere current popular romance is not touched by a paltry culture it will never be vitally immoral. It is always on the side of life. The poor—the slaves who really stoop under the burden of life—have often been mad, scatter-brained, and cruel, but never hopeless. That is a class privilege, like cigars. Their driveling literature will always be a "blood and thunder" literature, as simple as the thunder of heaven and the blood of men.

ON LYING IN BED¹

Lying in bed would be an altogether perfect and supreme experience if only one had a coloured pencil long enough to draw on the ceiling. This, however, is not generally a part of the domestic apparatus on the premises. I think myself that the thing might be managed with several pails of Aspinall² and a broom. Only if one worked in a really sweeping and masterly way, and laid on the colour in great washes, it might drip down again on one's face in floods of rich and mingled colour like some strange fairy rain; and that would have its disadvantages. I am afraid it would be necessary to stick to black and white in this form of artistic composition. To that purpose, indeed, the white ceiling would be of the greatest possible use; in fact it is the only use I think of a white ceiling being put to.

But for the beautiful experiment of lying in bed I might never have discovered it. For years I have been looking for some blank spaces in a modern house to draw on. Paper is much too small for any really allegorical design; as

Cyrano de Bergerac³ says: "Il me faut des géants."⁴ But when I tried to find these fine clear spaces in modern rooms such as we all live in I was continually disappointed. I found an endless pattern and complication of small objects hung like a curtain of fine links between me and my desire. I examined the walls, I found them to my surprise to be already covered with wall paper, and I found the wall paper to be already covered with very uninteresting images, all bearing a ridiculous resemblance to each other. I could not understand why one arbitrary symbol—a symbol apparently devoid of any religious or philosophical significance—should thus be sprinkled all over my nice walls like a sort of smallpox. The Bible must be referring to wall papers, I think, when it says, "Use not vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do."⁵ I found the Turkey carpet a mass of unmeaning colours, rather like the Turkish Empire, or like the sweet-meat called Turkish delight. I do not exactly know what Turkish delight really is; but I suppose it is Macedonian massacres. Everywhere that I went forlornly, with my pencil or my paint brush, I found that others had unaccountably been before me, spoiling the walls, the curtains, and the furniture with their childish and barbaric designs.

Nowhere did I find a really clear place for sketching until this occasion when I prolonged beyond the proper limit the process of lying on my back in bed. Then the light of that white heaven broke upon my vision, that breath of mere white which is indeed almost the definition of Paradise, since it means purity and also means freedom. But alas! like all heavens, now that it is seen it is found to be unattainable; it looks more austere and more distant than the sky outside the window. For my proposal to paint on it with the bristly end of a broom has been discouraged—never mind by whom; by a person debarred from all political rights—and even my minor proposal to put the other end of the broom into the kitchen fire and turn it into charcoal has not been conceded. Yet I am certain that it was from persons in my position that all the original inspiration came for covering the ceilings of palaces and cathedrals with a riot of fallen

¹ Reprinted by permission of Dodd, Mead and Company, Inc., and of Methuen & Co. Ltd., from *Tremendous Trifles*, by Gilbert K. Chesterton.

² a kind of paint.

³ a character in *Cyrano de Bergerac*, a play by Edmond Rostand (1868–1918).

⁴ I must have giants.

⁵ Matthew 6:7.

how kindly and liberal a coat it was, and how easy and unconstrained all movements of limb had been in it, and how many years it still had before it, and I perceived sorrowfully that I had given away as noble a set of hartogs as man ever possessed. This proves how careful we should be in parting with cast-off suits. Thoreau² affirmed that old clothes should be burned; and, from the point of view of those who hold that attire ought to be autobiographical, this is true; for how can tweeds handed on from one man to another continue to be autobiographical? But Thoreau's contention was a counsel of perfection—that is to say, advice for Thoreaus—and, moreover, so few persons have autobiographies that we may as well persevere in the bestowal of old clothes.

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of travesty, as in his novel *Zuleika* Dobson (1911), a satire on Oxford life in the nineties. "My gifts are small," said Beerbohm long ago. "I've used them very well and discreetly, never straining them, and the result is that I've made a charming little reputation." The truth is that Beerbohm has made two reputations, for he is perhaps more famous as a caricaturist than as a writer. His books of essays include *Works of Max Beerbohm* (1896), *Yet Again* (1909), and *And Even Now* (1920)

LAUGHTER¹

M. Bergson,² in his well-known essay on this theme, says . . . well, he says many things; but none of these, though I have just read them, do I clearly remember, nor am I sure that in the act of reading I understood any of them. That is the worst of these fashionable philosophers—or rather, the worst of me. Somehow I never manage to read them till they are just going out of fashion, and even then I don't seem able to cope with them. About ten years ago, when everyone suddenly talked to me about Pragmatism and William James,³ I found myself moved by a dull but irresistible impulse to try Schopenhauer,⁴ of whom years before that, I had heard that he was the easiest reading in the world, and the most exciting and amusing. I wrestled with Schopenhauer for a day or so, in vain. Time passed: M. Bergson appeared "and for his hour was lord of the ascendant"; I tardily tackled William James. I bore in mind, as I approached him, the testimonials that had been lavished on him by all my friends. I could make nothing of William James. And now, in the fullness of time, I have been flooded by M. Bergson.

It distresses me, this failure to keep up with the leaders of thought as they pass into oblivion. It makes me wonder whether I am, after all, an absolute fool. Yet surely I am not that. Tell me of a man or a woman, a place or an event, real or fictitious; surely you will find me

a fairly intelligent listener. Any such narrative will present to me some image, and will stir me to not altogether fatuous thoughts. Come to me in some grievous difficulty; I will talk to you like a father, even like a lawyer. I'll be changed if I haven't a certain mellow wisdom. But if you are by way of weaving theories as to the nature of things in general, and if you want to try those theories on someone who will humbly confirm them or powerfully rend them, I must, with a hangdog air, warn you that I am not your man. I suffer from a strong suspicion that things in general cannot be accounted for through any formula or set of formulae, and that any one philosophy, howsoever new, is no better than another. That is in itself a sort of philosophy, and I suspect it accordingly, but it has for me the merit of being the only one I can make head or tail of. If you try to expound any other philosophic system to me, you will find not merely that I can detect no flaw in it (except the one great flaw just suggested), but also that I haven't, after a minute or two, the vaguest notion of what you are driving at. "Very well," you say, "instead of trying to explain all things all at once, I will explain some little, simple, single thing."

It was for the sake of such shorn lambs as myself, doubtless, that M. Bergson sat down and wrote about—Laughter. But I have profited by his kindness no more than if he had been treating of the cosmos. I cannot tread even a limited space of air. I have a gross satisfaction in the crude fact of being on hard ground again, and I utter a coarse peal of—Laughter.

At least, I say I do so. In point of fact, I have merely smiled. Twenty years ago, ten years ago, I should have laughed, and have professed to you that I had merely smiled. A very young man is not content to be very young, nor even a young man to be young; he wants to share the dignity of his elders. There is no dignity in laughter, there is much of it in smiles. Laughter is but a joyous surrender, smiles give token of mature criticism. It may be that in the early ages of this world there was much more laughter than is to be heard now, and that aons hence laughter will be obsolete, and smiles universal—everyone, always, mildly, slightly, smiling. But it is less useful to speculate as to mankind's past and future than to observe men. And

¹ Taken from *And Even Now*, by Max Beerbohm; published and copyrighted, 1921, by E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York.

² Henri Bergson (1859–1941), French philosopher. Under the title *Laughter* Bergson's essay was published in English translation in 1911.

³ See the headnote on William James, II, 182.

⁴ Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860), German philosopher.

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To such laughter nothing is more propitious than an occasion that demands gravity. To have good reason for not laughing is one of the surest aids. Laughter rejoices in bonds. If music halls were schoolrooms for us, and the comedians were our schoolmasters, how much less talent would be needed for giving us how much more joy! Even in private and accidental intercourse, few are the men whose humor can reduce us, be we never so susceptible, to paroxysms of mirth. I will wager that nine-tenths of the world's best laughter is laughter *at*, not *with*. And it is the people set in authority over us that touch most surely our sense of the ridiculous. Freedom is a good thing, but we lose through it golden moments. The schoolmaster to his pupils, the monarch to his courtiers, the editor to his staff—how priceless they are! Reverence is a good thing, and part of its value is that the more we revere a man, the more sharply are we struck by anything in him (and there is always much) that is incongruous with his greatness. Reverence, like subjection, is a rich source of laughter. And herein lies one of the reasons why as we grow older we laugh less. The men we esteemed so great are gathered to their fathers. Some of our coevals may, for ought we know, be very great, but good heavens! we can't esteem *them* so.

Of extreme laughter I know not in any annals a more satisfactory example than one that is to be found in Moore's⁶ *Life of Byron*. Both Byron and Moore were already in high spirits when, on an evening in the spring of 1813, they went "from some early assembly" to Mr. Rogers'⁷ house in St. James's Place and were regaled there with an impromptu meal. But not high spirits alone would have led the two young poets to such excess of laughter as made the evening so very memorable. Luckily they both venerated Rogers (strange as it may seem to us) as the greatest of living poets. Luckily, too, Mr. Rogers was ever the kind of man, the coldly and quietly suave kind of man, with whom you don't take liberties, if you can help it—with whom, if you can't help it, to take liberties is in itself a wildly exhilarating act. And he had just received a presentation copy of Lord Thurloe's

latest book, *Poems on Several Occasions*. The two young poets found in this elder's Muse much that was so execrable as to be delightful. They were soon, as they turned the pages, held in throes of laughter, laughter that was but intensified by the endeavors of their correct and nettled host to point out the genuine merits of his friend's work. And then suddenly—oh joy!—"we lighted," Moore records, "on the discovery that our host, in addition to his sincere approbation of some of this book's contents, had also the motive of gratitude for standing by its author, as one of the poems was a warm, and I need not add, well-deserved panegyric on himself. We were, however"—the narrative has an added charm from Tom Moore's demure care not to offend or compromise the still-surviving Rogers—"too far gone in nonsense for even this eulogy, in which we both so heartily agreed, to stop us. The opening line of the poem was, as well as I can recollect, 'When Rogers o'er this labor bent', and Lord Byron undertook to read it aloud,—but he found it impossible to get beyond the first two words. Our laughter had now increased to such a pitch that nothing could restrain it. Two or three times he began; but no sooner had the words 'When Rogers' passed his lips, than our fit burst out afresh,—till even Mr. Rogers himself, with all his feelings of our injustice, found it impossible not to join us, and we were, at last, all three in such a state of inextinguishable laughter, that, had the author himself been of our party, I question much whether he would have resisted the infection." The final fall and dissolution of Rogers, Rogers behaving as badly as either of them, is all that was needed to give perfection to this heart-warming scene. I like to think that on a certain night in spring, year after year, three ghosts revisit that old room and (without, I hope, inconvenience to Lord Northcliffe, who may happen to be there) sit rocking and writhing in the grip of that old shared rapture. Uncanny? Well, not more so than would have seemed to Byron and Moore and Rogers the notion that more than a hundred years away from them was someone joining in their laughter—as *I* do.

Alas, I cannot join in it more than gently. To imagine a scene, however vividly, does not give us the sense of being, or even of having been, present at it. Indeed, the greater the glow of

⁶ Thomas Moore (1779–1852), English poet and biographer.

⁷ Samuel Rogers (1763–1855), English poet and memoir writer.

how kindly and liberal a coat it was, and how easy and unconstrained all movements of limb had been in it, and how many years it still had before it, and I perceived sorrowfully that I had given away as noble a set of hartogs as man ever possessed. This proves how careful we should be in parting with cast-off suits. Thoreau² affirmed that old clothes should be burned; and, from the point of view of those who hold that attire ought to be autobiographical, this is true; for how can tweeds handed on from one man to another continue to be autobiographical? But Thoreau's contention was a counsel of perfection—that is to say, advice for Thoreaus—and, moreover, so few persons have autobiographies that we may as well persevere in the bestowal of old clothes.

Of all old clothes, none wears so sorry an air as the old fur-lined coat. A new fur-lined coat is magnificent. It is a symbol of luxury, the antithesis of the hair shirt. It is more than a garment; it is a fortification. An Englishman's fur coat is his castle. But when decay has set in, when it is partly bald and entirely weather-worn, then the fur coat is the wretchedest object in civilization. It is not good even for charades; although, in its luxuriant days, how versatile it was! From time to time it had been—inside out—most of the larger animals in the Zoo. Such versatility, indeed, has the fur coat that on the night of a children's party the prudent father turns the key upon it. Fur-lined coats never become hartogs; nor do overcoats. These, therefore, may be given away or sold without heart-flutterings, although the ordinary overcoat should not be parted with lightly. An old overcoat is a good fellow to accompany one to sea, to wear on deck on rough or rainy nights. But, strictly speaking, no overcoat becomes a hartog.

And what, I seem to hear you ask, what are hartogs? Old clothes that are less imposing and more comfortable than any others are hartogs. To be old is not sufficient; nor is it enough that they are easy. To be hartogs they must combine both these merits. Good clothes when they grow baggy and faded become hartogs; bad clothes, never. Inferior and ill-fitting clothes become merely "old clo." The derivation of hartogs is a secret; but all philologists and all who,

like R. L. Stevenson, have a "love of lovely words," will recognize in the term a neologue³ of singular fitness and attraction. Think about it for a minute or two, and you will realize that clothes of the kind described above could not possibly be known in any other way. They are hartogs—just hartogs, and nothing else. Old clothes of the common type one thinks of without affection, but hartogs are beloved. Any thing is good enough to cover nakedness; hartogs do more—they confer cheerfulness and irresponsibility; they fit the wearer for a freer life. Yet it must be understood that hartogs are never absolutely disreputable, never so old that one cannot meet the vicar's wife without shame.

In ordinary life the wearer of hartogs disdains coats and mackintoshes, except in extreme stress of weather. It is the winds and rains of heaven and the might of the sun that have made his hartogs what they are; the indoor life produces a very inferior result. The best hartogs are stamped by the universe itself. They are the garb of the wise traveler. You meet hartogs on Helvellyn⁴ and among the Langdale Pikes, you recognize them in the Black Forest and on the Furka;⁵ you are aware of them in the Trossachs⁶ and beneath the smooth rotundities and swelling undulations of the South Downs. Nature's best lovers woo her in hartogs.

This definition should be exhaustive enough, but still a little may be added. It should be said, for instance, that few women have enough courage to achieve hartogs. The mass dare not. There are also men who dare not, and there are men whose position is against it. Bishops probably have no hartogs.

Of all hartogs the coat is the most dearly prized. One does not feel so affectionately towards a waistcoat; little is lovable about a waistcoat; but a coat becomes a friend, a brother. Men have worn coats for decades. A satisfying coat is worth its weight in platinum, because it is so rare. The waistcoat is within the compass of any tailor; but a coat is different. Nothing is quite so disgusting as the determination of one's tailor to have his own way in the matter of the coat. You order a dozen personal

³ a new word.

⁴ a mountain in northwest England.

⁵ a mountain pass in Switzerland.

⁶ a valley in central Scotland.

² See the note on Thoreau, II, 112.

Strange, too, that not to one of all the characters in romance has such an end been allotted. Has it ever struck you what a chance Shakespeare missed when he was finishing the Second Part of *King Henry the Fourth*? Falstaff was not the man to stand cowed and bowed while the new king lectured him and cast him off. Little by little, as Hal proceeded in that portentous allocution, the humor of the situation would have mastered old Sir John. His face, blank with surprise at first, would presently have glowed and widened, and his whole bulk have begun to quiver. Lest he should miss one word, he would have mastered himself. But the final words would have been the signal for release of all the roars pent up in him, the welkin would have rung; the roars, belike, would have gradually subsided in dreadful rumblings of more than utterable or conquerable mirth. Thus and thus only might his life have been rounded off with dramatic fitness, *secundum ipsius naturam*.⁸ He never should have been left to babble of green fields and die "an it had been any christom child."

Falstaff is a triumph of comedic creation because we are kept laughing equally at and with him. Nevertheless, if I had the choice of sitting with him at the Boar's Head or with Johnson at the Turk's,⁹ I shouldn't hesitate for an instant. The agility of Falstaff's mind gains much of its effect by contrast with the massiveness of his body; but in contrast with Johnson's equal agility is Johnson's moral as well as physical bulk. His sallies "tell" the more startlingly because of the noble weight of character behind them: they are the better because *he* makes them. In Falstaff there isn't this final incongruity and element of surprise. Falstaff is but a sublimated sample of "the funny man." We cannot, therefore, laugh so greatly with him as with Johnson. (Nor even *at* him; because we are not tickled so much by the weak points of a character whose points are all weak ones; also because we have no reverence trying to impose restraint on us.) Still, Falstaff has indubitably the power to convulse us. I don't mean we ever are convulsed in reading *Henry the Fourth*. No printed page, alas, can thrill us to extremities of laughter. These are ours only if the mirth-maker be a

living man whose jests we hear as they come fresh from his own lips. All I claim for Falstaff is that he would be able to convulse us if he were alive and accessible. Few, as I have said, are the humorists who can induce this state. To master and dissolve us, to give us the joy of being worn down and tired out with laughter, is a success to be won by no man save in virtue of a rare staying power. Laughter becomes extreme only if it be consecutive. There must be no pauses for recovery. Touch-and-go humor, however happy, is not enough. The jester must be able to grapple his theme and hang on to it, twisting it this way and that, and making it yield magically all manner of strange and precious things, one after another, without pause. He must have invention keeping pace with utterance. He must be inexhaustible. Only so can he exhaust us.

I have a friend whom I would praise. There are many other of my friends to whom I am indebted for much laughter; but I do believe that if all of them sent in their bills tomorrow, and all of them overcharged me not a little, the total of all those totals would be less appalling than that which looms in my own vague estimate of what I owe to Comus.¹⁰ Comus I call him here in observance of the line drawn between public and private virtue, and in full knowledge that he would of all men be the least glad to be quite personally thanked and laurelled in the market-place for the hours he has made memorable among his cronies. No one is so diffident as he, no one as self-postponing. Many people have met him again and again without faintly suspecting "anything much" in him. Many of his acquaintances—friends, too—relatives, even—have lived and died in the belief that he was quite ordinary. Thus he is the more greatly valued by his cronies. Thus do we pride ourselves on having some curious right quality to which alone he is responsive. But it would seem that either this asset of ours or its effect on him is intermittent. He can be dull and null enough with us sometimes—a mere asker of questions or drawer of comparisons between this and that brand of cigarettes, or full expatiator on the merits of some new patent razor. A whole hour and more may be wasted in such humdrum and darkness. And then—something

⁸ according to his nature.

⁹ Turk's Head, in Gerard Street, meeting place of Dr. Johnson's Literary Club.

¹⁰ the god of mirth and revelry.

will have happened. There has come a spark in the murk; a flame now, presage of a radiance: Comus has begun. His face is a great part of his equipment. A cast of it might be somewhat akin to the comic mask of the ancients, but no cast could be worthy of it; nobility is the essence of it. It flickers and shifts in accord to the matter of his discourse, it contracts and it expands; is there anything its elastic can't express? Comus would be eloquent even were he dumb. And he is mellifluous. His voice, while he develops an idea or conjures up a scene, takes on a peculiar richness and unction. If he be describing an actual scene, voice and face are adaptable to those of the actual persons therein. But it is not in such mimicry that he excels. As a reporter he has rivals. For the most part, he moves on a higher plane than that of mere fact; he imagines, he creates, giving you not a person, but a type, a synthesis, and not what anywhere has been, but what anywhere might be—what, as one feels, for all the absurdity of it, just would be. He knows his world well, and nothing human is alien to him, but certain skeins of life have a special hold on him, and he on them. In his youth he wished to be a clergyman; and over the clergy of all grades and denominations his genius hovers and swoops and ranges with a special mastery. Lawyers he loves less; yet the legal mind seems to lie almost as wide-open to him as the sacerdotal; and the legal manner in all its phases he can unerringly burlesque. In the minds of journalists, diverse journalists, he is not less thoroughly at home, so that of the wild contingencies imagined by him there is none about which he cannot reel off an oral "leader" or "middle" in the likeliest style, and with as much ease as he can preach a High Church or a Low Church sermon on it. Nor are his improvisations limited by prose. If a theme calls for nobler treatment, he becomes an unflagging fountain of blank verse. Or again, he may deliver himself in rhyme. There is no form of utterance that comes amiss to him for interpreting the human comedy, or for broadening the farce into which that comedy is changed by him. Nothing can stop him when once he is in the vein. No appeals move him. He goes from strength to strength, while his audience is more and more piteously debilitated.

What a gift to have been endowed with!

What a power to wield! And how often I have envied Comus! But this envy has never taken root. Incomparable laughter-giver, he is not much a laughier. He is vintner, not toper. I would not change places with him. I am well content to have been his beneficiary during thirty years, and to be for as many more as may be given us.

AN INFAMOUS BRIGADE¹

Not many nights ago, as I was hastening through the frost, I saw a strange glamour in the sky. "Is it Tithonus?"² I wondered, "shamed forth, at length, by his lady's taunts?" The glamour grew. I thought Aurora had followed her lord, and was beseeching him to return. But a cabman, whom I consulted, told me it was not Tithonus, nor Aurora, but only some wharf burning by the river. I let him drive me there. Through a rattle of dark alleys sped we, through brawls and squalor. Under the red glory of flames that were reduplicated in sky and water we rested. Than the roaring of those great flames had I yet heard, than their red glory seen, nothing lovelier.

Yet, under my very eyes, there was an organized attempt to spoil this fair thing. Persons in absurd helmets ran about pouring cascades of cold water on the flames. These, my cabman told me, were firemen. I jumped out and, catching one of them by the arm, bade him sharply resist from his vandalism. I told him that I had driven miles to see this fire, that great crowds of Londoners, poor people with few joys, were there to see it also, and I asked him who was he that he should dare to disappoint us. Without answering my arguments, he warned me that I must not interfere with him "in the discharge of duty." The silly crowd would not uphold me and I fell back, surreptitiously slitting his water-hose with a penknife. But what could I avail? The cascades around me were ceaseless, innumerable. Every moment dashed up fresh firemen, imprecant on cars, behind wild horses. In less than an hour, all was over. The flames had been surrounded, driven back, and

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² a Trojan prince, beloved of Aurora, goddess of the dawn.

stricken, at length, as they lay cowering and desperate in their last embers. But as they died there leaped from my heart's core a great residuary flame of indignation. It is still burning.

For my friends assure me that beautiful fires are constantly springing up and are never spared. This fire brigade, as it is called, is a regular organization, winked at, if not openly encouraged, by the municipal authorities. It has its ramifications in all parts of London. It can produce, at five minutes' notice, its hundreds of hired ruffians such as I saw that night by the river, none hindering them at their work. I know that vandalism is recurrent in all history. In the days of civil strife, our fairest monuments were marred by the fanatics of Cromwell.³ Athens wept over the Hermacopeia.⁴ The cultured Roman saw, as we see, helmeted Goths charging with hoarse threats through the city. But not secretly nor with fear of retribution, not in hostility to us nor in spiritual fervor, are planned the nightly outrages of "Commander" Wells and his merry men. Ah! we make a poor community. Americans, as yet inferior to us in the appreciation of most fan things, are far more spirited than we are about fires. Many years ago, when all Chicago was afire, the Mayor, watching it from the lakeside, exclaimed in a loud voice, "Who will say now that ours is not the finest city in all the world?" I remember, too, that some years ago, on the eve of my departure from Chicago, a certain citizen, who was entertaining me at supper, expressed his great regret that they had not been able to show me one of their fires. And indeed it must be splendid to see those twenty-three story buildings come crashing down in less time than was required to build them up. In Chicago, extinction is not attempted. Little value is set on bricks and mortar. A fire is enjoyed; then the building is reproduced and burned down again at leisure. But we, who pull down, year by year, old inns and almshouses, because they are obsolete in usage, despite their prettiness and their tradition, we in London suffer to be saved any wharf or warehouse, however beautiful its encircling flames, however hideous it.

And here is a strange anomaly! Whilst there

³ Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658), English general and Lord Protector of England.

⁴ mutilation of the statues of Hermes.

are companies which honor with gifts of gold and silver anyone whose silly tenement Vesta⁵ has deigned to visit, the law still loads with chains anyone who may be found to have planned the happy occasion. I am far from exalting arson to the level of a fine art. Nothing is easier than to be an incendiary. All you want is a box of matches and a sense of beauty. I know, too, that fires have often been made for unworthy ends, for the gratification of revenge or, even, personal vanity. Nero set light to Rome that he might divert the ears of the musical critics from his indifferent fiddling, and fires, I am told, are mysteriously frequent in the little Duchy of Saxe-Coburg Gotha. But it is absurd that no distinction is made between motives of self-interest and the desire for a pretty scene. Perpend! I stay for a few days in the country. I see some haystacks in a field. After dark, I set light to them. Am I to be punished for doing so? Probably, I admit, the rural police would not dream of suspecting me, and would forthwith arrest the last farm-laborer who had been discharged from the place. But that does not alter the principle of the thing. I should be sorry that another should suffer for me, but, having done no wrong, I certainly should not give myself up.

Vain, though, to cavil at the follies of the law, as exemplified here and there, until the public has been thoroughly aroused on the general question of its right to the unspoiled enjoyment of fires! The sentimentalist may prattle of life-saving, but we must think, rather, of the greatest happiness of the greatest number. And, as a matter of fact, the strongest objection to the fire brigade may be raised on behalf of those very persons whom it professes to benefit. Perpend, reader, once more! You are a householder. You are sleeping in the dead of night. The insidious savor of smoke awakens you. You rush out on to the landing, only to find the staircase enveloped in smoke, whose dense volumes are flame-cloven. Escape is impossible! You rush back and rouse your wife and children. In half-conscious terror, they cling to your knees. It is the most tragic moment of your life. You feel that the Ministers of Fate have compassed you about, that Death is grinning at you from their ranks and will soon beckon. Already

⁵ Roman goddess of the hearth.

the smoke is curling round you, already—The sash of the window is thrown up. In jumps a perfect stranger in fancy dress and proceeds to play snapdragon with you and your wife and children. An anticlimax! The whole scene ruined! You are bundled down a ladder, protesting that an Englishman's house is his castle. Some scores of licensed practical-jokers are below with their squirts, and you are drenched to the skin, as likely as not. Finally, you are put to bed in some neighbor's house. So ends your tragedy, reader.

Not forgetting that before the next dawn breaks your house may be wet ashes and you its unwilling survivor, try now, reader, to take an altruist view. For the fire brigade is most hateful, not because it invades the sanctity of our home life, but because it takes constantly from so many citizens their enjoyment of fair things. I know that the fire brigade is strong. It will die hard. Years hence, it may still be flourishing. But meanwhile one should not be idle. I am forming an Artists' Corps, whose aim will be to harass the members of the fire brigade on all occasions. I am maturing an elaborate system of false alarms, and I shall train my recruits to waylay the enemy in their onrush, seize the bridles of their horses, cut their reins. We, too, shall hold ourselves in readiness to start off at five minutes' notice, but there will be no furious driving, no terrorizing of harmless traffic. We shall go about our work in a quiet, gentlemanly manner, servants, not tyrants, of the public. Though at first, necessarily, our organization will be small, we shall extend it gradually, I hope. We shall, in time, despise mere guerilla warfare and take our stand upon the very field of battle. Each one of us will trail a sinuous hose. It will not be filled with water. It will be filled with oil.

STEPHEN BUTLER LEACOCK
1869–1944

In saying that he would rather have written Alice in Wonderland than the Encyclopædia Britannica, Stephen Leacock, Canadian humorist and college professor, gave the measure of his own achievement as a writer. He did not write an encyclopedia, but he did write books on economics and political science—this as a

professor of those subjects. He also wrote books of humor, a far more difficult task, in his opinion. Leacock's humor, like Mark Twain's, provokes thought as well as laughter. And that Leacock was capable of sharp and instructive satire is shown by such of his works as Literary Lapses (1910) and Behind the Beyond (1913). Other works by Leacock are Moonbeams from the Larger Lunacy (1915), My Discovery of England (1922), and Humour: Its Theory and Technique (1935).

HOMER AND HUMBUG¹

AN ACADEMIC DISCUSSION

The following discussion is of course only of interest to scholars. But, as the public schools' returns show that in the United States there are now over a million colored scholars alone, the appeal is wide enough.

I do not mind confessing that for a long time past I have been very skeptical about the classics. I was myself trained as a classical scholar. It seemed the only thing to do with me. I acquired such a singular facility in handling Latin and Greek that I could take a page of either of them, distinguish which it was by merely glancing at it, and, with the help of a dictionary and a pair of compasses, whip off a translation of it in less than three hours.

But I never got any pleasure from it. I lied about it. At first, perhaps, I lied through vanity. Any colored scholar will understand the feeling. Later on I lied through habit; later still because, after all, the classics were all that I had and so I valued them. I have seen thus a deceived dog value a pup with a broken leg, and a pauper child nurse a dead doll with the sawdust out of it. So I nursed my dead Homer and my broken Demosthenes² though I knew in my heart that there was more sawdust in the stomach of one modern author than in the whole lot of them. Observe, I am not saying which it is that has it full of it.

So, as I say, I began to lie about the classics. I said to people who knew no Greek that there was a sublimity, a majesty about Homer which

¹ Reprinted by permission of Dodd, Mead and Company, Inc., and of Messrs. John Lane the Bodley Head Ltd. London, from *Behind the Beyond* by Stephen Leacock.

² Athenian orator (384–322 B.C.).

they could never hope to grasp. I said it was like the sound of the sea beating against the granite cliffs of the Ionian Esophagus; or words to that effect. As for the truth of it, I might as well have said that it was like the sound of a rum distillery running a night shift on half time. At any rate this is what I said about Homer, and when I spoke of Pindar³—the dainty grace of his strophes—and Aristophanes,⁴ the delicious sallies of his wit, sally after sally, each sally explained in a note calling it a sally—I managed to suffuse my face with an animation which made it almost beautiful.

I admitted of course that Vergil in spite of his genius had a hardness and a cold glitter which resembled rather the brilliance of a cut diamond than the soft grace of a flower. Certainly I admitted this; the mere admission of it would knock the breath out of anyone who was arguing.

From such talks my friends went away sad. The conclusion was too cruel. It had all the cold logic of a syllogism (like that almost brutal form of argument so much admired in the Paraphernalia of Socrates). For if:

Vergil and Homer and Pindar had all this grace and pith and these sallies—
And if I read Vergil and Homer and Pindar,
And if they only read Mrs. Wharton and Mrs. Humphrey Ward,
Then where were they?

So continued lying brought its own reward in the sense of superiority and I lied more.

When I reflect that I have openly expressed regret, as a personal matter, even in the presence of women, for the missing books of Tacitus,⁵ and the entire loss of the Abacadabra of Polyphemus of Syracuse, I can find no words in which to beg for pardon. In reality I was just as much worried over the loss of the ichthyosaurus. More, indeed—I'd like to have seen it; but if the books Tacitus lost were like those he didn't, I wouldn't.

I believe all scholars lie like this. An ancient friend of mine, a clergyman, tells me that in Hesiod⁶ he finds a peculiar grace that he doesn't find elsewhere. He's a liar. That's all.

³ Greek lyric poet (c. 522–442 B.C.).

⁴ Greek writer of comedies (c. 444–c. 380 B.C.).

⁵ Roman historian (c. 55–c. 117).

⁶ Greek poet (eighth century B.C.).

Another man, in politics and in the legislature, tells me that every night before going to bed he reads over a page or two of Thucydides to keep his mind fresh. Either he never goes to bed or he's a liar. Doubly so, no one could read Greek at that frantic rate, and anyway his mind isn't fresh. How could it be, he's in the legislature. I don't object to this man talking freely of the classics, but he ought to keep it for the voters. My own opinion is that before he goes to bed he takes whisky, why call it Thucydides?⁷

I know there are solid arguments advanced in favor of the classics. I often hear them from my colleagues. My friend the professor of Greek tells me that he truly believes the classics have made him what he is. This is a very grave statement, if well founded. Indeed I have heard the same argument from a great many Latin and Greek scholars. They all claim, with some heat, that Latin and Greek have practically made them what they are. This damaging charge against the classics should not be too readily accepted. In my opinion some of these men would have been what they are, no matter what they were.

Be this as it may, I for my part bitterly regret the lies I have told about my appreciation of Latin and Greek literature. I am anxious to do what I can to set things right. I am therefore engaged on, indeed have nearly completed, a work which will enable all readers to judge the matter for themselves. What I have done is a translation of all the great classics, not in the usual literal way but on a design that brings them into harmony with modern life. I will explain what I mean in a minute.

The translation is intended to be within reach of everybody. It is so designed that the entire set of volumes can go on a shelf twenty-seven feet long, or even longer. The first edition will be an *édition de luxe* bound in vellum, or perhaps in buckskin, and sold at five hundred dollars. It will be limited to five hundred copies and, of course, sold only to the feeble-minded. The next edition will be the Literary Edition, sold to artists, authors, actors, and contractors. After that will come the Boarding House Edition, bound in board and paid for in the same way.

My plan is to so transpose the classical writ-

⁷ Greek historian (c. 460–400 B.C.).

ers as to give, not the literal translation word for word, but what is really the modern equivalent. Let me give an odd sample or two to show what I mean. Take the passage in the First Book of Homer that describes Ajax the Greek dashing into the battle in front of Troy. Here is the way it runs (as nearly as I remember), in the usual word for word translation of the classroom, as done by the very best professor, his spectacles glittering with the literary rapture of it.

Then he too Ajax on the one hand leaped (or possibly jumped) into the fight wearing on the other hand, yes certainly a steel corselet (or possibly a bronze under tunic) and on his head of course, yes without doubt he had a helmet with a tossing plume taken from the mane (or perhaps extracted from the tail) of some horse which once fed along the banks of the Scamander (and it sees the herd and raises its head and paws the ground) and in his hand a shield worth a hundred oxen and on his knees too especially in particular greaves made by some cunning artificer (or perhaps blacksmith) and he blows the fire and it is hot. Thus Ajax leaped (or, better, was propelled from behind) into the fight.

Now that's grand stuff. There is no doubt of it. There's a wonderful movement and force to it. You can almost see it move, it goes so fast. But the modern reader can't get it. It won't mean to him what it meant to the early Greek. The setting, the costume, the scene has all got to be changed in order to let the reader have a real equivalent to judge just how good the Greek verse is. In my translation I alter it just a little, not much but just enough to give the passage a form that reproduces the proper literary value of the verses, without losing anything of the majesty. It describes, I may say, the Directors of the American Industrial Stocks rushing into the Balkan War Cloud.

Then there came rushing to the shock of war
Mr. McNicoll of the C. P. R.
He wore suspenders and about his throat
High rose the collar of a sealskin coat.
He had on gaiters and he wore a tie,
He had his trousers buttoned good and high;
About his waist a woolen undervest
Bought from a sad-eyed farmer of the West.
(And every time he clips a sheep he sees
Some bloated plutocrat who ought to freeze.)
Thus in the Stock Exchange he burst to view,
Leaped to the post, and shouted, "Ninety-two!"

There! That's Homer, the real thing! Just as it sounded to the rude crowd of Greek peasants who sat in a ring and guffawed at the rimes and watched the minstrel stamp it out into "feet" as he recited it!

Or let me take another example from the so-called Catalogue of the Ships that fills up nearly an entire book of Homer. This famous passage names all the ships, one by one, and names the chiefs who sailed on them, and names the particular town or hill or valley that they came from. It has been much admired. It has that same majesty of style that has been brought to an even loftier pitch in the New York Business Directory and the City Telephone Book. It runs along, as I recall it, something like this:

"And first, indeed, oh yes, was the ship of Homistogetes the Spartan, long and swift, having both its masts covered with cowhide and two rows of oars. And he, Homistogetes, was born of Hermogenes and Ophthalmia and was at home in Syncope beside the Last Flowing Paresis. And after him came the ship of Preposterus the Eurasian, son of Oasis and Hysteria," . . .

and so on endlessly.

Instead of this I substitute, with the permission of the New York Central Railway, the official catalogue of their locomotives taken almost word for word from the list compiled by their superintendent of works. I admit that he wrote in hot weather. Part of it runs:

Out in the yard and steaming in the sun
Stands locomotive engine number forty-one;
Seated beside the windows of the cab
Are Pat McGaw and Peter James McNab.
Pat comes from Troy and Peter from Cohoes,
And when they pull the throttle off she goes;
And as she vanishes there comes to view
Steam locomotive engine number forty-two.
Observe her mighty wheels, her easy roll,
With William J. Macarthy in control.
They say her engineer some time ago
Lived on a farm outside of Buffalo,
Whereas his fireman, Henry Edward Foy,
Attended school in Springfield, Illinois.
Thus does the race of man decay or rot—
Some men can hold their jobs and some can not.

Please observe that if Homer had actually written that last line it would have been quoted for a thousand years as one of the deepest sayings ever said. Orators would have rounded out

their speeches with the majestic phrase, quoted in sonorous and unintelligible Greek verse, "some men can hold their jobs and some can not"; essayists would have begun their most scholarly dissertations with the words—"It has been finely said by Homer that (in Greek) 'some men can hold their jobs'"; and the clergy in mid-pathos of a funeral sermon would have raised their eyes aloft and echoed "some men can not!"

This is what I should like to do. I'd like to take a large stone and write on it in very plain writing:

"The classics are only primitive literature. They belong in the same class as primitive machinery and primitive music and primitive medicine"—and then throw it through the windows of a university and hide behind a fence to see the professors buzz!!

OXFORD AS I SEE IT¹

My private station being that of a university professor, I was naturally deeply interested in the system of education in England. I was therefore led to make a special visit to Oxford and to submit the place to a searching scrutiny. Arriving one afternoon at four o'clock, I stayed at the Mitre Hotel and did not leave until eleven o'clock next morning. The whole of this time, except for one hour spent in addressing the undergraduates, was devoted to a close and eager study of the great university. When I add to this that I had already visited Oxford in 1907 and spent a Sunday at All Souls with Colonel L. S. Amery, it will be seen at once that my views on Oxford are based upon observations extending over fourteen years.

At any rate I can at least claim that my acquaintance with the British university is just as good a basis for reflection and judgment as that of the numerous English critics who come to our side of the water. I have known a famous English author to arrive at Harvard University in the morning, have lunch with President Lowell, and then write a whole chapter on the Excellence of Higher Education in America. I

have known another one to come to Harvard, have lunch with President Lowell, and do an entire book on the Decline of Serious Study in America. Or take the case of my own university.

I remember Mr. Rudyard Kipling coming to McGill and saying in his address to the undergraduates at 2.30 p.m., "You have here a great institution." But how could he have gathered this information? As far as I know he spent the entire morning with Sir Andrew Macphail in his house beside the campus, smoking cigarettes. When I add that he distinctly refused to visit the Paleontologic Museum, that he saw nothing of our new hydraulic apparatus, or of our classes in Domestic Science, his judgment that we had here a great institution seems a little bit superficial. I can only put beside it, to redeem it in some measure, the hasty and ill-formed judgment expressed by Lord Milner, "McGill is a noble university"; and the rash and indiscreet expression of the Prince of Wales, when we gave him an LL.D. degree, "McGill has a glorious future."

To my mind these unthinking judgments about our great college do harm, and I determined, therefore, that anything that I said about Oxford should be the result of the actual observation and real study based upon a bona fide residence in the Mitre Hotel.

On the strength of this basis of experience I am prepared to make the following positive and emphatic statements. Oxford is a noble university. It has a great past. It is at present the greatest university in the world: and it is quite possible that it has a great future. Oxford trains scholars of the real type better than any other place in the world. Its methods are antiquated. It despises science. Its lectures are rotten. It has professors who never teach and students who never learn. It has no order, no arrangement, no system. Its curriculum is unintelligible. It has no president. It has no state legislature to tell it how to teach, and yet—it gets there. Whether we like it or not, Oxford gives something to its students, a life and a mode of thought, which in America as yet we can emulate but not equal.

If anybody doubts this let him go and take a room at the Mitre Hotel (ten and six for a wainscoted bedroom, period of Charles I) and study the place for himself.

These singular results achieved at Oxford are

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all the more surprising when one considers the distressing conditions under which the students work. The lack of an adequate building fund compels them to go on working in the same old buildings which they have had for centuries. The buildings at Brasenose College have not been renewed since the year 1525. In New College and Magdalen the students are still housed in the old buildings erected in the sixteenth century. At Christ Church I was shown a kitchen which had been built at the expense of Cardinal Wolsey in 1527. Incredible though it may seem, they have no other place to cook in than this and are compelled to use it today. On the day when I saw this kitchen, four cooks were busy roasting an ox whole for the students' lunch; this at least is what I presumed they were doing from the size of the fire-place used, but it may not have been an ox; perhaps it was a cow. On a huge table, twelve feet by six and made of slabs of wood five inches thick, two other cooks were rolling out a game pie. I estimated it as measuring three feet across. In this rude way, unchanged since the time of Henry VIII, the unhappy Oxford students are fed. I could not help contrasting it with the cosy little boarding houses on Cottage Grove Avenue where I used to eat when I was a student at Chicago, or the charming little basement dining-rooms of the students' boarding houses in Toronto. But then, of course, Henry VIII never lived in Toronto.

The same lack of a building-fund necessitates the Oxford students' living in the identical old boarding houses they had in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Technically they are called "quadrangles," "closets" and "rooms"; but I am so broken in to the usage of my student days that I can't help calling them boarding houses. In many of these the old stairway has been worn down by the feet of ten generations of students: the windows have little latticed panes: there are old names carved here and there upon the stone, and a thick growth of ivy covers the walls. The boarding house at St. John's College dates from 1509, the one at Christ Church from the same period. A few hundred thousand pounds would suffice to replace these old buildings with neat steel and brick structures like the normal school at Schenectady, N. Y., or the Peel Street High School at Montreal. But nothing is done. A movement

was indeed attempted last autumn towards removing the ivy from the walls, but the result was unsatisfactory and they are putting it back. Anyone could have told them beforehand that the mere removal of the ivy would not brighten Oxford up, unless at the same time one cleared the stones of the old inscriptions, put in steel fire-escapes, and in fact brought the boarding houses up to date.

But Henry VIII being dead, nothing was done. Yet in spite of its dilapidated buildings and its lack of fire-escapes, ventilation, sanitation, and up-to-date kitchen facilities, I persist in my assertion that I believe that Oxford, in its way, is the greatest university in the world. I am aware that this is an extreme statement and needs explanation. Oxford is much smaller in numbers, for example, than the State University of Minnesota, and is much poorer. It has, or had till yesterday, fewer students than the University of Toronto. To mention Oxford beside the 26,000 students of Columbia University sounds ridiculous. In point of money, the \$39,000,000 endowment of the University of Chicago, and the \$35,000,000 one of Columbia, and the \$43,000,000 of Harvard seem to leave Oxford nowhere. Yet the peculiar thing is that it is not nowhere. By some queer process of its own it seems to get there every time. It was therefore of the very greatest interest to me, as a profound scholar, to try to investigate just how this peculiar excellence of Oxford arises.

It can hardly be due to anything in the curriculum or program of studies. Indeed, to anyone accustomed to the best models of a university curriculum as it flourishes in the United States and Canada, the program of studies is frankly quite laughable. There is less Applied Science in the place than would be found with us in a theological college. Hardly a single professor at Oxford would recognize a dynamo if he met it in broad daylight. The Oxford student learns nothing of chemistry, physics, heat, plumbing, electric wiring, gas-fitting or the use of a blow-torch. Any American college student can run a motor-car, take a gasoline engine to pieces, fix a washer on a kitchen tap, mend a broken electric bell, and give an expert opinion on what has gone wrong with the furnace. It is these things indeed which stamp him as a college man, and occasion a very pardonable pride

in the minds of his parents. But in all these things the Oxford student is the merest amateur.

This is bad enough. But after all one might say this is only the mechanical side of education. True: but one searches in vain in the Oxford curriculum for any adequate recognition of the higher and more cultured studies. Strange though it seems to us on this side of the Atlantic, there are no courses at Oxford in House-keeping, or in Salesmanship, or in Advertising, or on Comparative Religion, or on the influence of the Press. There are no lectures whatever on Human Behaviour, on Altruism, on Egotism, or on the Play of Wild Animals. Apparently, the Oxford student does not learn these things. This cuts him off from a great deal of the larger culture of our side of the Atlantic. "What are you studying this year?" I once asked a fourth year student at one of our great colleges. "I am electing Salesmanship and Religion," he answered. Here was a young man whose training was destined inevitably to turn him into a moral business man: either that or nothing. At Oxford Salesmanship is not taught and Religion takes the feeble form of the New Testament. The more one looks at these things the more amazing it becomes that Oxford can produce any results at all.

The effect of the comparison is heightened by the peculiar position occupied at Oxford by the professors' lectures. In the colleges of Canada and the United States the lectures are supposed to be a really necessary and useful part of the student's training. Again and again I have heard the graduates of my own college assert that they had got as much, or nearly as much, out of the lectures at college as out of athletics or the Greek letter society or the Banjo and Mandolin Club. In short, with us the lectures form a real part of the college life. At Oxford it is not so. The lectures, I understand, are given and may even be taken. But they are quite worthless and are not supposed to have anything much to do with the development of the student's mind. "The lectures here," said a Canadian student to me, "are punk." I appealed to another student to know if this was so. "I don't know whether I'd call them exactly punk," he answered, "but they're certainly rotten." Other judgments were that the lectures were of no importance: that nobody took them:

that they don't matter, that you can take them if you like: that they do you no harm.

It appears further that the professors themselves are not keen on their lectures. If the lectures are called for they give them, if not, the professor's feelings are not hurt. He merely waits and rests his brain until in some later year the students call for his lectures. There are men at Oxford who have rested their brains this way for over thirty years: the accumulated brain power thus dammed up is said to be colossal.

I understand that the key to this mystery is found in the operations of the person called the tutor. It is from him, or rather with him, that the students learn all that they know: one and all are agreed on that. Yet it is a little odd to know just how he does it. "We go over to his rooms," said one student, "and he just lights a pipe and talks to us." "We sit round with him," said another, "and he simply smokes and goes over our exercises with us." From this and other evidence I gather that what an Oxford tutor does is to get a little group of students together and smoke at them. Men who have been systematically smoked at for four years turn into ripe scholars. If anybody doubts this, let him go to Oxford and he can see the thing actually in operation. A well-smoked man speaks and writes English with a grace that can be acquired in no other way.

In what was said above, I seem to have been directing criticism against the Oxford professors as such: but I have no intention of doing so. For the Oxford professor and his whole manner of being I have nothing but a profound respect. There is indeed the greatest difference between the modern up-to-date American idea of a professor and the English type. But even with us in older days, in the bygone time when such people as Henry Wadsworth Longfellow were professors, one found the English idea; a professor was supposed to be a venerable kind of person, with snow-white whiskers reaching to his stomach. He was expected to moon around the campus oblivious of the world around him. If you nodded to him he failed to see you. Of money he knew nothing; of business, far less. He was, as his trustees were proud to say of him, "a child."

On the other hand he contained within him a reservoir of learning of such depth as to be

practically bottomless. None of this learning was supposed to be of any material or commercial benefit to anybody. Its use was in saving the soul and enlarging the mind.

At the head of such a group of professors was one whose beard was even whiter and longer, whose absence of mind was even still greater, and whose knowledge of money, business, and practical affairs was below zero. Him they made the president.

All this is changed in America. A university professor is now a busy, hustling person, approximating as closely to a business man as he can do it. It is on the business man that he models himself. He has a little place that he calls his "office," with a typewriter machine and a stenographer. Here he sits and dictates letters, beginning after the best business models, "in re yours of the eighth ult. would say, etc., etc." He writes these letters to students, to his fellow professors, to the president, indeed to any people who will let him write to them. The number of letters that he writes each month is duly counted and set to his credit. If he writes enough he will get a reputation as an "executive," and big things may happen to him. He may even be asked to step out of the college and take a post as an "executive" in a soap company or an advertising firm. The man, in short, is a "hustler," an "advertiser" whose highest aim is to be a "live-wire." If he is not, he will presently be dismissed, or, to use the business term, be "let go," by a board of trustees who are themselves hustlers and live-wires. As to the professor's soul, he no longer needs to think of it as being handed over along with all the others to a Board of Censors.

The American professor deals with his students according to his lights. It is his business to chase them along over a prescribed ground at a prescribed pace like a flock of sheep. They all go humping together over the hurdles with the professor chasing them with a set of "tests" and "recitations," "marks" and "attendances," the whole apparatus obviously copied from the time-clock of the business man's factory. This process is what is called "showing results." The pace set is necessarily that of the slowest, and thus results in what I have heard Mr. Edward Beatty describe as the "convoy system of education."

In my own opinion, reached after fifty-two

years of profound reflection, this system contains in itself the seeds of destruction. It puts a premium on dulness and a penalty on genius. It circumscribes that latitude of mind which is the real spirit of learning. If we persist in it we shall presently find that true learning will fly away from our universities and will take rest wherever some individual and enquiring mind can mark out its path for itself.

Now the principal reason why I am led to admire Oxford is that the place is little touched as yet by the measuring of "results," and by this passion for visible and provable "efficiency." The whole system at Oxford is such as to put a premium on genius and to let mediocrity and dulness go their way. On the dull student Oxford, after a proper lapse of time, confers a degree which means nothing more than that he lived and breathed at Oxford and kept out of jail. This for many students is as much as society can expect. But for the gifted students Oxford offers great opportunities. There is no question of his hanging back till the last sheep has jumped over the fence. He need wait for no one. He may move forward as fast as he likes, following the bent of his genius. If he has in him any ability beyond that of the common herd, his tutor, interested in his studies, will smoke at him until he kindles him into a flame. For the tutor's soul is not harassed by herding dull students, with dismissal hanging by a thread over his head in the class room. The American professor has no time to be interested in a clever student. He has time to be interested in his "department," his letter-writing, his executive work, and his organizing ability and his hope of promotion to a soap factory. But with that his mind is exhausted. The student of genius merely means to him a student who gives no trouble, who passes all his "tests," and is present at all his "recitations." Such a student also, if he can be trained to be a hustler and an advertiser, will undoubtedly "make good." But beyond that the professor does not think of him. The everlasting principle of equality has inserted itself in a place where it has no right to be, and where inequality is the breath of life.

American or Canadian college trustees would be horrified at the notion of professors who apparently do no work, give few or no lectures and draw their pay merely for existing. Yet these are really the only kind of professors

worth having—I mean, men who can be trusted with a vague general mission in life, with a salary guaranteed at least till their death, and a sphere of duties entrusted solely to their own consciences and the promptings of their own desires. Such men are rare, but a single one of them, when found, is worth ten “executives” and a dozen “organizers.”

The excellence of Oxford, then, as I see it, lies in the peculiar vagueness of the organization of its work. It starts from the assumption that the professor is a really learned man whose sole interest lies in his own sphere, and that a student, or at least the only student with whom the university cares to reckon seriously, is a young man who desires to know. This is an ancient mediæval attitude long since buried in more up-to-date places under successive strata of compulsory education, state teaching, the democratization of knowledge and the substitution of the shadow for the substance, and the casket for the gem. No doubt, in newer places the thing has got to be so. Higher education in America flourishes chiefly as a qualification for entrance into a money-making profession, and not as a thing in itself. But in Oxford one can still see the surviving outline of a nobler type of structure and a higher inspiration.

I do not mean to say, however, that my judgment of Oxford is one undiluted stream of praise. In one respect at least I think that Oxford has fallen away from the high ideals of the Middle Ages. I refer to the fact that it admits women students to its studies. In the Middle Ages women were regarded with a peculiar chivalry long since lost. It was taken for granted that their brains were too delicately poised to allow them to learn anything. It was presumed that their minds were so exquisitely hung that intellectual effort might disturb them. The present age has gone to the other extreme: and this is seen nowhere more than in the crowding of women into colleges originally designed for men. Oxford, I regret to find, has not stood out against this change.

To a profound scholar like myself, the presence of these young women, many of them most attractive, flitting up and down the streets of Oxford in their caps and gowns, is very distressing.

Who is to blame for this and how they first got in I do not know. But I understand that

they first of all built a private college of their own close to Oxford, and then edged themselves in foot by foot. If this is so they only followed up the precedent of the recognized method in use in America. When an American college is established, the women go and build a college of their own overlooking the grounds. Then they put on becoming caps and gowns and stand and look over the fence at the college athletics. The male undergraduates, who were originally and by nature a hardy lot, were not easily disturbed. But inevitably some of the senior trustees fell in love with the first year girls and became convinced that coeducation was a noble cause. American statistics show that between 1880 and 1900 the number of trustees and senior professors who married girl undergraduates or who wanted to do so reached a percentage of—I forget the exact percentage; it was either a hundred or a little over.

I don't know just what happened at Oxford but presumably something of the sort took place. In any case the women are now all over the place. They attend the college lectures, they row in a boat, and they perambulate the High Street. They are even offering a serious competition against the men. Last year they carried off the ping-pong championship and took the chancellor's prize for needlework, while in music, cooking, and millinery the men are said to be nowhere.

There is no doubt that unless Oxford puts the women out while there is yet time, they will overrun the whole university. What this means to the progress of learning few can tell and those who know are afraid to say.

Cambridge University, I am glad to see, still sets its face sternly against this innovation. I am reluctant to count any superiority in the University of Cambridge. Having twice visited Oxford, having made the place a subject of profound study for many hours at a time, having twice addressed its undergraduates, and having stayed at the Mitre Hotel, I consider myself an Oxford man. But I must admit that Cambridge has chosen the wiser part.

Last autumn, while I was in London on my voyage of discovery, a vote was taken at Cambridge to see if the women who have already a private college nearby, should be admitted to the university. They were triumphantly shut out, and as a fit and proper sign of enthusiasm

the undergraduates went over in a body and knocked down the gates of the women's college. I know that it is a terrible thing to say that any one approved of this. All the London papers came out with headings that read—ARE OUR UNDERGRADUATES TURNING INTO BAROONS? and so on. The *Manchester Guardian* draped its pages in black and even the *London Morning Post* was afraid to take bold ground in the matter. But I do know also that there was a great deal of secret chuckling and jubilation in the London clubs. Nothing was expressed openly. The men of England have been too terrorized by the women for that. But in safe corners of the club, out of earshot of the waiters and away from casual strangers, little groups of elderly men chuckled quietly together. "Knocked down their gates, eh?" said the wicked old men to one another, and then whispered guiltily behind an uplifted hand, "Serve 'em right." Nobody dared to say anything outside. If they had some one would have got up and asked a question in the House of Commons. When this is done all England falls flat upon its face.

But for my part when I heard of the Cambridge vote, I felt as Lord Chatham did when he said in parliament, "Sir, I rejoice that America has resisted." For I have long harbored views of my own upon the higher education of women. In these days, however, it requires no little hardihood to utter a single word of criticism against it. It is like throwing half a brick through the glass roof of a conservatory. It is bound to make trouble. Let me hasten, therefore, to say that I believe most heartily in the higher education of women; in fact, the higher the better. The only question to my mind is: What is "higher education" and how do you get it? With which goes the secondary enquiry, What is a woman and is she just the same as a man? I know that it sounds a terrible thing to say in these days, but I don't believe she is.

Let me say also that when I speak of coeducation I speak of what I know. I was coeducated myself some thirty-five years ago, at the very beginning of the thing. I learned my Greek alongside of a bevy of beauty on the opposite benches that mashed up the irregular verbs for us very badly. Incidentally, those girls are all married long since, and all the Greek they know now you could put under a thimble. But of that presently.

I have had further experience as well. I spent three years in the graduate school of Chicago, where coeducational girls were as thick as autumn leaves—and some thicker. And as a college professor at McGill University in Montreal, I have taught mingled classes of men and women for twenty years.

On the basis of which experience I say with assurance that the thing is a mistake and has nothing to recommend it but its relative cheapness. Let me emphasize this last point and have done with it. Coeducation is of course a great economy. To teach ten men and ten women in a single class of twenty costs only half as much as to teach two classes. Where economy must rule, then, the thing has got to be. But where the discussion turns not on what is cheapest, but on what is best, then the case is entirely different.

The fundamental trouble is that men and women are different creatures, with different minds and different aptitudes and different paths in life. There is no need to raise here the question of which is superior and which is inferior (though I think, the Lord help me, I know the answer to that too). The point lies in the fact that they are different.

But the mad passion for equality has masked this obvious fact. When women began to demand, quite rightly, a share in higher education, they took for granted that they wanted the same curriculum as the men. They never stopped to ask whether their aptitudes were not in various directions higher and better than those of the men, and whether it might not be better for their sex to cultivate the things which were best suited to their minds. Let me be more explicit. In all that goes with physical and mathematical science, women, on the average, are far below the standard of men. There are, of course, exceptions. But they prove nothing. It is no use to quote to me the case of some brilliant girl who stood first in physics at Cornell. That's nothing. There is an elephant in the zoo that can count up to ten, yet I refuse to reckon myself his inferior.

Tabulated results spread over years, and the actual experience of those who teach show that in the whole domain of mathematics and physics women are outclassed. At McGill the girls of our first year have wept over their failures in elementary physics these twenty-five years.

It is time that some one dried their tears and took away the subject.

But, in any case, examination tests are never the whole story. To those who know, a written examination is far from being a true criterion of capacity. It demands too much of mere memory, imitativeness, and the insidious willingness to absorb other people's ideas. Parrots and crows would do admirably in examinations. Indeed, the colleges are full of them.

But take, on the other hand, all that goes with the æsthetic side of education, with imaginative literature and the cult of beauty. Here women are, or at least ought to be, the superiors of men. Women were in primitive times the first story-tellers. They are still so at the cradle side. The original college woman was the witch, with her incantations and her prophecies and the glow of her bright imagination, and if brutal men of duller brains had not burned it out of her, she would be meaning still. To my thinking, we need more witches in the colleges and less physics.

I have seen such young witches myself—if I may keep the word: I like it—in colleges such as Wellesley in Massachusetts and Bryn Mawr in Pennsylvania, where there isn't a man allowed within the three mile limit. To my mind, they do infinitely better thus by themselves. They are freer, less restrained. They discuss things openly in their classes, they lift up their voices, and they speak, whereas a girl in such a place as McGill, with men all about her, sits for four years as silent as a frog full of shot.

But there is a deeper trouble still. The careers of the men and women who go to college together are necessarily different, and the preparation is all aimed at the man's career. The men are going to be lawyers, doctors, engineers, business men, and politicians. And the women are not.

There is no use pretending about it. It may sound an awful thing to say, but the women are going to be married. That is, and always has been, their career; and, what is more, they know it; and even at college, while they are studying algebra and political economy, they have their eye on it sideways all the time. The plain fact is that, after a girl has spent four years of her time and a great deal of her parents' money in equipping herself for a career that she is never going to have, the wretched

creature goes and gets married, and in a few years she has forgotten which is the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle, and she doesn't care. She has much better things to think of.

At this point someone will shriek. "But surely, even for marriage, isn't it right that a girl should have a college education?" To which I hasten to answer: most assuredly. I freely admit that a girl who knows algebra, or once knew it, is a far more charming companion and a nobler wife and mother than a girl who doesn't know x from y . But the point is this: Does the higher education that fits a man to be a lawyer also fit a person to be a wife and mother? Or, in other words, is a lawyer a wife and mother? I say he is not. Granted that a girl is to spend four years in time and four thousand dollars in money in going to college, why train her for a career that she is never going to adopt? Why not give her an education that will have a meaning and a harmony with the real life that she is to follow?

For example, suppose that during her four years every girl lucky enough to get a higher education spent at least six months of it in the training and discipline of a hospital as a nurse. There is more education and character making in that than in a whole bucketful of algebra.

But no, the woman insists on snatching her share of an education designed by Erasmus or William of Wykeham or William of Occam for the creation of scholars and lawyers; and when later on in her home there is a sudden sickness or accident, and the life or death of those nearest to her hangs upon skill and knowledge and a trained fortitude in emergency, she must needs send in all haste for a hired woman to fill the place that she herself has never learned to occupy.

But I am not here trying to elaborate a whole curriculum. I am only trying to indicate that higher education for the man is one thing, for the woman another. Nor do I deny the fact that women have got to earn their living. Their higher education must enable them to do that. They cannot all marry on their graduation day. But that is no great matter. No scheme of education that anyone is likely to devise will fail in this respect.

The positions that they hold as teachers or civil servants they would fill all the better if their education were fitted to their wants.

Some few, a small minority, really and truly "have a career"—husbandless and childless—in which the sacrifice is great and the honor to them, perhaps, all the higher. And others no doubt dream of a career in which a husband and a group of blossoming children are carried as an appendage to a busy life at the bar or on the platform. But all such are the mere minority, so small as to make no difference to the general argument.

But there—I have written quite enough to make plenty of trouble except perhaps at Cambridge University. So I return with relief to my general study of Oxford. Viewing the situation as a whole, I am led then to the conclusion that there must be something in the life of Oxford itself that makes for higher learning. Smoked at by his tutor, fed in Henry VIII's kitchen, and sleeping in a tangle of ivy, the student evidently gets something not easily obtained in America. And the more I reflect on the matter the more I am convinced that it is the sleeping in the ivy that does it. How different it is from student life as I remember it!

When I was a student at the University of Toronto thirty years ago, I lived—from start to finish—in seventeen different boarding houses. As far as I am aware these houses have not, or not yet, been marked with tablets. But they are still to be found in the vicinity of McCaul and Darcy, and St. Patrick Streets. Anyone who doubts the truth of what I have to say may go and look at them.

I was not alone in the nomadic life that I led. There were hundreds of us drifting about in this fashion from one melancholy habitation to another. We lived as a rule two or three in a house, sometimes alone. We dined in the basement. We always had beef, done up in some way after it was dead, and there were always soda biscuits on the table. They used to have a brand of soda biscuits in those days in the Toronto boarding houses that I have not seen since. They were better than dog biscuits but with not so much snap. My contemporaries will all remember them. A great many of the leading barristers and professional men of Toronto were fed on them.

In the life we led we had practically no opportunities for association on a large scale, no common rooms, no reading rooms, nothing. We

never saw the magazines—personally I didn't even know the names of them. The only interchange of ideas we ever got was by going over to the Cæsar Howell Hotel on University Avenue and interchanging them there.

I mention these melancholy details not for their own sake but merely to emphasize the point that when I speak of students' dormitories, and the larger life which they offer, I speak of what I know.

If we had had at Toronto, when I was a student, the kind of dormitories and dormitory life that they have at Oxford, I don't think I would ever have graduated. I'd have been there still. The trouble is that the universities on our Continent are only just waking up to the idea of what a university should mean. They were, very largely, instituted and organized with the idea that a university was a place where young men were sent to absorb the contents of books and to listen to lectures in the class rooms. The student was pictured as a pallid creature, burning what was called the "midnight oil," his wan face bent over his desk. If you wanted to do something for him you gave him a book: if you wanted to do something really large on his behalf you gave him a whole basketful of them. If you wanted to go still further and be a benefactor to the college at large, you endowed a competitive scholarship and set two or more pallid students working themselves to death to get it.

The real thing for the student is the life and environment that surrounds him. All that he really learns he learns, in a sense, by the active operation of his own intellect and not as the passive recipient of lectures. And for this active operation what he really needs most is the continued and intimate contact with his fellows. Students must live together and eat together, talk and smoke together. Experience shows that that is how their minds really grow. And they must live together in a rational and comfortable way. They must eat in a big dining room or hall, with oak beams across the ceiling, and the stained glass in the windows, and with a shield or tablet here or there upon the wall, to remind them between times of the men who went before them and left a name worthy of the memory of the college. If a student is to get from his college what it ought to give him, a college

dormitory, with the life in common that it brings, is his absolute right. A university that fails to give it to him is cheating him.

If I were founding a university—and I say it with all the seriousness of which I am capable—I would found first a smoking room, then when I had a little more money in hand I would found a dormitory; then after that, or more probably with it, a decent reading room and a library. After that, if I still had money over that I couldn't use, I would hire a professor and get some text books.

This chapter has sounded in the most part like a continuous eulogy of Oxford with but little in favor of our American colleges. I turn therefore with pleasure to the more congenial task of showing what is wrong with Oxford and with the English university system generally, and the aspect in which our American universities far excel the British.

The point is that Henry VIII is dead. The English are so proud of what Henry VIII and the benefactors of earlier centuries did for the universities that they forget the present. There is little or nothing in England to compare with the magnificent generosity of individuals, provinces and states, which is building up the colleges of the United States and Canada. There used to be. But by some strange confusion of thought the English people admire the noble gifts of Cardinal Wolsey and Henry VIII and Queen Margaret, and do not realize that the Carnegies and Rockefellers and the William Macdonalds are the Cardinal Woleseys of today. The University of Chicago was founded upon oil. McGill University rests largely on a basis of tobacco. In America the world of commerce and business levies on itself a noble tribute in favor of the higher learning. In England, with a few conspicuous exceptions, such as that at Bristol, there is little of the sort. The feudal families are content with what their remote ancestors have done: they do not try to emulate it in any great degree.

In the long run this must count. Of all the various reforms that are talked of at Oxford, and of all the imitations of American methods that are suggested, the only one worth while, to my thinking, is to capture a few millionaires, give them honorary degrees at a million pounds sterling apiece, and tell them to imagine that

they are Henry the Eighth. I give Oxford warning that if this is not done the place will not last another two centuries.

BERTRAND RUSSELL 1872-

Bertrand Russell's most important contributions to thought lie in the fields of philosophy and mathematics. But the mind of Russell, remarkable for its breadth and sanity, has been active in still other departments of thought and has made itself known in books on religion, sociology, and education. A man of strong convictions, Russell has led a rather stormy life, his fearlessness placing him, at times, in dramatic opposition to his age—this not only in England, his homeland, but in America. During World War I he was imprisoned for his pacifism, and some years later, because of his advanced views on sex, he lost an appointment as professor of philosophy at an American college. Russell's interest in education and his lucid expository style are well illustrated in his essay "The Place of Science in a Liberal Education." And some indication of the wide range of his thinking is seen in such of his book titles as Proposed Roads to Freedom (1918), The ABC of Relativity (1925), Education and the Good Life (1926), and Power: A New Social Analysis (1938). Russell's profound statement about the place of science in education should be read in connection with Thomas Huxley's "A Liberal Education" (II, 160) and "On the Advisableness of Improving Natural Knowledge" (II, 152). It should also be compared with Arnold's "Sweetness and Light" (II, 143).

THE PLACE OF SCIENCE IN A LIBERAL EDUCATION¹

1

Science, to the ordinary reader of newspapers, is represented by a varying selection of sensational triumphs, such as wireless tele-

¹ Reprinted from *Mysticism and Logic* by Bertrand Russell by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York. Copyright 1929 by the publishers.

raphy and aeroplanes, radio-activity and the marvels of modern alchemy. It is not of this aspect of science that I wish to speak. Science, in this respect, consists of detached up-to-date fragments, interesting only until they are replaced by something newer and more up-to-date, displaying nothing of the systems of patiently constructed knowledge out of which, almost as a casual incident, have come the practically useful results which interest the man in the street. The increased command over the forces of nature which is derived from science is undoubtedly an amply sufficient reason for encouraging scientific research, but this reason has been so often urged and is so easily appreciated that other reasons, to my mind quite as important, are apt to be overlooked. It is with these other reasons, especially with the intrinsic value of a scientific habit of mind in forming our outlook on the world, that I shall be concerned in what follows.

The instance of wireless telegraphy will serve to illustrate the difference between the two points of view. Almost all the serious intellectual labor required for the possibility of this invention is due to three men—Faraday, Maxwell, and Hertz.² In alternating layers of experiment and theory these three men built up the modern theory of electromagnetism, and demonstrated the identity of light with electromagnetic waves. The system which they discovered is one of profound intellectual interest, bringing together and unifying an endless variety of apparently detached phenomena, and displaying a cumulative mental power which cannot but afford delight to every generous spirit. The mechanical details which remained to be adjusted in order to utilize their discoveries for a practical system of telegraphy demanded, no doubt, very considerable ingenuity, but had not that broad sweep and that universality which could give them intrinsic interest as an object of disinterested contemplation.

From the point of view of training the mind, of giving that well-informed, impersonal outlook which constitutes culture in the good sense of this much-misused word, it seems to be gen-

erally hold indisputable that a literary education is superior to one based on science. Even the warmest advocates of science are apt to rest their claims on the contention that culture ought to be sacrificed to utility. Those men of science who respect culture, when they associate with men learned in the classics, are apt to admit, not merely politely, but sincerely, a certain inferiority on their side, compensated doubtless by the services which science renders to humanity, but none the less real. And so long as this attitude exists among men of science, it tends to verify itself: the intrinsically valuable aspects of science tend to be sacrificed to the merely useful, and little attempt is made to preserve that leisurely, systematic survey by which the finer quality of mind is formed and nourished.

But even if there be, in present fact, any such inferiority as is supposed in the educational value of science, this is, I believe, not the fault of science itself, but the fault of the spirit in which science is taught. If its full possibilities were realized by those who teach it, I believe that its capacity of producing those habits of mind which constitute the highest mental excellence would be at least as great as that of literature, and more particularly of Greek and Latin literature. In saying this I have no wish whatever to disparage a classical education. I have not myself enjoyed its benefits, and my knowledge of Greek and Latin authors is derived almost wholly from translations. But I am firmly persuaded that the Greeks fully deserve all the admiration that is bestowed upon them, and that it is a very great and serious loss to be unacquainted with their writings. It is not by attacking them, but by drawing attention to neglected excellences in science, that I wish to conduct my argument.

One defect, however, does seem inherent in a purely classical education—namely, a too exclusive emphasis on the past. By the study of what is absolutely ended and can never be renewed, a habit of criticism towards the present and the future is engendered. The qualities in which the present excels are qualities to which the study of the past does not direct attention, and to which, therefore, the student of Greek civilisation may easily become blind. In what is new and growing there is apt to be something crude, insolent, even a little vulgar,

² Faraday, Maxwell . . . Hertz: Michael Faraday (1791–1867), English chemist and physicist; James Clerk Maxwell (1831–1879), Scottish physicist; Heinrich Hertz (1857–1894), German physicist.

which is shocking to the man of sensitive taste; quivering from the rough contact, he retires to the trim gardens of a polished past, forgetting that they were reclaimed from the wilderness by men as rough and earth-soiled as those from whom he shrinks in his own day. The habit of being unable to recognize merit until it is dead is too apt to be the result of a purely bookish life, and a culture based wholly on the past will seldom be able to pierce through every-day surroundings to the essential splendor of contemporary things, or to the hope of still greater splendor in the future.

My eyes saw not the men of old;
And now their age away has rolled.
I weep—to think I shall not see
The heroes of posterity.

So says the Chinese poet; but such impartiality is rare in the more pugnacious atmosphere of the West, where the champions of past and future fight a never-ending battle, instead of combining to seek out the merits of both.

This consideration, which militates not only against the exclusive study of the classics, but against every form of culture which has become static, traditional, and academic, leads inevitably to the fundamental question: What is the true end of education? But before attempting to answer this question it will be well to define the sense in which we are to use the word "education." For this purpose I shall distinguish the sense in which I mean to use it from two others, both perfectly legitimate, the one broader and the other narrower than the sense in which I mean to use the word.

In the broader sense, education will include not only what we learn through instruction, but all that we learn through personal experience—the formation of character through the education of life. Of this aspect of education, vitally important as it is, I will say nothing, since its consideration would introduce topics quite foreign to the question with which we are concerned.

In the narrower sense, education may be confined to instruction, the imparting of definite information on various subjects, because such information, in and for itself, is useful in daily life. Elementary education—reading, writing and arithmetic—is almost wholly of this kind. But instruction, necessary as it is, does not *per*

se constitute education in the sense in which I wish to consider it.

Education, in the sense in which I mean it, may be defined as *the formation, by means of instruction, of certain mental habits and a certain outlook on life and the world.* It remains to ask ourselves, what mental habits, and what sort of outlook, can be hoped for as the result of instruction? When we have answered this question we can attempt to decide what science has to contribute to the formation of the habits and outlook which we desire.

Our whole life is built about a certain number—not a very small number—of primary instincts and impulses. Only what is in some way connected with these instincts and impulses appears to us desirable or important; there is no faculty, whether "reason" or "virtue" or whatever it may be called, that can take our active life and our hopes and fears outside the region controlled by these first movers of all desire. Each of them is like a queen-bee, aided by a hive of workers gathering honey; but when the queen is gone the workers languish and die, and the cells remain empty of their expected sweetness. So with each primary impulse in civilised man: it is surrounded and protected by a busy swarm of attendant derivative desires, which store up in its service whatever honey the surrounding world affords. But if the queen-impulse dies, the death-dealing influence, though retarded a little by habit, spreads slowly through all the subsidiary impulses, and a whole tract of life becomes inexplicably colorless. What was formerly full of zest, and so obviously worth doing that it raised no questions, has now grown dreary and purposeless: with a sense of disillusion we inquire the meaning of life, and decide, perhaps, that all is vanity. The search for an outside meaning that can *compel* an inner response must always be disappointed: all "meaning" must be at bottom related to our primary desires, and when they are extinct no miracle can restore to the world the value which they reflected upon it.

The purpose of education, therefore, cannot be to create any primary impulse which is lacking in the uneducated; the purpose can only be to enlarge the scope of those that human nature provides, by increasing the number and variety of attendant thoughts, and by showing where the most permanent satisfaction is to be found.

Under the impulse of a Calvinistic horror³ of the "natural man," this obvious truth has been too often misconceived in the training of the young; "nature" has been falsely regarded as excluding all that is best in what is natural, and the endeavor to teach virtue has led to the production of stunted and contorted hypocrites instead of full-grown human beings. From such mistakes in education a better psychology or a kinder heart is beginning to preserve the present generation, we need, therefore, waste no more words on the theory that the purpose of education is to thwart or eradicate nature.

But although nature must supply the initial force of desire, nature is not, in the civilised man, the spasmodic, fragmentary, and yet violent set of impulses that it is in the savage. Each impulse has its constitutional ministry of thought and knowledge and reflection, through which possible conflicts of impulses are foreseen, and temporary impulses are controlled by the unifying impulse which may be called wisdom. In this way education destroys the crudity of instinct, and increases through knowledge the wealth and variety of the individual's contacts with the outside world, making him no longer an isolated fighting unit, but a citizen of the universe, embracing distant countries, remote regions of space, and vast stretches of past and future within the circle of his interests. It is this simultaneous softening in the insistence of desire and enlargement of its scope that is the chief moral end of education.

Closely connected with this moral end is the more purely intellectual aim of education, the endeavor to make us see and imagine the world in an objective manner, as far as possible as it is in itself, and not merely through the distorting medium of personal desire. The complete attainment of such an objective view is no doubt an ideal, indefinitely approachable, but not actually and fully realisable. Education, considered as a process of forming our mental habits and our outlook on the world, is to be judged successful in proportion as its outcome approximates to this ideal; in proportion, that is to say, as it gives us a true view of our place in society, of the relation of the whole human

society to its non-human environment, and of the nature of the non-human world as it is in itself apart from our desires and interests. If this standard is admitted, we can return to the consideration of science, inquiring how far science contributes to such an aim, and whether it is in any respect superior to its rivals in educational practice.

2

Two opposite and at first sight conflicting merits belong to science as against literature and art. The one, which is not inherently necessary, but is certainly true at the present day, is hopefulness as to the future of human achievement, and in particular as to the useful work that may be accomplished by any intelligent student. This merit and the cheerful outlook which it engenders prevent what might otherwise be the depressing effect of another aspect of science, to my mind also a merit, and perhaps its greatest merit—I mean the irrelevance of human passions and of the whole subjective apparatus where scientific truth is concerned. Each of these reasons for preferring the study of science requires some amplification. Let us begin with the first.

In the study of literature or art our attention is perpetually riveted upon the past: the men of Greece or of the Renaissance did better than any men do now; the triumphs of former ages, so far from facilitating fresh triumphs in our own age, actually increase the difficulty of fresh triumphs by rendering originality harder of attainment; not only is artistic achievement not cumulative, but it seems even to depend upon a certain freshness and *naïveté* of impulse and vision which civilisation tends to destroy. Hence comes, to those who have been nourished on the literary and artistic productions of former ages, a certain peevishness and undue fastidiousness towards the present, from which there seems no escape except into the deliberate vandalism which ignores tradition and in the search after originality achieves only the eccentric. But in such vandalism there is none of the simplicity and spontaneity out of which great art springs: theory is still the canker in its core, and insincerity destroys the advantages of a merely pretended ignorance.

The despair thus arising from an education which suggests no pre-eminent mental activity

³ the view that the natural man is totally depraved and that the flesh is therefore evil; one of the doctrines of John Calvin (1509–1564), French theologian.

except that of artistic creation is wholly absent from an education which gives the knowledge of scientific method. The discovery of scientific method, except in pure mathematics, is a thing of yesterday, speaking broadly, we may say that it dates from Galileo.⁴ Yet already it has transformed the world, and its success proceeds with ever-accelerating velocity. In science men have discovered an activity of the very highest value in which they are no longer, as in art, dependent for progress upon the appearance of continually greater genius, for in science the successors stand upon the shoulders of their predecessors; where one man of supreme genius has invented a method, a thousand lesser men can apply it. No transcendent ability is required in order to make useful discoveries in science, the edifice of science needs its masons, bricklayers, and common laborers as well as its foremen, master-builders, and architects. In art nothing worth doing can be done without genius; in science even a very moderate capacity can contribute to a supreme achievement.

In science the man of real genius is the man who invents a new method. The notable discoveries are often made by his successors, who can apply the method with fresh vigor, unimpaired by the previous labor of perfecting it; but the mental caliber of the thought required for their work, however brilliant, is not so great as that required by the first inventor of the method. There are in science immense numbers of different methods, appropriate to different classes of problems; but over and above them all, there is something not easily definable, which may be called *the* method of science. It was formerly customary to identify this with the inductive method, and to associate it with the name of Bacon. But the true inductive method was not discovered by Bacon, and the true method of science is something which includes deduction as much as induction, logic and mathematics as much as botany and geology. I shall not attempt the difficult task of stating what the scientific method is, but I will try to indicate the temper of mind out of which the scientific method grows, which is the second of the two merits that were mentioned above as belonging to a scientific education.

The kernel of the scientific outlook is a thing

so simple, so obvious, so seemingly trivial that the mention of it may almost excite derision. The kernel of the scientific outlook is the refusal to regard our own desires, tastes, and interests as affording a key to the understanding of the world. Stated thus baldly, this may seem no more than a trite truism. But to remember it consistently in matters arousing our passionate partisanship is by no means easy, especially where the available evidence is uncertain and inconclusive. A few illustrations will make this clear.

Aristotle, I understand, considered that the stars must move in circles because the circle is the most perfect curve. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, he allowed himself to decide a question of fact by an appeal to aesthetic-moral considerations. In such a case it is at once obvious to us that this appeal was unjustifiable. We know now how to ascertain as a fact the way in which the heavenly bodies move, and we know that they do not move in circles, or even in accurate ellipses, or in any other kind of simply describable curve. This may be painful to a certain hankering after simplicity of pattern in the universe, but we know that in astronomy such feelings are irrelevant. Easy as this knowledge seems now, we owe it to the courage and insight of the first inventors of scientific methods, and more especially of Galileo.

We may take as another illustration Malthus's⁵ doctrine of population. This illustration is all the better for the fact that his actual doctrine is now known to be largely erroneous. It is not his conclusions that are valuable, but the temper and method of his inquiry. As everyone knows, it was to him that Darwin owed an essential part of his theory of natural selection, and this was only possible because Malthus's outlook was truly scientific. His great merit lies in considering man not as the object of praise or blame, but as a part of nature, a thing with a certain characteristic behavior from which certain consequences must follow. If the behavior is not quite what Malthus supposed, if the con-

⁵ Thomas Robert Malthus (1766–1834), English economist. The doctrine Russell refers to is that "population increases in a geometrical, food in an arithmetical proportion." According to this view population would outgrow the means of subsistence.

⁴ an Italian astronomer (1564–1642).

sequences are not quite what he inferred, that may falsify his conclusions, but does not impair the value of his method. The objections which were made when his doctrine was new—that it was horrible and depressing, that the people ought not to act as he said they did, and so on—were all such as implied an unscientific attitude of mind; as against all of them, his calm determination to treat man as a natural phenomenon marks an important advance over the reformers of the eighteenth century and the Revolution.

Under the influence of Darwinism the scientific attitude towards man has now become fairly common, and is to some people quite natural, though to most it is still a difficult and artificial intellectual contortion. There is, however, one study which is as yet almost wholly untouched by the scientific spirit—I mean the study of philosophy. Philosophers and the public imagine that the scientific spirit must pervade pages that bristle with allusions to ions, germ-plasms, and the eyes of shell-fish. But as the devil can quote Scripture, so the philosopher can quote science. The scientific spirit is not an affair of quotation, of externally acquired information, any more than manners are an affair of the etiquette-book. The scientific attitude of mind involves a sweeping away of all other desires in the interests of the desire to know—it involves suppression of hopes and fears, loves and hates, and the whole subjective emotional life, until we become subdued to the material, able to see it frankly, without preconceptions, without bias, without any wish except to see it as it is, and without any belief that what it is must be determined by some relation, positive or negative, to what we should like it to be, or to what we can easily imagine it to be.

Now in philosophy this attitude of mind has not as yet been achieved. A certain self-absorption, not personal, but human, has marked almost all attempts to conceive the universe as a whole. Mind, or some aspect of it—thought or will or sentience—has been regarded as the pattern after which the universe is to be conceived, for no better reason, at bottom, than that such a universe would not seem strange, and would give us the cosy feeling that every place is like home. To conceive the universe as essentially progressive or essentially deteriorating, for example, is to give to our hopes and

fears a cosmic importance which *may*, of course, be justified, but which we have as yet no reason to suppose justified. Until we have learnt to think of it in ethically neutral terms, we have not arrived at a scientific attitude in philosophy; and until we have arrived at such an attitude, it is hardly to be hoped that philosophy will achieve any solid results.

I have spoken so far largely of the negative aspect of the scientific spirit, but it is from the positive aspect that its value is derived. The instinct of constructiveness, which is one of the chief incentives to artistic creation, can find in scientific systems a satisfaction more massive than any epic poem. Disinterested curiosity, which is the source of almost all intellectual effort, finds with astonished delight that science can unveil secrets which might well have seemed for ever undiscoverable. The desire for a larger life and wider interests, for an escape from private circumstances, and even from the whole recurring human cycle of birth and death, is fulfilled by the impersonal cosmic outlook of science as by nothing else. To all these must be added, as contributing to the happiness of the man of science, the admiration of splendid achievement, and the consciousness of inestimable utility to the human race. A life devoted to science is therefore a happy life, and its happiness is derived from the very best sources that are open to dwellers on this troubled and passionate planet.

HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK 1878–

Harry Emerson Fosdick, famous American preacher, is a widely read and provocative writer on religious subjects. A member of the Baptist Church, he may be described as having been for years a leading representative of liberal Protestantism. From 1930 to 1946 he was pastor of Riverside Church, New York City. His name is familiar to readers of magazines, and he has published many books, among them The Meaning of Prayer (1915), Adventurous Religion (1926), A Guide to Understanding the Bible (1938), and On Being Fit to Live With (1946). The following essay should be read in connection with Beard's essay on progress (II, 248) and Thomas Huxley's views on the importance of scientific knowledge (II, 152).

WILL SCIENCE DISPLACE GOD?¹

In one of our American colleges founded long ago in piety and faith for the furtherance of the Gospel, a professor recently made a "Senior Chapel Address" frankly skeptical of God and immortality, the key-note of which was sounded in the words, "God becomes progressively less essential to the running of the universe." There is occasion for thought along many lines, not only for religious people but for all our citizenship, in this suggestive spectacle of an American college chapel founded for the worship of God thus transformed into a platform for denying him. But behind all other questions lies the basic issue which the professor raises. He thinks that modern science is making God increasingly unnecessary.

That is the nub of the whole matter in the age-long conflict between science and religion. That way of stating the issue—not that science theoretically disproves God, but that science progressively makes him "less essential"—correctly focuses the problem. Religious people, fretted by fear of modern views of the world, have comforted themselves with the assurance that science cannot disprove God. Of course it cannot! They have assuaged their grief, mourning the loss of old theologies, by the conviction that, as new telescopes do not destroy the ancient stars, so new ways of viewing God's operations do not negative the Ancient of Days himself. Of course not! But that is not the ultimate issue in the conflict between science and religion. The professor has that matter correctly put. What modern science is doing for multitudes of people, as anybody who watches American life can see, is not to disprove God's theoretical existence, but to make him "progressively less essential."

Although its applications and its consequences are innumerable, the reason for this can be briefly stated. Throughout man's history in the past and among the great majority of people to-day, religion has been and is a way of getting things that human beings want. From rain out of heaven to good health on earth, men have sought the desires of their hearts at the altars of their gods. Closely associated in its early history with magic—the search for some

spell or incantation, some Aladdin's lamp which would make the unseen powers subject to the user—religion has always provided for its devotees methods of worship, forms of ritual, secrets of prayer, or spiritual relationships with God guaranteed to gain for the faithful the benefits they have sought. In every realm of human want and craving, men thus have used religious methods to achieve their aims and, whether they desired good crops, large families, relief from pestilence, or success in war, have conceived themselves as dependent on the favor of heaven. And now comes science, which also is a method of getting what human beings want. That is its most important character. As a theoretical influence it is powerful enough, as a practical influence it is overwhelming. It does provide an astoundingly successful method of getting what men want.

Here is the crucial point of competition between science and religion. In realm after realm where religion has been offering its methods for satisfying men's desires, science comes with a new method which works with obvious and enormous consequence. Quietly, but inevitably, man's reliance for the fulfilling of his needs slips over from religion to science. Not many men stop to argue against religion—they may even continue to believe it with considerable fervor—but they have less and less practical use for it. The things they daily want are no longer obtained that way. From providing light and locomotion, or stamping out typhus and yellow fever, to the unsnarling of mental difficulty by applied psychology, men turn to another method for their help. God is not disproved; he is displaced. The old picture of a bifurcated universe, where a supernatural order overlies a natural order and occasionally in miraculous interference invades it, becomes incredible. Creation is all of one piece, a seamless garment. And if, now, in this indivisible and law-abiding world we can get what we want by learning laws and fulfilling conditions, why is it not true, as the professor said, that "God becomes progressively less essential to the running of the universe"?

It is the more important to visualize this matter clearly and deal with it candidly because the conflict between science and religion is so seldom conceived and faced in terms of this central problem. From the first, an instinctive

¹ From *Adventurous Religion*, by Harry Emerson Fosdick. Copyright, 1926, by Harper & Brothers.

fear of science has characterized organized religion, as it manifestly characterizes a great deal of American Christianity to-day. That fear is justified and the peril real, but it does not lie in the quarter where it is popularly located.

That modern science is neither the science of the Bible nor the traditional science of the churches, that the ancient Book represents an ancient cosmology no longer tenable, so that the Bible cannot any more be used as a court of appeal on any scientific question whatsoever, became apparent long ago. The point of danger has been commonly supposed to lie there. Genesis versus astronomy, Genesis versus geology, Genesis versus evolution—such have been the major conflicts between the churches and the scientists. But such contentions, large as they have bulked in noise and rancor, are child's play compared with this other, central, devastating consequence which science is silently but surely working in popular religion. Science to-day is religion's overwhelmingly successful competitor in showing men how to get what they want.

This shift of reliance from religious to scientific methods for achieving human aims is so obvious that any man's daily life is a constant illustration of it, and in particular it grows vivid to one who travels in lands where memorials of old religions stand beside the achievements of new science. This would have been a famine year in Egypt in the olden time; so low a Nile would have meant starvation to myriads. One stands amid the ruins of Karnak and reconstructs in imagination the rituals, sacrifices, prayers offered before Amon-Re seeking for help in such a famished year. But no one went to Karnak this year for fear of starving, or to any Coptic church or Moslem mosque or Protestant chapel. Men have gotten what they wanted through another kind of structure altogether—the dam at Assuan.

This sort of thing, indefinitely repeated in areas where man's most immediate and clamorous needs lie, constitutes the critical effect of science on religion. It does not so much convert religion as crowd it out. The historians are saying that it was malaria that sapped the energy of ancient Greece and drained her human resources. For centuries folk must have prayed against their mysterious enemy, sacrificed to the gods, and consulted oracles. From the days of

the Dorians to the Christian churches in Corinth and the Moslem mosques that succeeded them, they tried by religious means to stave off their stealthy foe. But when a few months ago the Near East Relief took over old Greek army barracks at Corinth, put two thousand refugee children into them and straightway had twelve hundred cases of malaria, it was an American trained nurse who went into the community and despite apathy, ignorance, piety, and prejudice, cleaned up the whole countryside so that no one need have malaria there again.

Reduplicate that sort of thing interminably and the consequence is clear: we rely more and more on scientific methods for getting what we want. Travelers among primitive people must remark how deeply and constantly religious they are, so that no hour of the day is free from religious motive. Of course they are thus uninterruptedly religious. They would better be. Religion is the chief way they know of being sure of everything they want, from children to crops, from good health to good hunting. But with us many an area where only religious methods once were known for meeting human needs now is occupied by science, and the mastery of law-abiding forces, which science already has conferred, puts into our hands a power that makes trivial all the Aladdin's lamps magicians ever dreamed. A clever statistician recently has figured that in the mechanical appliances used in the United States in 1919 there was a force equal to over a billion horse-power, and that with a hundred odd million people to be served and each unit of horse-power equal to ten of manpower, every inhabitant of the United States, man, woman, and child, had on the average as good as fifty human slaves now working for him. There is no limit to the possibilities of that procedure, men think. We can in time have what we want.

Where, then, does God come in? Learn the laws, master the law-abiding forces—that seems to an ever-increasing number the only way to achieve our aims. It holds as true of mind as of matter, as true of morals as of mind. Whether in improving our crops, healing our diseases, educating our children, building our characters, or providing international substitutes for war, always we must learn the laws and fulfil the conditions, and when we do that the consequences will arrive. Such is the scientific meth-

od which everywhere wins out as the competitor of traditional religion in meeting human needs. And the upshot is that religion seems ever less necessary: "God becomes progressively less essential."

It is a tragic pity that, with this crucial problem facing religion in its relationship with science, anybody should be wasting time over foregone conclusions like evolution. For this far-more-central matter must be faced, and it can be faced triumphantly.

In the first place, science may be a competitor of religion conceived as a means of getting what we want, but it is not on that account a competitor of the kind of religion that the great souls of the race have known. Religion at its best never has been merely or chiefly a means of serving man's selfish purposes; it has rather faced men with a Purpose greater than their own which it was their business unselfishly to serve. The real prophets of the spirit have not so much relied on their religion for dole as they have been called by their religion to devotion. They have found religion's meaning, less in getting gifts from it, than in making their lives a gift to it. Religion, as Professor Royce of Harvard kept insisting, is at heart loyalty—loyalty to the highest that we know. The prayer of primitive religion and of a lamentable amount of traditional and current religion is "My will be done," and the sooner science breaks up that kind of sacramental magic, pulverizes that vain reliance on supernatural sleight-of-hand, the better. Real faith will not thereby be touched; that has another sort of prayer altogether: "Not my will, but thine, be done." Any man who in this morally loose and selfish time undertakes to show that that prayer, translated into life, is less necessary than it used to be has a task on his hands. The generation is sick for lack of it. Our prevalent doctrine of moral anarchy—let yourself go; do what you please; indulge any passing, passionate whim—is a sorry, ruinous substitute for it. God as a benign charity organization that we can impose upon—let science smash up that idea! But God as the Goal of all our living, whose will is righteousness and whose service is freedom—he does not become "progressively less essential." He becomes progressively more essential, and unless we can recover him and learn anew loyalty to the Highest in scorn of consequence, our modern soci-

ety, like that other group of bedeviled swine, is likely yet to plunge down a steep place into the sea.

Whenever any man discovers something greater than himself and in self-forgetting service gives his life to it, there religion has struck in its roots. There is such a thing as the "religion of science," where men at all costs and hazards live for the love of truth. Knowing, as I do, some churchmen formally religious but really undevoted to anything greater than themselves, and some scientists formally irreligious but devoted with all their hearts to the love of light, I have no doubt what the judgment of the Most High would be. He who faithfully serves the More-than-self has, in so far, found religion. So there is a religion of art in which men give their lives to beauty, as Ghiberti² spent laborious years upon the bronze doors of the Florentine Baptistery that Michelangelo³ called the Gates of Paradise; and there is a religion of human service where men count others better than themselves and live for the sake of generations yet unborn. The Over-Soul appears to men in many forms and claims allegiance. When, however, man ceases this fragmentary splitting of his ideal world—truth here, beauty there, love yonder—and sees that God is love, truth, beauty, and that he who dwells in these and lives for them is dwelling in God and God in him as the New Testament says, he has found religion crowned and consummated. What is there in our modern knowledge that has disparaged this spirit of devotion to the Highest or made it less necessary? What is there that can possibly take the place of it?

There is nothing peculiarly modern about this idea of religion as loyalty; it is at least as old as Gethsemane, as old as the prison house of Socrates, and the great hours of the Hebrew prophets. It has challenged conscience many a century in those who have thought it needful "to obey God rather than men." Religion may have started with selfish magic but it did not flower out there. It flowered out in a Cross where one died that other men might live abundantly. When that spirit takes modern form, it turns up in folk like Doctor Barlow, a missionary who deliberately swallowed the

² Italian sculptor (1378–1455).

³ Italian painter and sculptor (1475–1564).

THE ESSAY · HENRY LOUIS MENCKEN

germs of a Chinese pestilence and then went to Johns Hopkins that by the study of the results the plague, whose nature had been unknown, might be combated. Science is no competitor of that kind of Christianity; that kind of Christianity uses science and all its powers in the service of its God.

It strikes an interested observer of this present generation's life that nothing has happened to make that spirit less necessary than it used to be. It strikes one that there are some things which a college professor might better say to our youth than that God is becoming less essential.

This impression is deepened by another fact. Though the mechanical equivalent of fifty human slaves be serving each of us in the United States, and though that be multiplied as many times as imagination can conceive, by no such scientific mastery of power alone can our deepest needs be met. Religion is, in part, like science, a way of satisfying human wants, but there are wants that science cannot satisfy. The idea that the scientific method by itself can so fulfil the life of man that a new psalm sometime will be written beginning, "Science is my shepherd; I shall not want," and ending, "my cup runneth over," is not borne out by the actual effects of modern knowledge on many of its devotees. Consider this picture of creation drawn by one of them:

In the visible world the Milky Way is a tiny fragment. Within the solar system is an infinitesimal speck, and of this speck our planet is a microscopic dot. On this dot tiny lumps of impure carbon and water crawl about for a few years, until they dissolve into the elements of which they are compounded.

Call that, if you will, a *reductio ad absurdum* of blank skepticism, yet anybody who is acquainted with our colleges knows students who are in that pit or on the verge of it or scattered all up and down the road that leads to it. A purposeless physico-chemical mechanism which accidentally came from nowhere and is headed nowhere, which cannot be banked on for moral solvency, and to which we have no more ultimate significance than the flowers have to the weather—that is the scientific universe without religion. Something that man deeply needs is obviously left out of such a world-view.

There are human wants, profound and clamorous, which that picture cannot supply.

While it is true therefore, that there are areas where traditional religion and modern science meet in cutthroat competition and where the winning method of getting what men want is sure to be the scientific, it is also true that when every area that belongs to science has been freely given up to her religion is only liberated, not obliterated. Whether or not a man will think he needs God to supply his wants will depend altogether on what his wants are. He may get his Rolls-Royce and his yacht, have his fields irrigated, his houses built, his cuisine supplied, his pestilences stopped, without religion, although one may wonder how much of the stability and vigor of the civilization which produces such results has depended on faith in a morally reliable creation. He may even get health without God, although the experience of most of us is that the body is not well unless the mind is and that the mind is never well without faith and hope. But whatever else he may obtain without God he will still live in a world that, like a raft on the high seas, is aimlessly adrift, uncharted, unguided, and unknown. Any one who has ever supposed this world to be so futile and inconsequential an experiment of chance and now has entered into the faiths and hopes of a vital and sustaining religion will regard with utter incredulity the idea that God has become less essential.

If a man cannot honestly believe in God, let him honestly say so, but let him not try to fool himself and us by the supposition that he is giving up a superfluity. Never in man's history has faith in God been more necessary to sane, wholesome, vigorous, and hopeful living than to-day amid the dissipating strain and paralyzing skepticism of modern life.

HENRY LOUIS MENCKEN
1880—

Although Henry Louis Mencken has entered many fields of writing, he has treated no subject without enlivening it, whether it be the American way of life, morals, religion, literature, or the American language itself. He has called himself "a professional critic of life and letters," and in the 1920's he was a colorful and dy-

namic crusader in the cause of common sense and intellectual enlightenment. Master of a lusty, witty, and picturesque style, Mencken assailed sham, smugness, and stupidity wherever he found them, sparing no one—politician, educator, churchman, or businessman—and even pillorying whole sections of the country. Battler that he was, Mencken is not easy to envisage as a scholar, one engaged in the quiet pursuits of research, but his achievement in scholarship is seen in such of his books as Treatise on the Gods (1930) and The American Language (1918, 1936). At the age of sixty Mencken began the publication of a series of autobiographical works. Happy Days (1940), Newspaper Days (1941), Heathen Days (1943). His essay on the feminine mind is the first chapter of In Defense of Women (1917). It may be read in connection with the latter half of Leacock's "Oxford as I See It" (II, 225), in which Leacock expresses himself on the subject of education for women.

THE FEMININE MIND¹

1

THE MATERNAL INSTINCT

A man's women folk, whatever their outward show of respect for his merit and authority, always regard him secretly as an ass, and with something akin to pity. His most gaudy sayings and doings seldom deceive them, they see the actual man within, and know him for a shallow and pathetic fellow. In this fact, perhaps, lies one of the best proofs of feminine intelligence, or, as the common phrase makes it, feminine intuition. The mark of that so-called intuition is simply a sharp and accurate perception of reality, an habitual immunity to emotional enchantment, a relentless capacity for distinguishing clearly between the appearance and the substance. The appearance, in the normal family circle, is a hero, a magnifico, a demi-god. The substance is a poor mountebank.

The proverb that no man is a hero to his valet is obviously of masculine manufacture. It is both insincere and untrue: insincere because it merely makes the egotistic doctrine that he is

potentially a hero to every one else, and untrue because a valet, being a fourth-rate man himself, is likely to be the last person in the world to penetrate his master's charlatanism. Who ever heard of a valet who didn't envy his master wholeheartedly? who wouldn't willingly change places with his master? who didn't secretly wish that he *was* his master? A man's wife labors under no such naive folly. She may envy her husband, true enough, certain of his more soothing prerogatives and sentimentalities. She may envy him his masculine liberty of movement and occupation, his impenetrable complacency, his peasant-like delight in petty vices, his capacity for hiding the harsh face of reality behind the cloak of romanticism, his general innocence and childishness. But she never envies him his puerile ego, she never envies him his shoddy and preposterous soul.

This shrewd perception of masculine bombast and make-believe, this acute understanding of man as the eternal tragic comedian, is at the bottom of that compassionate irony which passes under the name of the maternal instinct. A woman wishes to mother a man simply because she sees into his helplessness, his need of an amiable environment, his touching self-delusion. That ironical note is not only daily apparent in real life; it sets the whole tone of feminine fiction. The woman novelist, if she be skilful enough to arise out of mere imitation into genuine self-expression, never takes her heroes quite seriously. From the day of George Sand to the day of Selma Lagerlöf she has always got into her character study a touch of superior aloofness, of ill-concealed derision. I can't recall a single masculine figure created by a woman who is not, at bottom, a booby.

2

WOMEN'S INTELLIGENCE

That it should still be necessary, at this late stage in the senility of the human race, to argue that women have a fine and fluent intelligence is surely an eloquent proof of the defective observation, incurable prejudice, and general imbecility of their lords and masters. One finds very few professors of the subject, even among admitted feminists, approaching the fact as obvious; practically all of them think it necessary to bring up a vast mass of evidence

¹ Reprinted from *In Defense of Women* by H. L. Mencken, by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Copyright, 1922, by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

to establish what should be an axiom. Even the Franco-Englishman, W. L. George,² one of the most sharp-witted of the faculty, wastes a whole book upon the demonstration, and then, with a great air of uttering something new, gives it the humorless title of "The Intelligence of Women." The intelligence of women, forsooth! As well devote a laborious time to the sagacity of serpents, pickpockets, or Holy Church!

Women, in truth, are not only intelligent, they have almost a monopoly of certain of the subtler and more utile forms of intelligence. The thing itself, indeed, might be reasonably described as a special feminine character; there is in it, in more than one of its manifestations, a femaleness as palpable as the femaleness of cruelty, masochism, or rouge. Men are strong. Men are brave in physical combat. Men have sentiment. Men are romantic, and love what they conceive to be virtue and beauty. Men incline to faith, hope and charity. Men know how to sweat and endure. Men are amiable and fond. But in so far as they show the true fundamentals of intelligence—in so far as they reveal a capacity for discovering the kernel of eternal verity in the husk of delusion and hallucination and a passion for bringing it forth—to that extent, at least, they are feminine, and still nourished by the milk of their mothers. "Human creatures," says George, borrowing from Weininger, "are never entirely male or entirely female; there are no men, there are no women, but only sexual majorities." Find me an obviously intelligent man, a man free from sentimentality and illusion, a man hard to deceive, a man of the first class, and I'll show you a man with a wide streak of woman in him. Bonaparte had it; Goethe had it; Schopenhauer had it; Bismarck and Lincoln had it. . . . The essential traits and qualities of the male, the hallmarks of the unpolluted masculine, are at the same time the hallmarks of the *Schafskopf*.³ The caveman is all muscles and mush. Without a woman to rule him and think for him, he is a truly lamentable spectacle: a baby with whiskers, a rabbit with the frame of an aurochs,⁴ a feeble and preposterous caricature of God.

² Walter Lionel George (1882–1926), English novelist, who was born in Paris and lived there until the age of twenty-three.

³ blockhead.

⁴ European bison.

It would be an easy matter, indeed, to demonstrate that superior talent in man is practically always accompanied by this feminine favor—that complete masculinity and stupidity are often indistinguishable. Lest I be misunderstood I hasten to add that I do not mean to say that masculinity contributes nothing to the complex of chemico-physiological reactions which produces what we call talent; all I mean to say is that this complex is impossible without the feminine contribution—that it is a product of the interplay of the two elements. In women of genius we see the opposite picture. They are commonly distinctly mannish, and shave as well as shine. Think of George Sand, Catherine the Great, Elizabeth of England, Rosa Bonheur, Teresa Carreño, or Cosima Wagner.⁵ The truth is that neither sex, without some fertilization by the complementary characters of the other, is capable of the highest reaches of human endeavor. Man, without a saving touch of woman in him, is too doltish, too naive and romantic, too easily deluded and lulled to sleep by his imagination to be anything above a cavalryman, a theologian, or a bank director. And woman, without some trace of that divine innocence which is masculine, is too harshly the realist for those vast projections of the fancy which lie at the heart of what we call genius. Here, as elsewhere in the universe, the best effects are obtained by a mingling of elements. The wholly manly man lacks the wit necessary to give objective form to his soaring and secret dreams, and the wholly womanly woman is apt to be too cynical a creature to dream at all.

3

THE MASCULINE BAG OF TRICKS

What men, in their egoism, constantly mistake for a deficiency of intelligence in woman is merely an incapacity for mastering that mass of small intellectual tricks, that complex of petty knowledges, that collection of cerebral

⁵ George Sand . . . Cosima Wagner: George Sand (1804–1876), French novelist; Catherine II (1729–1796), Empress of Russia; Elizabeth (1533–1603), Queen of England; Marie Rosa Bonheur (1820–1899), French painter of animals; Maria Teresa Carreño (1853–1917), Venezuelan pianist; Cosima Wagner (1837–1930), wife of Richard Wagner, German composer. She had remarkable business and executive ability.

rubber-stamps, which constitutes the chief mental equipment of the average male. A man thinks that he is more intelligent than his wife because he can add up a column of figures more accurately, and because he understands the imbecile jargon of the stock market, and because he is able to distinguish between the ideas of rival politicians, and because he is privy to the minutiae of some sordid and degrading business or profession, say soap-selling or the law. But these empty talents, of course, are not really signs of a profound intelligence; they are, in fact, merely superficial accomplishments, and their acquirement puts little more strain on the mental powers than a chimpanzee suffers in learning how to catch a penny or scratch a match. The whole bag of tricks of the average business man, or even of the average professional man, is mordantly childish. It takes no more actual sagacity to carry on the everyday hawking and haggling of the world, or to ladle out its normal doses of bad medicine and worse law, than it takes to operate a taxicab or fry a pan of fish. No observant person, indeed, can come into close contact with the general run of business and professional men—I confine myself to those who seem to get on in the world, and exclude the admitted failures—without marvelling at their intellectual lethargy, their incurable ingenuousness, their appalling lack of ordinary sense. The late Charles Francis Adams, a grandson of one American President and a great-grandson of another, after a long lifetime in intimate association with some of the chief business “geniuses” of that paradise of traders and usurers, the United States, reported in his old age that he had never heard a single one of them say anything worth hearing. These were vigorous and masculine men, and in a man’s world they were successful men, but intellectually they were all blank cartridges.

There is, indeed, fair ground for arguing that, if men of that kidney were genuinely intelligent, they would never succeed at their gross and drivelling concerns—that their very capacity to master and retain such balderdash as constitutes their stock in trade is proof of their inferior mentality. The motion is certainly supported by the familiar incompetency of first-rate men for what are called practical concerns. One could not think of Aristotle or Beethoven

multiplying 3,472,701 by 99,999 without making a mistake, nor could one think of him remembering the range of this or that railway share for two years, or the number of ten-penny nails in a hundredweight, or the freight on lard from Galveston to Rotterdam. And by the same token one could not imagine him expert at billiards, or at grouse-shooting, or at golf, or at any other of the idiotic games at which what are called successful men commonly divert themselves. In his great study of British genius, Havelock Ellis⁶ found that an incapacity for such petty expertness was visible in almost all first-rate men. They are bad at tying cravats. They do not understand the fashionable card-games. They are puzzled by book-keeping. They know nothing of party politics. In brief, they are inert and impotent in the very fields of endeavor that see the average men’s highest performances, and are easily surpassed by men who, in actual intelligence, are about as far below them as the *Simiidae*.⁷

This lack of skill at manual and mental tricks of a trivial character—which must inevitably appear to a barber or a dentist as stupidity, and to a successful haberdasher as downright imbecility—is a character that men of the first class share with women of the first, second, and even third classes. There is at the bottom of it, in truth, something unmistakably feminine, its appearance in a man is almost invariably accompanied by the other touch of femaleness that I have described. Nothing, indeed, could be plainer than the fact that women, as a class, are sadly deficient in the small expertness of men as a class. One seldom, if ever, hears of them succeeding in the occupations which bring out such expertness most lavishly—for example, tuning pianos, repairing clocks, practicing law (*i. e.*, matching petty tricks with some other lawyer), painting portraits, keeping books, or managing factories—despite the circumstance that the great majority of such occupations are well within their physical powers, and that few of them offer any very formidable social barriers to female entrance. There is no external reason why women shouldn’t succeed as operative surgeons; the way is wide open, the rewards are large, and there is a special de-

⁶ English scientist (1859–1939). His *Study of British Genius* was published in 1904.

⁷ the family of anthropoid apes.

mand for them on grounds of modesty. Nevertheless, not many women graduates in medicine undertake surgery and it is rare for one of them to make a success of it. There is, again, no external reason why women should not prosper at the bar, or as editors of newspapers, or as managers of the lesser sort of factories, or in the wholesale trade, or as hotel-keepers. The taboos that stand in the way are of very small force; various adventurous women have defied them with impunity; once the door is entered there remains no special handicap within. But, as every one knows, the number of women actually practising these trades and professions is very small, and few of them have attained to any distinction in competition with men.

4

WHY WOMEN FAIL

The cause thereof, as I say, is not external, but internal. It lies in the same disconcerting apprehension of the larger realities, the same impatience with the paltry and meretricious, the same disqualification for mechanical routine and empty technic which one finds in the higher varieties of men. Even in the pursuits which, by the custom of Christendom, are especially their own, women seldom show any of that elaborately conventionalized and half automatic proficiency which is the pride and boast of most men. It is a commonplace of observation, indeed, that a housewife who actually knows how to cook, or who can make her own clothes with enough skill to conceal the fact from the most casual glance, or who is competent to instruct her children in the elements of morals, learning and hygiene—it is a *platitude* that such a woman is very rare indeed, and that when she is encountered she is not usually esteemed for her general intelligence. This is particularly true in the United States, where the position of women is higher than in any other civilized or semi-civilized country, and the old assumption of their intellectual inferiority has been most successfully challenged. The American dinner-table, in truth, becomes a monument to the defective technic of the American housewife. The guest who respects his oesophagus, invited to feed upon its discordant and ill-prepared victuals, evades the experience as long and as often as he can, and resigns himself to it as he might

resign himself to being shaved by a paralytic. Nowhere else in the world have women more leisure and freedom to improve their minds, and nowhere else do they show a higher level of intelligence, or take part more effectively in affairs of the first importance. But nowhere else is there worse cooking in the home, or a more inept handling of the whole domestic economy, or a larger dependence upon the aid of external substitutes, by men provided, for the skill that is wanting where it theoretically exists. It is surely no mere coincidence that the land of the emancipated and enthroned woman is also the land of canned soup, of canned pork and beans, of whole meals in cans, and of everything else ready-made. And nowhere else is there a more striking tendency to throw the whole business of training the minds of children upon professional teachers, and the whole business of instructing them in morals and religion upon so-called Sunday-schools, and the whole business of developing and caring for their bodies upon playground experts, sex hygienists and other such professionals, most of them mounted banks.

In brief, women rebel—often unconsciously, sometimes even submitting all the while—against the dull, mechanical tricks of the trade that the present organization of society compels them to practise for a living, and that rebellion testifies to their intelligence. If they enjoyed and took pride in those tricks, and showed it by diligence and skill, they would be on all fours with such men as are head waiters, ladies' tailors, schoolmasters or carpet-beaters, and proud of it. The inherent tendency of any woman above the most stupid is to evade the whole obligation and, if she cannot actually evade it, to reduce its demands to the minimum. And when some accident purges her, either temporarily or permanently, of the inclination to marriage (of which much more anon), and she enters into competition with men in the general business of the world, the sort of career that she commonly carves out offers additional evidence of her mental peculiarity. In whatever calls for no more than an invariable technic and a feeble chicanery she usually fails; in whatever calls for independent thought and resourcefulness she usually succeeds. Thus she is almost always a failure as a lawyer, for the law requires only an armament

of hollow phrases and stereotyped formulae, and a mental habit which puts these phantasms above sense, truth and justice; and she is almost always a failure in business, for business, in the main, is so foul a compound of trivialities and rogueries that her sense of intellectual integrity revolts against it. But she is usually a success as a sick-nurse, for that profession requires ingenuity, quick comprehension, courage in the face of novel and disconcerting situations, and above all, a capacity for penetrating and dominating character, and whenever she comes into competition with men in the arts, particularly on those secondary planes where simple nimbleness of mind is unaided by the master strokes of genius, she holds her own invariably. The best and most intellectual—*i. e.*, most original and enterprising—play-actors are not men, but women, and so far the best teachers and blackmailers, and a fair share of the best writers, and public functionaries, and executants of music. In the *demi-monde* one will find enough acumen and daring, and enough resilience in the face of special difficulties, to put the equipment of any exclusively male profession to shame. . . .

5

THE THING CALLED INTUITION

Men, as every one knows, are disposed to question this superior intelligence of women; their egoism demands the denial, and they are seldom reflective enough to dispose of it by logical analysis. Moreover, as we shall see a bit later on, there is a certain *specious* appearance of soundness in their position; they have forced upon women an artificial character which well conceals their real character, and women have found it profitable to encourage the deception. But though every normal man thus cherishes the soothing unction that he is the intellectual superior of all women, and particularly of his wife, he constantly gives the lie to his pretension by consulting and deferring to what he calls her intuition. That is to say, he knows by experience that her judgment in many matters of capital concern is more subtle and searching than his own, and, being disinclined to accredit this greater sagacity to a more competent intelligence, he takes refuge behind the doctrine that it is due to some impenetrable and

intangible talent for guessing correctly, some half mystical supersense, some vague (and, in essence, intra-human) instinct.

The true nature of this alleged instinct, however, is revealed by an examination of the situations which inspire a man to call it to his aid. These situations do not arise out of the purely technical problems that are his daily concern, but out of the rarer and more fundamental, and hence enormously more difficult problems which beset him only at long and irregular intervals, and so offer a test, not of his mere capacity for being drilled, but of his capacity for genuine ratiocination. No man, I take it, save one consciously inferior and hen-pecked, would consult his wife about hiring a clerk, or about extending credit to some paltry customer, or about some routine piece of tawdry swindling; not even the most egoistic man would fail to sound the sentiment of his wife about taking a partner into his business, or about standing for public office, or about combating unfair and ruinous competition, or about marrying off their daughter. Such things are of massive importance; they lie at the foundation of well-being; they call for the best thought that the man confronted by them can muster; the perils hidden in the wrong decision overcome even the clamors of vanity. It is here that they rise above the insignificant sentimentalities, superstitions, and formulae of men, and apply to the business their singular talent for separating the appearance from the substance, and so exercise what is called intuition.

Intuition? With all respect, bosh! Then it was intuition that led Darwin to work out the hypothesis of natural selection. Then it was intuition that fabricated the gigantically complex score of *Die Walküre*.^a Then it was intuition that convinced Columbus of the existence of land to the west of the Azores. All this intuition of which so much transcendental rubbish is merchanted is no more and no less than intelligence—intelligence so keen that it can penetrate to the hidden truth through the most formidable wrappings of false semblance and demeanor, and so little corrupted by sentimental prudery that it is equal to the even more difficult task of hauling that truth out into the

^a a music drama by Richard Wagner, the second part of *The Ring of the Nibelung*.

light, in all its naked hideousness. Women decide the larger questions of life correctly and quickly, not because they are lucky guessers, not because they are divinely inspired, not because they practise a magic inherited from savagery, but simply and solely because they have sense. They see at a glance what most men could not see with searchlights and telescopes; they are at grips with the essentials of a problem before men have finished debating its mere externals. They are the supreme realists of the race. Apparently illogical, they are the possessors of a rare and subtle super-logic. Apparently whimsical, they hang to the truth with a tenacity which carries them through every phase of incessant, jelly-like shifting of form. Apparently unobservant and easily deceived, they see with bright and horrible eyes. . . . In men, too, the same merciless perspicacity sometimes shows itself—men recognized to be more aloof and unflappable than the general—men of special talent for the logical—sardonic men, cynics. Men, too, sometimes have brains. But that is a rare, rare man, I venture, who is as steadily intelligent, as constantly sound in judgment, as little put off by appearances, as the average woman of forty-eight.

CHARLES AUSTIN BEARD
1874–1948

*In his view of modern civilization Charles Austin Beard, American historian and political scientist, was a thoughtful optimist. He recognized the shortcomings of democracy but believed in its basic aims, regarding it as a cause which though never quite won is never wholly lost. Science and the machine he accepted as major and invincible facts of the modern world, but unlike such thinkers as Chesterton, Belloc, and Spengler, he believed that these facts have been, on the whole, a blessing rather than a curse. Those who refuse to accept the invincibility of science are, he said, "condemned in advance to sterility and defeat." Two of his well-known works are *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution* (1913) and *The Rise of American Civilization* (1927), the latter written in collaboration with his wife, Mary Payne Beard. Beard's views on scientific progress should be compared with those of Thomas Huxley (see II, 152).*

THE IDEA OF PROGRESS¹

Although hailed in some circles of conceit as a glorious symbol of more speed and bigger machines, and in others as a covering for cruel materialism, the concept of progress is one of the most profound and germinal ideas at work in the modern age. It is at the same time an interpretation of the long history of mankind and a philosophy of action in this world of bewildering choices. It gives a clue of meaning to the rise of civilization out of the crudities of primitive barbarism and offers a guide to the immense impending future. Briefly defined, it implies that mankind, by making use of science and invention, can progressively emancipate itself from plagues, famines, and social disasters, and subjugate the materials and forces of the earth to the purposes of the good life—here and now. In essence the idea of progress belongs to our own times, for it was unknown to the ancients and to the thinkers of the Middle Ages. It is associated, therefore, with every phase of the vast intellectual, economic, and rational movement which has transformed the classical and medieval heritage into what is called, for the sake of convenience, Western civilization.

Hence it is closely affiliated with democracy, natural science, technology, and social amelioration, and shares with them the strength of universality. It is more than a theory. It has achievements to its credit on every hand—diseases stamped out, pain silenced or assuaged, the span of life lengthened, famine made obsolete, comforts and conveniences established, sanitation supplied to multitudes, knowledge made popular through amazing instrumentalities of transmission and reproduction. And it suggests a faith of power, faith that the world, as Emerson said, "is all gates, all opportunities, strings of tension to be struck." Rejecting resignation as a philosophy of life, it confronts obstacles with assurance. Where the pessimist sees the worst, it proposes a search for the best and advances toward perfection by increments. The suffering, ignorance, and folly which drive the timid to the Nirvana of doubt and oblivion are, under the light of progress, calls to action,

¹ From *A Century of Progress* by Charles A. Beard. Copyright, 1932, by Harper & Brothers.

to research, to planning, and to conquest. Touched by the genius of universal emancipation, the idea cuts across the barriers of caste, class, race, and nationality, breaks through rigid boundaries, and regards the substances and forces of nature as potential instruments of humane purposes. Everywhere it makes its way, dissolving the feudal institutions of Europe, disturbing the slumbers of the Orient, arousing lethargic Russia, and finding a naked avowal in the United States of America: the earth may be subdued to the security, welfare, and delight of them that dwell therein.

Like religion, which may be used as a cloak for pious frauds, and patriotism, which may garb the profits of munition-makers, the idea of progress may be and indeed is employed to cloud issues, evade evident responsibilities, and justify cruelties. In the hands of the demagogue or noisy promoter it may be manipulated to avoid questions and obscure doubts. And yet the idea survives its friends as well as its enemies. Being a synthesis of all explorations, scientific, economic, and social, of all energies devoted to subduing matter and force to ordered human ends, it offers a philosophy of individual and collective action. Tendering no scheme of finality, it escapes the illusion of finality—the doom of all little systems. With natural science and the prodigious art of technology at its command, with indubitable achievements already on the credit side, it is no mere dream, but has demonstrated that symmetry and efficiency can be carried into modern life. If this is true only in part and in outline, the idea of progress, in any event, deserves exploration to its uttermost boundaries and illustration in particulars.

At the outset, the explorer confronts four fundamental questions which have perplexed thinkers since civilization began on this planet: Do nations, like human beings, pass through youth, middle life, and old age to death? Or do they revolve endlessly, as some ancient writers thought, in a cycle—despotism, kingship, tyranny, aristocracy, oligarchy, democracy, and mob-rule—or some such succession of forms? Or is it possible for a nation to stand still through countless ages, preserving what it believes to be an ideal arrangement of things? Or is there discernible, under the surface ebb and flow through the centuries, some stream of

tendency, some organizing principle indicating the course of nations, and giving to their peoples some guiding rule by which to shape their activities and mold their lives and their institutions?

These questions run deeply into our religious beliefs, our philosophies, our fundamental attitudes toward life and conduct. Individuals may avoid them if they will, may move from one thing to another under immediate impulses or "the instant need of things," and make one little decision after another, trusting to luck or fate or the immortal gods as far as all larger patterns and tendencies are concerned. But no great statecraft, art, letters or program of economy can be founded on hand-to-mouth concepts of living and working. Within the universal scheme, small projects may be constructed and executed, no doubt, sometimes with outward appearances of success, but even they are subject to laws and forces which constrain them on all sides, are themselves parts of a larger whole. No one can think long and hard about the issues of private life or public affairs without confronting and attempting to answer these basic questions respecting the nature and course of the whole. And judging by the methods of the leaders of thought and action, by the achievements that endure through time, it is only in coming as nearly as possible to the central scheme of things that the worthiest and most lasting work can be accomplished. Perhaps this is only another way of saying that the wider the horizon, the more catholic the thought, the surer will be the insight of those who attempt great enterprises. How could it be otherwise?

Now among the fundamental notions competing for the allegiance of mankind in our age, as indicated in the beginning, none is more widely discussed, warmly defended, and hotly attacked than the idea of progress. In substance, it is a theory that the lot of mankind on this earth can be continually improved by the attainment of exact knowledge and the subjugation of the material world to the requirements of human welfare. Associated with it are many subsidiary concepts. Its controlling interest is in this earth, in our own time, not in a remote heaven to be attained after death. It assumes an indefinite future and plans for greater security, health, comfort, and beauty in the

coming years. While a philosophy of history, it is also a gospel of futurism. It is founded on the belief that civilization is on the threshold of time and it is characterized by the bouyancy of youth, not the skepticism and morbidity of old age. If it lays emphasis on the material benefits of civilization, it makes no assumptions that are more materialistic than those of less earthly philosophies. It does not admit that nations move from youth to death or through endless cycles, but contends that mankind is advancing, in spite of calamities, errors, and disasters, and on the whole in a desirable direction. If the truth of this allegation be questioned, its defender may reply, as did the mathematician, Poincaré,² when the validity of Euclid was challenged: whether true or not, it is convenient and is at all events one of the supreme products of intellectual history, the highest of all world courts.

Thus broadly conceived, the idea of progress runs counter, of course, to the doctrine of fatalism which has possessed large sections of humanity for long ages, especially in the Orient. The fatalist sees nations decimated by plagues, famines, floods, blights, diseases, and wars, and insists that "nothing can be done about it," that the more changes we have the more we have of the same thing. Those who make a philosophy of such fatalism, leave the world to its folly and withdraw within themselves to contemplate. Seeing many horrors wrought by physical nature and human nature, they conclude that "nothing really matters"; resignation, not effort and thought, is the best, if not the only, recourse. That such an attitude is fitting for a civilization in which science and invention have created no instrumentalities for eliminating or reducing calamitous forces must be conceded, but what justification can be made for accepting undoubted evils that can be eliminated by understanding and labor? By what criterion of values is it better to endure evils than to remove them? Let the philosophy of fatalism answer that question.

In a similar way the idea of progress is opposed to certain views of life which may fairly be said to have been dominant in Europe in the Middle Ages. With exceptions, of course, medieval thinkers looked upon this world as a

mere vestibule to heaven. Man, ran the current theory, is a poor and miserable sinner, born to trouble as the sparks fly upward; faith and conduct are to be shaped with reference to eternal bliss hereafter rather than to a pleasant and comfortable living on this mundane sphere. The ideal was not to refashion the world after some concept of earthly needs, but to accept most of it, as it came, and pass on to joys beyond. Riches, and the delightful life which they provided, were not unknown, to be sure, but were objects of suspicion. "There is not to be found in the writers of the early Middle Ages," declares a competent scholar, "that is to say, from the eighth to the thirteenth century, a trace of any attention to what we at the present day would designate economic questions. . . . The writings of this period, therefore, betray no sign of any interest in economic affairs." An exhaustive examination of the works of the outstanding thinkers of the time reveals not "a single passage to suggest that any of these authors suspected that the pursuit of riches, which they despised, occupied a sufficiently large place in national as well as individual life, to offer the philosopher a subject fruitful in reflections and results." Such was the Christian heritage near the close of the thirteenth century.

Although later in the Middle Ages religious philosophers were compelled to give attention to the economy of life and did work out systems of thought respecting it, they related their schemes to theology—to conduct acceptable in the sight of God, to sin, hell, salvation, and heaven. And their systems of thought were based upon the idea of a fixed order of society in which the established relations of classes were to be maintained and sanctioned by morality. Kings, bishops, priests, landlords, serfs, peasants, and artisans had their rights and duties—nothing fundamental was to be changed by the daring experimentation of the mind. The best thought of the time was concentrated on salvation in the hereafter rather than on the progressive reordering of earthly affairs. The great end of life—the purpose of history—was to secure the external welfare of that portion of humanity which could pass the gates of heaven. As for this world, well, it would be utterly destroyed sometime or at best was to be viewed as a place of temporary sojourn. While the Lord's Prayer mentioned a possible King-

²Jules Henri Poincaré (1854–1912), French mathematician.

dom of Heaven here below, medieval thinkers certainly did not concentrate on that aspect of their theology.

To the fatalism of the Orient and the other-worldliness of the Christian Middle Ages must be added a second idea opposed to the concept of progress—that is, utopianism. This idea takes two forms. In the minds of some thinkers it is related to the past: there has been a golden age, in the “good old days of the fathers” or in some remote period of the early evolution of mankind. In seeking to escape the evils of the present, we must return to the perfection of long ago when people lived in peace, happiness, innocence, and plenty. But, in other minds, utopianism is related to the future: by doing this or that we can establish a static order of bliss—a fixed scheme of things so nearly perfect that they will never have to be changed. A variant on these aspects of dreaming may be called the utopianism of whitewash: the present order is so nearly perfect that it is almost profane to inquire into its evils or to propose modifications, for the possibility of doing harm is always greater than the chances of doing good. Historians, with all their searching, have not been able to find the golden age in the past, and skeptics doubt the perfection of the present. Still the illusion of utopianism shadows all human thought about public and private affairs, challenging the idea of progress.

Unknown to the ancients, foreign to the theology of the Middle Ages, the idea of progress was slow in taking form and winning its way as a dominant concept of life. In reality it was a kind of gigantic intellectual outcropping—the product of the great commercial revolution ushered in by the discovery of America, the circumnavigation of the globe, and the development of natural science. As J. B. Bury³ points out, certain conditions were necessary to the flowering of the idea. First of all, there had to be respect for, and interest in, the common business of labor and industry—a respect which the slave-owners of ancient Athens and the landlords of the Middle Ages could not acquire. In the next place, since the idea of progress had to do with this world, it was necessary to shake off the dominance of other-worldliness and to think in secular terms; the recovery of ancient

learning in the Renaissance and the commercial revolution to which reference has been made favored this shift from heaven to earth. Finally, the idea of progress could not flourish until thinkers had cast overboard their slavish adherence to ancient books; natural science, with its emphasis on experimentation, the observation of common things, and invention, was necessary to clear the way for the emancipation of the mind from the despotism of theology and the classics. By the end of the seventeenth century, when all the American colonies except one, had been fairly started on their course, the ground was prepared for the rise and growth of the idea of progress—the steady improvement of the lot of mankind in this world as a good in itself, as a value in itself, without any reference whatever to a possible life after death.

At last the idea of progress, long in germination, already dimly foreshadowed by a few thinkers, finally came out in positive form. If a single name must be associated with its origin, it may well be that of Abbé de Saint-Pierre who gave to the world in 1737 his epoch-making work entitled *Observations on the Continuous Progress of Universal Reason*. “Here,” says Bury, correctly, “we have for the first time, expressed in definite terms, the vista of an immensely long progressive life in front of humanity. Civilization is only in its infancy. Bacon, like Pascal,⁴ had conceived it to be in its old age. . . . The Abbé was the first to fix his eyes on the remote destinies of the race and name immense periods of time.” By shaking off its inertia, by taking thought, by devoting its talents to the enterprise, wrote the Abbé, in substance, mankind can do more in a relatively short time to establish peace and improve its lot on earth than it has done in a thousand years under the régime of resignation, indifference, and complacency.

Once announced, the new philosophy ran swiftly through the minds of the French thinkers who were preparing the way for the Revolution that was to shake Church and State in the Old World and make room for secular supremacy. It was a dominant note in the great French *Encyclopaedia of Universal Knowledge*. It was implicit in Adam Smith’s *Wealth of Nations* published in 1776. In many ways the titanic

³ Irish historian (1861–1927), author of *The Idea of Progress* (1920).

⁴ Blaise Pascal (1623–1662), French philosopher and mathematician, author of *Pensées*.

labors of the French Revolution were guided by the idea of progress. The constitutional, economic, educational, and law-reform policies which accompanied that upheaval were secular, mundane, and directed to the improvement of the common fortunes of mankind. If, in immediate consequences, the Revolution was bourgeois in character, its achievements and ideas far outran the purposes of its directors, breaking the path for reconstruction of government and economy. If the bourgeois could be lifted into power, security, and well-being, why not the whole order of society? If the bourgeois could set up for themselves the goal of earthly advancement, why not the humblest laborers in the land? The genie was clearly out of the bottle and no human power could compress the spirit again into a class mold.

During these momentous years, while the idea of progress was taking form, spreading, branching, and working its way into the remotest divisions of European thought, the English colonies in America grew to maturity and burst upon the world stage as a united and independent power. Here the natural resources, intellectual climate, and social order were highly favorable to the growth of the new concept. Here nature had provided an enormous and diversified material endowment which could be used to establish a high level of life and sustain the continuous advancement of standards, if intelligently and efficiently used. Here the population was ready for secular enterprise. While many had migrated to America in search of religious freedom, the great majority who came voluntarily had come for mundane reasons—the improvement of their condition here and now—and even those who fled for religious reasons expected, as a rule, to find a decent living somehow. All the factors which had contributed to the germination of the idea of progress in Europe were even more prominent in America—respect for industry and labor, a preoccupation with secular enterprise, and a spirit of experimentation and invention.

In these circumstances, the leading thinkers of the New World, especially Franklin and Paine, carried the idea of progress more or less consciously into the plans they formulated for American culture. "It is impossible to imagine," wrote the former, "the height to which may be carried, in a thousand years, the power of

man over matter. We may perhaps learn to deprive large masses of their gravity and give them levity, for the sake of easy transportation. Agriculture may diminish its labor and double its produce; all diseases may by sure means be prevented or cured, not excepting that of old age, and our lives lengthened at pleasure even beyond the antediluvian standard. O that moral science were in a fair way of improvement, that men would cease to be wolves to one another and that human beings would at length learn what they now improperly call humanity!" Thomas Paine, in his *Rights of Man*, written in answer to Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution*—a plea for historic conservatism—sketched an outline of political economy that embraced universal education, the abolition of poverty, reform of the criminal law, pensions for the aged, the reduction of armaments, and international peace.

All through the nineteenth century the idea of progress continued to work as a powerful ferment in the opinions of the world. In America, the extension of the suffrage beyond the boundaries of the propertied classes, the adoption of universal education, and the growth of a leveling freedom in the agrarian West helped to widen its scope to include the whole population, to democratize it, in a word, and make it a guiding principle for civilization. In previous times and in other circumstances, privileged classes and individuals could lift themselves to a position of comfort, security, and prosperity by law and economic advantage and thus enjoy the benefits and delights of culture; now at last in a vast natural theater, it was thought, a whole people could, through progressive development, enjoy the blessings of science, industry, and art, and become civilized. The hewers of wood and drawers of water were to rise above the level of serfdom and sit at the banquet prepared by applied science. Here civilization was conceived not as a beautiful fairyland of delight surrounded by brutalizing labor, illiteracy, and margin-of-subsistence living for the masses. The actualities of American life, it was easy to show, were far from the ideal held up to the faithful, but the concept of progress, once let loose in our democracy, continued to act as a dynamic force, transforming every aspect of American civilization.

With inescapable fatality the mass production made possible by machinery and nourished by our unparalleled natural resources accelerated the leveling democracy implied in the idea of progress. Gigantic industries could not flourish without an immense market. And where was that market to be found? In a small privileged class enriched by the profits of capitalism? Only one answer was possible. The few craftsmen of the Middle Ages might sell the choice products of loom, forge, kiln, and chisel to lords, ladies, bishops, princes, and kings, but masters of huge industries turning out commodities by the ton and the million could thrive in no such limited area of demand. Markets for mass production simply could not be found unless the masses themselves rose above the historic margin of subsistence and were able to buy by the ton and the million. Only when the standard of life for the multitude is constantly rising and buying capacity is expanding can widening outlets be found for the goods which pour in swelling streams from the vast industries made possible by science and machinery. If the American bourgeois were as indifferent, on moral grounds, to the lot of the masses as the French nobility of the eighteenth century to the plight of their laborious peasants, still their enterprises could not develop without a continuous enlargement of the popular market—without a steady growth in the capacity of the masses to buy and enjoy goods once confined to the classes.

Herein, no doubt, lies one of the main sources of the European criticism which is directed against the idea of progress as powerfully expressed in American civilization. Every quest for the inner nature of that criticism and for the roots of its inspiration leads immediately to an opposition of class ideals. True culture, we are told, is inevitably confined to "the superior minority," and cannot exist when boundaries are widened to include millions of nameless and unknown. This is the theme of one school of writers which had its origins in ancient Greece and survives in the latest hour, finding new spokesmen as the old are forgotten. Consciously or unconsciously, it is dominated by one secret wish or conviction: Democracy operating under the idea of progress is incompatible with "culture."

This concept and the antithesis were clearly

and eloquently set forth long ago in the writings of Amiel.⁵ "In society," he remarks, "people are expected to behave as if they lived on ambrosia and concerned themselves with no interests except such as are noble. Care, need, passion, do not exist. All realism is suppressed as brutal. In a word, what is called *le grand monde* gives itself for the moment that flattering illusion that it is moving in an ethereal atmosphere and breathing the air of the gods. For this reason all vehemence, any cry of nature, all real suffering, all heedless familiarity, any genuine sign of passion, are startling and distasteful in this delicate *milieu* and at once destroy the collective work, the cloud palace, the imposing architectural creation raised by common consent. It is like the shrill cock-crow which breaks the spell of all enchantments and puts the faines to flight. These select gatherings produce without intending it a sort of concert for the eye and ear, an improvised work of art. By the instinctive collaboration of everybody concerned, wit and taste hold festival, and the associations of reality are exchanged for the associations of imagination. So understood, society is a form of poetry, the cultivated classes deliberately recompose the idyll of the past, and the buried world of Astraea.⁶ Paradox or not, I believe that these fugitive attempts to reconstruct a dream, whose only end is beauty, represent confused reminiscences of an age of gold haunting the human heart; or rather, aspirations toward a harmony of things which everyday reality denies to us, and of which art alone gives us a glimpse." Undoubtedly this is a fair statement of the idealized case; although a student of the world's social memoirs may be inclined to believe that such a *grand monde* never existed, save perhaps in the Tokugawa era of Japan at the height of its glory.

Having drawn his perfect picture of *le grand monde* supplied by Europe, Amiel presents the contrast afforded by the United States: "For the Americans, life means devouring, incessant activity. They must win gold, predominance, power; they must crush rivals, subdue nature. They have their hearts set on the means and

⁵ Henri-Frédéric Amiel (1821-1881), Swiss philosopher and critic.

⁶ daughter of Zeus and Themis. Astraea lived on earth during the Golden Age, an era of ideal prosperity and bliss.

never for an instant think of the end. They confound being with individual being, and the expansion of self with happiness. This means that they do not live by the soul, that they ignore the immutable and eternal, bustle at the circumference of their existence, because they cannot penetrate to its center. They are restless, eager, positive, because they are superficial. To what end all this stir, noise, greed, struggle? It is all a mere being, stunned and deafened." In short, without stopping now to dispute the correctness of Amiel's contentions, Americans do not live on ambrosia, dispense with care, move in an ethereal atmosphere, breathe the air of the gods, escape from the world, and reconstruct a dream whose only end is beauty; they are incessantly engaged in subduing nature and in seeking to develop an ordered economy which will establish security, continuity in high productive output, and the widest possible distribution of the benefits flowing from efficient industry.

When once the antithesis presented by Amiel is clearly recognized and its implications understood, the issue of civilization before us becomes perfectly evident. Whether and how long European countries will continue to maintain superior minorities concerned only with "noble" interests, with cloud palaces and associations of the imagination, is an appropriate matter for speculation. Assuming their virtues to be all that their advocates claim, it may be appropriately asked, "At what price glory?" Bent backs, knotted hands, and numbed minds must pay for parties at which such wit and taste hold festival and the idyll of the past is recovered for the delight of the participants. If, when the balance sheet is struck, the credits outweigh the debits, still it may be surmised that the knowledge released by science, the demands of industry for markets, the awakening insistence of the multitude on sharing the fruits of the earth, have made forever obsolete *le grand monde* of the lotos-eaters. Esthetes may regret it, but there is something Promethean in the vast upward thrust of the masses under the banner of progress, and those who have occasion to think, teach, or direct in the coming years will have to reckon with that invincible fact. Iron gates are closing on the dreams of privilege, and those who cherish the ideals of that order will have to look beyond

this world for their lost Atlantis. This seems to inhere in the nature of things, even though poignant Americans will long continue to pay large honoraria to Europeans for the privilege of listening to deprecatory estimates respecting the very heart and dynamic of civilization in the United States.

If critics of progress fail to grasp its cosmic nature, friends of the idea often make it appear petty and ridiculous by the indiscriminating zeal with which they espouse it. As in the case of every other fruitful concept, a lunatic fringe is associated with the idea. To these short-sighted spectators at the great show, all movement is progress, means are ends, and the worth of a personality is to be measured by the number of motor-cars, telephones, radios, and bath-tubs he possesses. The idea of progress thus becomes purely numerical. J. P. Morgan⁷ has more things than Dante;⁸ therefore he is superior. Jim Fiske⁹ had more diamond rings than Francis of Assisi;¹⁰ accordingly, his rating in civilization must be higher. Zenith¹¹ has more miles of paved streets than Athens, a single apartment house in New York will hold the entire population of that ancient city; evidently America transcends in achievement the best of the Greeks. Thus a noble concept of humanity is made both absurd and contemptible, obnoxious in the house of its friends, and a shining target for abuse at the hands of its opponents.

Yet when the critics and scoffers, writing under soft lamps or lecturing for fees to well-fed audiences, in comfortable rooms electrically lighted, venture to speak of an alternative, they can only offer a return to agriculture and handicrafts. Overlooking the fact that they can themselves go at any time to any one of a thousand waste places awaiting the plow or the hoe, they prefer to advise others to incur the risk. When asked for a bill of particulars, they become hazy and vague. Are we merely to surrender the tractor and return to the steel plow?

⁷ an American financier.

⁸ Alighieri Dante (1265-1321), a great Italian poet.

⁹ a nineteenth-century American financier and speculator.

¹⁰ Italian friar (1182-1226), devoted to the relief of the sick and the poor.

¹¹ a typical Midwestern city in the writings of Sinclair Lewis.

Why not to the wooden plow? Or better still, to the forked stick hardened by fire? Each advance on the most primitive instrument is a gain in efficiency, a transfer of labor from man to a tool. In the process of retreat are surgery and dentistry to go into the discard? Sanitation, antiseptics, and anesthetics? Each of these gains has marked a step in progress or rather a long series of steps, and each art steadily advances in our own time as masters of the test tube and microscope penetrate deeper and deeper into the mysteries of nature. Fundamentally the machine differs from the tool in degree, not in kind, and the chemist works in materials no less than did the most primitive woman herbalist. His knowledge is wider, his skill is greater, but his ends may well be fundamentally the same—the relief of human suffering. Where then is the line to be drawn? To what point in the long upward progress of mankind is the return to be made? To ask these questions is to answer them. The severest critic of progress is forced to admit, when cornered, that the problem is not one of retreat, but of ends and methods, of choices and uses.

If in the hands of its superficial champions the idea of progress seems to emphasize means rather than ends, an examination into the history and nature of the concept shows that this notion is without basis. Although selfish men have seized upon the instrumentalities of progress and have left in the train of their exploits hideous industrial cities, slums, poverty, and misery, that upshot is no more to be attributed to the idea itself than the cruelties of the Inquisition to the teachings of Jesus. An inquiry into the writings of those who originated and developed the theory of progress shows at the center of their thought the concept of the good life at the end of progressive endeavor, the genius which is to preside over the searches and labors of explorers and experimenters. The good life for the multitude, not for a superior minority living in a land of illusion on the sweat of the "ignoble"—this is the kernel germinating in the heart of the concept of progress. To see life whole and to see it steadily, to sound its depths, to illuminate its possibilities, and to make the noblest and wisest use of material resources in realizing its purposes, this is the sum total of the idea of progress—a grand

end, conceived in the light of universality, appealing to a mankind seeking high destiny and striving for mastery over the instrumentalities to be employed by the way. Anything less than this is a caricature of the idea.

Wrongly identified with capitalism, communism, or particular systems of economy, though standing at the very threshold of the great analysis and inquest, the idea of progress nevertheless clearly reveals the method by which ends are to be attained. Its method is that of science and technology—rationality, in short. And that method implies many things. It implies an open-eyed and open-minded attitude toward tasks in hand and problems to be solved. Working with concrete materials under positive law, technology is as indifferent to the emotional idiosyncrasies of individuals and classes as the elements themselves. Universal in its reach, as transcendent as the gods, it cannot be monopolized by any nation, period, class, government, or race. Its catholicity surpasses that of all religions. Essentially objective in its manipulations, dealing with materials, quantities, and known laws, technology is leveling and democratic in its effects; it is not a closed cult handed down by a few masters to a few students in cloistered universities. Rational in nature, corresponding to the mathematics of physical things and forces, this method is necessarily planful. It cannot begin anything without a goal, project, or purpose. To proceed at all it must stake out a field of work, a problem to be solved, and then it must proceed according to plan, on the assumption of predictable results, to predetermined ends. Inexorably, therefore, it cuts across the wild welter of unreasoned actions, irrelevant sentiments, and emotional starts and fits which have so long characterized human life in historic politics, industry, agriculture, and esthetics. Rational and planful, working in the unity of all things, this method is centripetal, drawing all arts, economies, and sciences inward toward the unity of the world—with implications so vast, so in harmony with mankind's noblest dreams, that the imagination is staggered by them.

Since the rationality of progress imposes limitations on inner impulses and cuts across external arrangements, it inevitably involves all departments of human activity—pure science, invention, industry, transportation, agriculture,

government, finance, medicine, social adjustments, the work of women, education, arts, and letters. As the first carved gates of ancient Egypt celebrated the purpose of the ruling monarch, so the latest skyscraper in New York reflects the functions of its inhabitants. All branches of civilization mirror the dominant idea. If the escape of negation be sought, it will be found blocked at the exit. All arts, sciences, and crafts are drawn into the movement of regnant thought and practice. And when the thought of the thinker, the dream of the artist, and the aspiration of the practitioner draw together under a common principle of unification, the light and heat required for heroic endeavor are generated, giving to each the power of the whole, suffusing all with a sense of elevation and movement, supplying energy to the weak, and providing for the strong and willful who make history that social dynamic without which even Napoleon himself might have been a Corsican lawyer or Genoese scrivener.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY
1890—

Like many other successful writers, Christopher Morley began his literary career as a journalist. And like most journalists who become writers, he gave up newspaper and magazine work at the earliest possible moment. Morley has written poetry, plays, essays, and fiction. Because of its frankness, his novel Kitty Foyle (1939) became something of a sensation. Morley is inclined to feel that his earlier and "less important" work has won unmerited praise, and that the serious intention of his later writings has been rather overlooked. Among his best-loved books of essays are Shandygaff (1918), Mince Pie (1919), and The Powder of Sympathy (1923). Morley's humorous defense of not answering letters may be compared with Beerbohm's diverting objections to the efficiency of fire brigades (II, 220).

ON UNANSWERING LETTERS¹

There are a great many people who really believe in answering letters the day they are

¹ From *Mince Pie*. Copyright, 1919, 1947, by Christopher Morley. Published by J. B. Lippincott Co.

received, just as there are people who go to the movies at nine o'clock in the morning; but these people are stunted and queer.

It is a great mistake. Such crass and breathless promptness takes away a great deal of the pleasure of correspondence.

The psychological didoes involved in receiving letters and making up one's mind to answer them are very complex. If the tangled process could be clearly analyzed and its component involutions isolated for inspection, we might reach a clearer comprehension of that curious bag of tricks, the efficient Masculine Mind.

Take Bill F., for instance, a man so delightful that even to contemplate his existence puts us in good humor and makes us think well of a world that can exhibit an individual equally comely in mind, body, and estate. Every now and then we get a letter from Bill, and immediately we pass into a kind of trance, in which our mind rapidly enunciates the ideas, thoughts, surmises, and contradictions that we would like to write to him in reply. We think what fun it would be to sit right down and churn the ink-well, spreading speculation and cynicism over a number of sheets of foolscap to be wafted Billward.

Sternly we repress the impulse for we know that the shock to Bill of getting so immediate a retort would surely unhinge the well-fitted panels of his intellect.

We add his letter to the large delta of unanswered mail on our desk, taking occasion to turn the mass over once or twice and run through it in a brisk, smiling mood, thinking of all the jolly letters we shall write some day.

After Bill's letter has lain on the pile for a fortnight or so it has been gently silted over by about twenty other pleasantly postponed manuscripts. Coming upon it by chance, we reflect that any specific problems raised by Bill in that manifesto will by this time have settled themselves. And his random speculations upon household management and human destiny will probably have taken a new slant by now, so that to answer his letter in its own tune will not be congruent with his present fevers. We had better bide a wee until we really have something of circumstance to impart.

We wait a week.

By this time a certain sense of shame has

begun to invade the privacy of our brain. We feel that to answer that letter now would be an indelicacy. Better to pretend that we never got it. By and by Bill will write again and then we will answer promptly. We put the letter back in the middle of the heap and think what a fine chap Bill is. But he knows we love him, so it doesn't really matter whether we write or not.

Another week passes by, and no further communication from Bill. We wonder whether he does love us as much as we thought. Still—we are too proud to write and ask.

A few days later a new thought strikes us. Perhaps Bill thinks we have died and he is annoyed because he wasn't invited to the funeral. Ought we to wire him? No, because after all we are not dead, and even if he thinks we are, his subsequent relief at hearing the good news of our survival will outweigh his bitterness during the interval. One of these days we will write him a letter that will really express our heart, filled with all the grindings and gear-work of our mind, rich in affection and fallacy. But we had better let it ripen and mellow for a while. Letters, like wines, accumulate bright fumes and bubblings if kept under cork.

Presently we turn over that pile of letters again. We find in the lees of the heap two or three that have gone for six months and can safely be destroyed. Bill is still on our mind, but in a pleasant, dreamy kind of way. He does not ache or twinge us as he did a month ago. It is fine to have old friends like that and keep in touch with them. We wonder how he is and whether he has two children or three. Splendid old Bill!

By this time we have written Bill several letters in imagination and enjoyed doing so, but the matter of sending him an actual letter has begun to pall. The thought no longer has the savor and vivid sparkle it had once. When one feels like that it is unwise to write. Letters should be spontaneous outpourings: they should never be undertaken merely from a sense of duty. We know that Bill wouldn't want to get a letter that was dictated by a feeling of obligation.

Another fortnight or so elapsing, it occurs to us that we have entirely forgotten what Bill said to us in that letter. We take it out and con-

it over. Delightful fellow! It is full of his own felicitous kinks of whim, though some of it sounds a little old-fashioned by now. It seems a bit stale, has lost some of its freshness and surprise. Better not answer it just yet, for Christmas will soon be here and we shall have to write then anyway. We wonder, can Bill hold out until Christmas without a letter?

We have been rereading some of those imaginary letters to Bill that have been dancing in our head. They are full of all sorts of fine stuff. If Bill ever gets them he will know how we love him. To use O. Henry's immortal joke, we have days of Damon and Knights of Pythias writing those uninked letters to Bill. A curious thought has come to us. Perhaps it would be better if we never saw Bill again. It is very difficult to talk to a man when you like him so much. It is much easier to write in the sweet fantastic strain. We are so inarticulate when face to face. If Bill comes to town we will leave word that we have gone away. Good old Bill! He will always be a precious memory.

A few days later a sudden frenzy sweeps over us, and though we have many pressing matters on hand, we mobilize pen and paper and literary shock troops and prepare to hurl several battalions at Bill. But, strangely enough, our utterance seems stilted and stiff. We have nothing to say. *My dear Bill*, we begin, *it seems a long time since we heard from you. Why don't you write? We still love you, in spite of all your shortcomings*

That doesn't seem very cordial. We muse over the pen and nothing comes. Bursting with affection, we are unable to say a word.

Just then the phone rings. "Hello?" we say.

"It is Bill, come to town unexpectedly."

"Good old fish!" we cry, ecstatic. "Meet you at the corner of Tenth and Chestnut in five minutes."

We tear up the unfinished letter. Bill will never know how much we love him. Perhaps it is just as well. It is very embarrassing to have your friends know how you feel about them. When we meet him we will be a little bit on our guard. It would not be well to be betrayed into any extravagance of cordiality.

And perhaps a not altogether false little story could be written about a man who never visited those most dear to him, because it panged him so to say good-bye when he had to leave.

ALDOUS HUXLEY
1894—

*Aldous Huxley, English poet, essayist, and novelist, has examined modern life, for the purposes of his art, with the pitiless eye of a scientist. He is perhaps the most powerful satirist in twentieth-century letters, and that his report on the human situation has not been more heartening but, on the contrary, little short, at times, of horrifying is hardly to be held against him. Given the scientific definition that man is an animal—and man is demonstrably that, whatever else he may be—Huxley could not be the honest writer that he is and depict man otherwise than he does. Perhaps Huxley's most devastating comment on the materialistic view of man is his *Brave New World* (1932), a grimly humorous picture of a scientific Utopia. It is not to be concluded, however, that Huxley accepts, or has necessarily ever accepted, as adequate the scientific account of man's nature. His more recent books, *Time Must Have a Stop* (1944) and *The Perennial Philosophy* (1945), for instance, reveal him as thinking that man's true significance—the final end of the human experience—is to be found in a spiritual view of the world. As a writer Huxley is said to be at his best in the essay. He is criticized, indeed, for being too much the essayist in his fiction. "Aldous Huxley," says Somerset Maugham, "is an essayist I would be ready to rank with Hazlitt." Huxley's essay on comfort may be read in connection with Beard's essay on progress (II, 248); the essay on equality, with Mill's essay on liberty (II, 131). Among Huxley's books of essays are *Along the Road* (1925), *Proper Studies* (1927), and *Ends and Means* (1937).*

COMFORT¹

NOVELTY OF THE PHENOMENON

French hotel-keepers call it *Le confort moderne*, and they are right. For comfort is a thing of recent growth, younger than steam, a child when telegraphy was born, only a genera-

tion older than radio. The invention of the means of being comfortable and the pursuit of comfort as a desirable end—one of the most desirable that human beings can propose to themselves—are modern phenomena, unparalleled in history since the time of the Romans. Like all phenomena with which we are extremely familiar, we take them for granted, as a fish takes the water in which it lives, not realizing the oddity and novelty of them, not bothering to consider their significance. The padded chair, the well-sprung bed, the sofa, central heating and the regular hot bath—these and a host of other comforts enter into the daily lives of even the most moderately prosperous of the Anglo-Saxon bourgeoisie. Three hundred years ago they were unknown to the greatest kings. This is a curious fact which deserves to be examined and analysed.

The first thing that strikes one about the discomfort in which our ancestors lived is that it was mainly voluntary. Some of the apparatus of modern comfort is of purely modern invention; people could not put rubber tyres on their carriages before the discovery of South America and the rubber plant. But for the most part there is nothing new about the material basis of our comfort. Men could have made sofas and smoking-room chairs, could have installed bathrooms and central heating and sanitary plumbing any time during the last three or four thousand years. And as a matter of fact, at certain periods they did indulge themselves in these comforts. Two thousand years before Christ, the inhabitants of Cnossos² were familiar with sanitary plumbing. The Romans had invented an elaborate system of hot-air heating, and the bathing facilities in a smart Roman villa were luxurious and complete beyond the dreams of modern man. There were sweating-rooms, massage-rooms, cold plunges, tepid drying-rooms with (if we may believe Sidonius Apollinaris)³ improper frescoes on the walls and comfortable couches where you could lie and get dry and talk to your friends. As for the public baths they were almost inconceivably luxurious. "To such a height of luxury have we reached," said Seneca, "that we are dissatisfied if, in our baths, we do not tread on gems." The size and com-

¹ From *Proper Studies*, by Aldous Huxley. Copyright, 1927, by Aldous Huxley. Reprinted by permission of Harper & Brothers and of Chatto & Windus.

² royal city of ancient Crete.

³ Roman writer (fifth century A.D.).

pleteness of the *thermæ* was proportionable to their splendour. A single room of the baths of Diocletian⁴ has been transformed into a large church.

It would be possible to adduce many other examples showing what could be done with the limited means at our ancestors' disposal in the way of making life comfortable. They show sufficiently clearly that if the men of the Middle Ages and early modern epoch lived in filth and discomfort, it was not for any lack of ability to change their mode of life; it was because they chose to live in this way, because filth and discomfort fitted in with their principles and prejudices, political, moral, and religious.

COMFORT AND THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

What have comfort and cleanliness to do with politics, morals, and religion? At a first glance one would say that there was and could be no causal connection between armchairs and democracies, sofas and the relaxation of the family system, hot baths and the decay of Christian orthodoxy. But look more closely and you will discover that there exists the closest connection between the recent growth of comfort and the recent history of ideas. I hope in this essay to make that connection manifest, to show why it was not possible (not materially, but psychologically impossible) for the Italian princes of the quattrocento,⁵ for the Elizabethan, even for Louis xiv to live in what the Romans would have called common cleanliness and decency, or enjoy what would be to us indispensable comforts.

Let us begin with the consideration of armchairs and central heating. These, I propose to show, only became possible with the breakdown of monarchical and feudal power and the decay of the old family and social hierarchies. Smoking-room chairs and sofas exist to be lolled in. In a well-made modern armchair you cannot do anything but loll. Now, lolling is neither dignified nor respectful. When we wish to appear impressive, when we have to administer a rebuke to an inferior, we do not lie in a deep chair with our feet on the mantel-piece; we sit up and try to look majestic. Similarly, when

we wish to be polite to a lady or show respect to the old or eminent, we cease to loll; we stand, or at least we straighten ourselves up. Now, in the past human society was a hierarchy in which every man was always engaged in being impressive towards his inferiors or respectful to those above him. Lolling in such societies was utterly impossible. It was as much out of the question for Louis xiv to loll in the presence of his courtiers as it was for them to loll in the presence of their king. It was only when he attended a session of the Parliament that the King of France ever lolled in public. On these occasions he reclined in the Bed of Justice, while princes sat, the great officers of the crown stood, and the smaller fry knelt. Comfort was proclaimed as the appanage of royalty. Only the king might stretch his legs. We may feel sure, however, that he stretched them in a very majestic manner. The lolling was purely ceremonial and accompanied by no loss of dignity. At ordinary times the king was seated, it is true, but seated in a dignified and upright position; the appearance of majesty had to be kept up. (For, after all, majesty is mainly a question of majestic appearance.) The courtiers, meanwhile, kept up the appearance of deference, either standing, or else, if their rank was very high and their blood peculiarly blue, sitting, even in the royal presence, on stools. What was true of the king's court was true of the nobleman's household; and the squire was to his dependents, the merchant was to his apprentices and servants, what the monarch was to his courtiers. In all cases the superior had to express his superiority by being dignified, the inferior his inferiority by being deferential; there could be no lolling. Even in the intimacies of family life it was the same: the parents ruled like popes and princes, by divine right; the children were their subjects. Our fathers took the fifth commandment very seriously—how seriously may be judged from the fact that during the great Calvin's theocratic rule of Geneva a child was publicly decapitated for having ventured to strike its parents. Lolling on the part of children, though not perhaps a capital offence, would have been regarded as an act of the grossest disrespect, punishable by much flagellation, starving, and confinement. For a slighter insult—neglect to touch his cap—Vespasiano Gonzaga kicked his

⁴ Roman emperor (245–313).

⁵ the fifteenth century.

only son to death; one shudders to think what he might have been provoked to do if the boy had lolled. If the children might not loll in the presence of their parents, neither might the parents loll in the presence of their children, for fear of demeaning themselves in the eyes of those whose duty it was to honour them. Thus we see that in the European society of two or three hundred years ago it was impossible for any one—from the Holy Roman Emperor and the King of France down to the poorest beggar, from the bearded patriarch to the baby—to loll in the presence of any one else. Old furniture reflects the physical habits of the hierarchical society for which it was made. It was in the power of mediæval and renaissance craftsmen to create armchairs and sofas that might have rivalled in comfort those of to-day. But society being what, in fact, it was, they did nothing of the kind. It was not, indeed, until the sixteenth century that chairs became at all common. Before that time a chair was a symbol of authority. Committeemen now loll, Members of Parliament are comfortably seated, but authority still belongs to a Chairman, still issues from a symbolical Chair. In the Middle Ages only the great had chairs. When a great man travelled, he took his chair with him, so that he might never be seen detached from the outward and visible sign of his authority. To this day the Throne no less than the Crown is the symbol of royalty. In mediæval times the vulgar sat, whenever it was permissible for them to sit, on benches, stools, and settles. With the rise, during the Renaissance period, of a rich and independent bourgeoisie, chairs began to be more freely used. Those who could afford chairs sat in them, but sat with dignity and discomfort; for the chairs of the sixteenth century were still very throne-like, and imposed upon those who sat in them a painfully majestic attitude. It was only in the eighteenth century, when the old hierarchies were seriously breaking up, that furniture began to be comfortable. And even then there was no real lolling. Armchairs and sofas on which men (and, later, women) might indecorously sprawl were not made until democracy was firmly established, the middle classes enlarged to gigantic proportions, good manners lost from out of the world, women emancipated, and family restraints dissolved.

CENTRAL HEATING AND THE FEUDAL SYSTEM

Another essential component of modern comfort—the adequate heating of houses—was made impossible, at least for the great ones of the earth, by the political structure of ancient societies. Plebeians were more fortunate in this respect than nobles. Living in small houses, they were able to keep warm. But the nobleman, the prince, the king, and the cardinal inhabited palaces of a grandeur corresponding with their social position. In order to prove that they were greater than other men, they had to live in surroundings considerably more than life-size. They received their guests in vast halls like roller-skating rinks; they marched in solemn processions along galleries as long and as draughty as Alpine tunnels, up and down triumphal staircases that looked like the cataracts of the Nile frozen into marble. Being what he was, a great man in those days had to spend a great deal of his time in performing solemn symbolical charades and pompous ballets—performances which required a lot of room to accommodate the numerous actors and spectators. This explains the enormous dimensions of royal and princely palaces, even of the houses of ordinary landed gentlemen. They owed it to their position to live, as though they were giants, in rooms a hundred feet long and thirty high. How splendid, how magnificent! But oh, how bleak! In our days the self-made great are not expected to keep up their position in the splendid style of those who were great by divine right. Sacrificing grandiosity to comfort, they live in rooms small enough to be heated. (And so, when they were off duty, did the great in the past; most old palaces contain a series of tiny apartments to which their owners retired when the charades of state were over. But the charades were long-drawn affairs, and the unhappy princes of the old days had to spend a great deal of time being magnificent in icy audience-chambers and among the whistling draughts of interminable galleries.) Driving in the environs of Chicago, I was shown the house of a man who was reputed to be one of the richest and most influential of the city. It was a medium-sized house of perhaps fifteen or twenty smallish rooms. I looked at it in astonishment, thinking of the vast palaces in which I myself have lived in Italy (for considerable less

rent than one would have to pay for garaging a Ford in Chicago). I remembered the rows of bedrooms as big as ordinary ballrooms, the drawing-rooms like railway stations, the staircase on which you could drive a couple of limousines abreast. Noble *palazzi*, where one has room to feel oneself a superman! But remembering also those terrible winds that blow in February from the Apennines, I was inclined to think that the rich man of Chicago had done well in sacrificing the magnificences on which his counterpart in another age and country would have spent his riches.

BATHS AND MORALS

It is to the decay of monarchy, aristocracy, and ancient social hierarchy that we owe the two components of modern comfort hitherto discussed; the third great component—the bath—must, I think, be attributed, at any rate in part, to the decay of Christian morals. There are still on the continent of Europe, and for all I know, elsewhere, convent schools in which young ladies are brought up to believe that human bodies are objects of so impure and obscene a character that it is sinful for them to see, not merely other people's nakedness, but even their own. Baths, when they are permitted to take them (every alternate Saturday) must be taken in a chemise descending well below the knees. And they are even taught a special technique of dressing which guarantees them from catching so much as a glimpse of their own skin. These schools are now, happily, exceptional, but there was a time, not so long ago, when they were the rule. Theirs is the great Christian ascetic tradition which has flowed on in majestic continuity from the time of St. Anthony and the unwashed, underfed, sex-starved monks of the Thebaid, through the centuries, almost to the present day. It is to the weakening of that tradition that women at any rate owe the luxury of frequent bathing.

The early Christians were by no means enthusiastic bathers; but it is fair to point out that Christian ascetic tradition has not at all times been hostile to baths as such. That the Early Fathers should have found the promiscuity of Roman bathing shocking is only natural. But the more moderate of them were prepared to allow a limited amount of washing, provided that the business was done with decency. The

final decay of the great Roman baths was as much due to the destructiveness of the Barbarians as to Christian ascetic objections. During the Ages of Faith there was actually a revival of bathing. The Crusaders came back from the East, bringing with them the oriental vapour bath, which seems to have had a considerable popularity all over Europe. For reasons which it is difficult to understand, its popularity gradually waned, and the men and women of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries seem to have been almost as dirty as their barbarous ancestors. Medical theory and court fashions may have had something to do with these fluctuations.

The ascetic tradition was always strongest where women were concerned. The Goncourts⁶ record in their diary the opinion, which seems to have been current in respectable circles during the Second Empire, that female immodesty and immorality had increased with the growth of the bath habit. "Girls should wash less," was the obvious corollary. Young ladies who enjoy their bath owe a debt of gratitude to Voltaire for his mockeries, to the nineteenth-century scientists for their materialism. If these men had never lived to undermine the convent school tradition, our girls might still be as modest and as dirty as their ancestresses.

COMFORT AND MEDICINE

It is, however, to the doctors that bath-lovers owe their greatest debt. The discovery of microbic infection has put a premium on cleanliness. We wash now with religious fervour, like the Hindus. Our baths have become something like magic rites to protect us from the powers of evil, embodied in the dirt-loving germ. We may venture to prophesy that this medical religion will go still further in undermining the Christian ascetic tradition. Since the discovery of the beneficial effects of sunlight, too much clothing has become, medically speaking, a sin. Immodesty is now a virtue. It is quite likely that the doctors, whose prestige among us is almost equal to that of the medicine men among the savages, will have us stark naked before very long. That will be the last stage in the process of making clothes more comfortable. It is a process which has been going on for some time

⁶Edmond de Goncourt (1822-1896) and his brother Jules (1830-1870), French novelists.

—first among men, later among women—and among its determining causes are the decay of hierarchic formalism and of Christian morality. In his lively little pamphlet describing Gladstone's visit to Oxford shortly before his death, Mr. Fletcher has recorded the Grand Old Man's comments on the dress of the undergraduates. Mr. Gladstone, it appears, was distressed by the informality and the cheapness of the students' clothes. In his day, he said, young men went about with a hundred pounds worth of clothes and jewellery on their persons, and every self-respecting youth had at least one pair of trousers in which he never sat down for fear of spoiling its shape. Mr. Gladstone visited Oxford at a time when undergraduates still wore very high starched collars and bowler hats. One wonders what he would have said of the open shirts, the gaudily coloured sweaters, the loose flannel trousers of the present generation. Dignified appearances have never been less assiduously kept up than they are at present; informality has reached an unprecedented pitch. On all but the most solemn occasions a man, whatever his rank or position, may wear what he finds comfortable.

The obstacles in the way of women's comforts were moral as well as political. Women were compelled not merely to keep up social appearances, but also to conform to a tradition of Christian ascetic morality. Long after men had abandoned their uncomfortable formal clothes, women were still submitting to extraordinary inconveniences in the name of modesty. It was the war which liberated them from their bondage. When women began to do war work, they found that the traditional modesty in dress was not compatible with efficiency. They preferred to be efficient. Having discovered the advantages of immodesty, they have remained immodest ever since, to the great improvement of their health and the increase of their personal comfort. Modern fashions are the most comfortable that women have ever worn. Even the ancient Greeks were probably less comfortable. Their under-tunic, it is true, was as rational a garment as you could wish for; but their outer robe was simply a piece of stuff wound round the body like an Indian *sari*, and fastened with safety-pins. No woman whose appearance depended on safety-pins can ever have felt really comfortable.

COMFORT AS AN END IN ITSELF

Made possible by changes in the traditional philosophy of life, comfort is now one of the causes of its own further spread. For comfort has now become a physical habit, a fashion, an ideal to be pursued for its own sake. The more comfort is brought into the world, the more it is likely to be valued. To those who have known comfort, discomfort is a real torture. And the fashion which now decrees the worship of comfort is quite as imperious as any other fashion. Moreover, enormous material interests are bound up with the supply of the means of comfort. The manufacturers of furniture, of heating apparatus, of plumbing fixtures, cannot afford to let the love of comfort die. In modern advertisement they have means for compelling it to live and grow.

Having now briefly traced the spiritual origins of modern comfort, I must say a few words about its effects. One can never have something for nothing, and the achievement of comfort has been accompanied by a compensating loss of other equally, or perhaps more, valuable things. A man of means who builds a house today is in general concerned primarily with the comfort of his future residence. He will spend a great deal of money (for comfort is very expensive: in America they talk of giving away the house with the plumbing) on bathrooms, heating apparatus, padded furnishings, and the like; and having spent it, he will regard his house as perfect. His counterpart in an earlier age would have been primarily concerned with the impressiveness and magnificence of his dwelling—with beauty in a word, rather than comfort. The money our contemporary would spend on baths and central heating would have been spent in the past on marble staircases, a grand façade, frescoes, huge suites of gilded rooms, pictures, statues. Sixteenth-century popes lived in a discomfort that a modern bank manager would consider unbearable; but they had Raphael's frescoes, they had the Sistine chapel, they had their gallery of ancient sculpture. Must we pity them for the absence from the Vatican of bathrooms, central heating, and smoking-room chairs? I am inclined to think that our present passion for comfort is a little exaggerated. Though I personally enjoy comfort, I have lived very happily in houses devoid

of almost everything that Anglo-Saxons deem indispensable. Orientals and even South Europeans, who know not comfort and live very much as our ancestors lived centuries ago, seem to get on very well without our elaborate and costly apparatus of padded luxury. I am old-fashioned enough to believe in higher and lower things, and can see no point in material progress except in so far as it subserves thought. I like labour-saving devices, because they economize time and energy which may be devoted to mental labour. (But then I enjoy mental labour; there are plenty of people who detest it, and who feel as much enthusiasm for thought-saving devices as for automatic dishwashers and sewing-machines.) I like rapid and easy transport, because by enlarging the world in which men can live it enlarges their minds. Comfort for me has a similar justification: it facilitates mental life. Discomfort handicaps thought; it is difficult when the body is cold and aching to use the mind. Comfort is a means to an end. The modern world seems to regard it as an end in itself, an absolute good. One day, perhaps, the earth will have been turned into one vast feather-bed, with man's body dozing on top of it and his mind underneath, like Desdemona, smothered.

THE IDEA OF EQUALITY¹

SUNDAY FAITH AND WEEKDAY FAITH

That all men are created equal is a proposition to which, at ordinary times, no sane human being has ever given his assent. A man who has to undergo a dangerous operation does not act on the assumption that one doctor is just as good as another. Editors do not print every contribution that reaches them. And when they require Civil Servants, even the most democratic governments make a careful selection among their theoretically equal subjects. At ordinary times, then, we are perfectly certain that men are not equal. But when, in a democratic country, we think or act politically, we are no less certain that men are equal. Or at any rate—which comes to the same thing in

¹ From *Proper Studies*, by Aldous Huxley. Copyright, 1927, by Aldous Huxley. Reprinted by permission of Harper & Brothers and of Chatto & Windus.

practice—we behave as though we were certain of men's equality. Similarly, the pious medieval nobleman who, in church, believed in forgiving enemies and turning the other cheek, was ready, as soon as he had emerged again into the light of day, to draw his sword at the slightest provocation. The human mind has an almost infinite capacity for being inconsistent.

The amount of time during which men are engaged in thinking or acting politically is very small when compared with the whole period of their lives; but the brief activities of man the politician exercise a disproportionate influence on the daily life of man the worker, man at play, man the father and husband, man the owner of property. Hence the importance of knowing what he thinks in his political capacity and why he thinks it.

THE EQUALITARIAN AXIOM

Politicians and political philosophers have often talked about the equality of man as though it were a necessary and unavoidable idea, an idea which human beings must believe in, just as they must, from the very nature of their physical and mental constitution, believe in such notions as weight, heat, and light. Man is "by nature free, equal, and independent," says Locke, with the calm assurance of one who knows he is saying something that cannot be contradicted. It would be possible to quote literally thousands of similar pronouncements. One must be mad, says Babeuf,² to deny so manifest a truth.

EQUALITY AND CHRISTIANITY

In point of historical fact, however, the notion of human equality is of recent growth, and, so far from being a directly apprehended and necessary truth, is a conclusion logically drawn from pre-existing metaphysical assumptions. In modern times the Christian doctrines of the brotherhood of men and of their equality before God have been invoked in support of political democracy. Quite illogically, however. For the brotherhood of men does not imply their equality. Families have their fools and their men of genius, their black sheep and their saints, their worldly successes and their worldly failures. A

² François Émile Babeuf (1760–1797), French Revolutionist.

man should treat his brothers lovingly and with justice, according to the deserts of each. But the deserts of every brother are not the same. Neither does men's equality before God imply their equality as among themselves. Compared with an infinite quantity, all finite quantities may be regarded as equal. There is no difference, where infinity is concerned, between one and a thousand. But leave infinity out of the question, and a thousand is very different from one. Our world is a series of finite quantities, and where worldly matters are concerned, the fact that all men are equal in relation to the infinite quantity which is God is entirely irrelevant. The Church has at all times conducted its worldly policy on the assumption that it was irrelevant. It is only recently that the theorists of democracy have appealed to Christian doctrine for a confirmation of their equalitarian principles. Christian doctrine, as I have shown, gives no such support.

EQUALITY AND THE PHILOSOPHER

The writers who in the course of the eighteenth century supplied our modern political democracy with its philosophical basis did not turn to Christianity to find the doctrine of human equality. They were, to begin with, almost without exception anti-clerical writers, to whom the idea of accepting any assistance from the Church would have been extremely repugnant. Moreover, the Church, as organized for its worldly activities, offered them no assistance, but a frank hostility. It represented, even more clearly than the monarchical and feudal state, that mediæval principle of hierarchical, aristocratic government against which, precisely, the equalitarians were protesting.

The origin of our modern idea of human equality is to be found in the philosophy of Aristotle. The tutor of Alexander the Great was not, it is true, a democrat. Living as he did in a slave-holding society, he regarded slavery as a necessary state of affairs. Whatever is, is right; the familiar is the reasonable; and Aristotle was an owner of slaves, not a slave himself; he had no cause to complain. In his political philosophy he rationalized his satisfaction with the existing state of things, and affirmed that some men are born to be masters (himself, it went without saying, among them) and others to be slaves. But in saying this he was committing an

inconsistency. For it was a fundamental tenet of his metaphysical system that specific qualities are the same in every member of a species. Individuals of one species are the same in essence or substance. Two human beings differ from one another in matter, but are the same in essence, as being both rational animals. The essential human quality which distinguishes the species Man from all other species is identical in both.

INCONSISTENCIES

How are we to reconcile this doctrine with Aristotle's statement that some men are born to be masters and others slaves? Clearly, no reconciliation is possible; the doctrines are contradictory. Aristotle said one thing when he was discussing the abstract problems of metaphysics and another when, as a slave-owner, he was discussing politics. Such inconsistencies are extremely common, and are generally made in perfectly good faith. In cases where material interests are at stake, where social and religious traditions, inculcated in childhood, and consequently incorporated into the very structure of the mind, can exercise their influence, men will naturally think in one way; in other cases, where their interests and their early-acquired beliefs are not concerned, they will naturally and inevitably think in quite a different way. A man who thinks and behaves as an open-minded, unprejudiced scientist so long as he is repairing his automobile, will be outraged if asked to think about the creation of the world or the future life except in terms of the mythology current among the barbarous Semites three thousand years ago, and though quite ready to admit that the present system of wireless telegraphy might be improved, he will regard anyone who desires to alter the existing economic and political system as either a madman or a criminal. The greatest men of genius have not been exempt from these curious inconsistencies. Newton created the science of celestial mechanics; but he was also the author of *Observations on the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of Saint John*, of a *Lexicon Propheticum* and a *History of the Creation*. With one part of his mind he believed in the miracles and prophecies about which he had been taught in childhood; with another part he believed that the universe is a scene of order

and uniformity. The two parts were impenetrably divided one from the other. The mathematical physicist never interfered with the commentator on the Apocalypse, the believer in miracles had no share in formulating the laws of gravitation. Similarly, Aristotle the slave-owner believed that some men are born to command and others to serve; Aristotle the metaphysician, thinking in the abstract, and unaffected by the social prejudices which influenced the slave-owner, expounded a doctrine of specific essences, which entailed belief in the real and substantial equality of all human beings. The opinion of the slave-owner was probably nearer the truth than that of the metaphysician. But it is by the metaphysician's doctrine that our lives are influenced today.

APPLIED METAPHYSICS

That all members of a species are identical in essence was still, in the Middle Ages, a purely metaphysical doctrine. No attempt was made to apply it practically in politics. So long as the feudal and ecclesiastical hierarchies served their purpose of government, they seemed, to all but a very few, necessary and unquestionable. Whatever is, is right; feudalism and Catholicism *were*. It was only after what we call the Reformation and the Renaissance, when, under the stress of new economic and intellectual forces, the old system had largely broken down, that men began to think of applying the metaphysical doctrine of Aristotle and his mediæval disciples to politics. Feudalism and ecclesiastical authority lingered on, but as the merest ghosts of themselves. They had, to all intents and purposes, ceased to be, and not being, they were wrong.

It was not necessary, however, for the political thinkers of the eighteenth century to go back directly to Aristotle and the Schoolmen.³ They had what was for them a better authority nearer home. Descartes,⁴ the most influential philosopher of his age, had reaffirmed the Aristotelian and Scholastic doctrine in the most positive terms. At the beginning of his *Discourse on Method* we read that "what is called good

sense or reason is equal in all men," and a little later he says, "I am disposed to believe that [reason] is to be found complete in each individual, and on this point to adopt the opinion of philosophers who say that the difference of greater or less holds only among the accidents, and not among the forms or natures of individuals of the same species." Descartes took not the slightest interest in politics, and was concerned only with physical science and the theory of knowledge. It remained for others to draw the obvious political conclusions from what was for him, as it had been for Aristotle and the Schoolmen, a purely abstract metaphysical principle. These conclusions might have been drawn at any time during the preceding two thousand years. But it was only in the two centuries immediately following Descartes' death that political circumstances in Europe, especially in France, were favourable to such conclusions being drawn. The forms of government current during classical antiquity and the Middle Ages had been efficient and well adapted to the circumstances of the times. They seemed, accordingly, right and reasonable. In the eighteenth century, on the other hand, particularly on the continent of Europe, the existing form of government was not adapted to the social circumstances of the age. At a period when the middle classes were already rich and well educated, absolute monarchy and the ineffectual remains of feudalism were unsuitable as forms of government. Being unsuitable, they therefore seemed utterly unreasonable and wrong. Middle-class Frenchmen wanted a share in the government. But men are not content merely to desire; they like to have a logical or a pseudo-logical justification for their desires; they like to believe that when they want something, it is not merely for their own personal advantage, but that their desires are dictated by pure reason, by nature, by God Himself. The greater part of the world's philosophy and theology is merely an intellectual justification for the wishes and the day-dreams of philosophers and theologians. And practically all political theories are elaborated, after the fact, to justify the interests and desires of certain individuals, classes, or nations. In the eighteenth century, middle-class Frenchmen justified their very natural wish to participate in the government of the country by elab-

³ mediæval thinkers who endeavored to harmonize the thought of Aristotle with that of the Christian fathers.

⁴ René Descartes (1596-1650), French mathematician and philosopher.

orating a new political philosophy from the metaphysical doctrine of Aristotle, the Schoolmen, and Descartes. These philosophers had taught that the specific essence is the same in all individuals of a species. In the case of *Homo Sapiens*⁵ this specific essence is reason. All men are equally reasonable. It follows that all men have an equal capacity, and therefore an equal right, to govern; there are no born slaves nor masters. Hence, monarchy and hereditary aristocracy are inadmissible. Nature herself demands that government shall be organized on democratic principles. Thus middle-class Frenchmen had the satisfaction of discovering that their desires were endorsed as right and reasonable, not only by Aristotle, Saint Thomas,⁶ and Descartes, but also by the Creator of the Universe in person.

MAKING THE FACTS FIT

Even metaphysicians cannot entirely ignore the obvious facts of the world in which they live. Having committed themselves to a belief in this fundamental equality of all men, the eighteenth-century political philosophers had to invent an explanation for the manifest inequalities which they could not fail to observe on every side. If Jones, they argued, is an imbecile and Smith a man of genius, that is due, not to any inherent and congenital differences between the two men, but to purely external and accidental differences in their upbringing, their education, and the ways in which circumstances have compelled them to use their minds. Give Jones the right sort of training, and you can turn him into a Newton, a Saint Francis, or a Cæsar according to taste. "The diversity of opinions," says Descartes, "does not arise from some being endowed with a larger share of reason than others, but solely from this, that we conduct our thoughts along different ways, and do not fix our attention on the same objects." "Intelligence, genius, and virtue," says Helvétius,⁷ whose work, *De l'Esprit*, was published in 1758, and exercised an enor-

mous contemporary influence, "are the products of education." And again (*De l'Esprit*, Discours III, ch. 26): "*La grande inégalité d'esprit qu'on aperçoit entre les hommes dépend donc uniquement et de la différente éducation qu'ils reçoivent, et de l'enchaînement inconnu et divers dans lesquels ils se trouvent placés,*"⁸ and so on.

The political and philosophical literature of the eighteenth century teems with such notions. It was only to be expected; for such notions, it is obvious, are the necessary corollaries of the Cartesian axiom that reason is the same and entire in all men. They followed no less necessarily from the *tabula rasa* theory of mind elaborated by Locke. Both philosophers regarded men as originally and in essence equal, the one in possessing the same specific faculties and innate ideas, the other in possessing no innate ideas. It followed from either assumption that men are made or marred exclusively by environment and education. Followers whether of Locke or of Descartes, the eighteenth-century philosophers were all agreed in attributing the observed inequalities of intelligence and virtue to inequalities of instruction. Men were naturally reasonable and therefore good; but they lived in the midst of vice and abject superstition. Why? Because evil-minded legislators—kings and priests—had created a social environment calculated to warp the native reason and corrupt the morals of the human race. Why priests and kings, who, as human beings, were themselves naturally reasonable and therefore virtuous, should have conspired against their fellows, or why their reasonable fellows should have allowed themselves to be put upon by these crafty corrupters, was never adequately explained. The democratic religion, like all other religions, is founded on faith as much as on reason. The king-priest theory in its wildest and most extravagant form is the inspiration and subject of much of Shelley's finest poetry. Poor Shelley, together with large numbers of his less talented predecessors and contemporaries, seems seriously to have believed that by getting rid of priests and kings you could inaugurate the golden age.

⁸ "The great inequality of intelligence that prevails among men is the result, then, of the different education they receive and the environment, varied and unknown, in which they are placed."

⁵ man, the human species.

⁶ St. Thomas Aquinas (1225?-1274), Italian scholastic philosopher and one of the great theologians of the Roman Catholic Church.

⁷ Claude Arien Helvétius (1715-1771), French philosopher.

THE TESTS OF EXPERIMENT

The historical and psychological researches of the past century have rendered the theory which lies behind the practice of modern democracy entirely untenable. Reason is not the same in all men; human beings belong to a variety of psychological types separated one from another by irreducible differences. Men are not the exclusive products of their environments. A century of growing democracy has shown that the reform of institutions and the spread of education are by no means necessarily followed by improvements in individual virtue and intelligence. At the same time biologists have accumulated an enormous mass of evidence tending to show that physical peculiarities are inherited in a perfectly regular and necessary fashion. Body being indissolubly connected with mind, this evidence would almost be enough in itself to prove that mental peculiarities are similarly heritable. Direct observation on the history of families reinforces this evidence, and makes it certain that mental idiosyncrasies are inherited in exactly the same way as physical idiosyncrasies. Indeed, mind being in some sort a function of brain, a mental idiosyncrasy is also a physical one, just as much as red hair or blue eyes. Faculties are heritable: we are born more or less intelligent, more or less musical, mathematical, and so on. From this it follows that men are not essentially equal, and that human beings are at least as much the product of their heredity as of their education.

THE BEHAVIOURIST REACTION

Recently, it is true, Helvétius's doctrine of the all-effectiveness of nurture and the unimportance of nature and heredity has been revived by psychologists of the Behaviourist School. Unlike the philosophers of the eighteenth century, the Behaviourists have no political axe to grind and are not metaphysicians. If they agree with Helvétius, it is not because they want the vote (they have it), nor, presumably, because they accept the authority of Aristotle, the Schoolmen, and Descartes on the one hand, or of Locke on the other. They agree with Helvétius on what they affirm to be scientific grounds. Helvétius's theory, according to

the Behaviourists,⁹ is in accordance with the observed facts. Before going further, let us briefly examine their claims.

"The Behaviourist," writes Mr. J. B. Watson,¹⁰ the leader of the school, "no longer finds support for hereditary patterns of behaviour nor for special abilities (musical, art, etc.), which are supposed to run in families. He believes that, given the relatively simple list of embryological responses which are fairly uniform in infants, he can build (granting that both internal and external environment can be controlled) any infant along any specified line—into rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief." Taken literally, this last statement is merely silly. No one was ever such a fool as to suggest that riches and poverty were heritable in the sense that a Roman nose or a talent for music may be said to be heritable. Opulent fathers have long anticipated this great discovery of the Behaviourists, and have "built their children into rich men" by placing large cheques to their account at the bank. We must presume, in charity to Mr. Watson, that he does not mean what he says, and that when he says "rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief," he really means something like intelligent man, imbecile, mathematician and non-mathematician, musical person and unmusical person, etc. Presuming that this is what he does mean, let us examine the Behaviourists' hypothesis, which is identical with that of the philosophers who, in the eighteenth century, elaborated the theory of modern democracy. The first thing that strikes one about the Behaviourists' hypothesis is, that the observations on which it is based are almost exclusively observations on small children, not on fully grown men and women. It is on the ground that all infants are very much alike that the Behaviourists deny the hereditary transmission of special aptitudes, attributing the enormous differences of mental capacity observable among grown human beings exclusively to differences in environment, internal and external. Now it is an obvious and familiar fact, that the younger a child, the less individually differentiated it is. Physically, all new-born children are very much alike: there are few fathers who, after seeing their new-born infant once, could recognize it again among a group of

⁹ a school of psychologists.

¹⁰ an American psychologist (1878-).

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DEMOCRATIC POT AND CATHOLIC
KETTLE

Pots have a diverting way of calling kettles black, and the prophets of the democratic-humanitarian religion have at all times, from the eighteenth century down to the present day, denounced the upholders of Christian orthodoxy as anti-scientific. In certain important respects, however, the dogmas and the practice of orthodox Catholic Christianity were and are more nearly in accordance with the facts than the dogmas and practice of democratic-humanitarianism. The doctrine of Original Sin is, scientifically, much truer than the doctrine of natural reasonableness and virtue. Original Sin, in the shape of anti-social tendencies inherited from our animal ancestors, is a familiar and observable fact. Primitively, and in a state of nature, human beings were not, as the eighteenth-century philosophers supposed, wise and virtuous: they were apes.

Practically, the wisdom of the Church displays itself in a recognition among human beings of different psychological types. It is not every Tom, Dick, or Harry who is allowed to study the intricacies of theology. What may strengthen the faith of one may bewilder or perhaps even disgust another. Moreover, not all are called upon to rule; there must be discipline, a hierarchy, the subjection of many and the dominion of few. In these matters the theory and practice of the Church is based on observation and long experience. The humanitarian democrats who affirm that men are equal, and who on the strength of their belief distribute votes to everybody, can claim no experimental justification for their beliefs and actions. They are men who have a faith, and who act on it, without attempting to discover whether the faith corresponds with objective reality.

THE RELATION OF THEORY TO ACTION

It is in the theory of human equality that modern democracy finds its philosophic justification and some part, at any rate, of its motive force. It would not be true to say that the democratic movement took its rise in the theories propounded by Helvétius and his fellows. The origin of any widespread social disturbance is never merely a theory. It is only in pursuit of their interests, or under the influence of power-

ful emotions, that large masses of men are moved to action. When we analyse any of the historical movements in favour of democracy and self-determination, we find that they derive their original impetus from considerations of self-interest on the part of the whole or a part of the population. Autocracy and the rule of foreigners are often (though by no means invariably) inefficient, cruel, and corrupt. Large masses of the subjects of despots or strangers find their interests adversely affected by the activities of their rulers. They desire to change the form of government, so that it shall be more favourable to their particular national or class interests. But the discontented are never satisfied with mere discontent and desire for change. They like, as I have already pointed out, to justify their discontent, to find exalted and philosophical excuses for their desires, to feel that the state of affairs most agreeable to them is also the state of affairs most agreeable to Pure Reason, Nature, and the Deity. Violent oppression begets violent and desperate reaction. But if their grievances are only moderate, men will not fight whole-heartedly for their redress, unless they can persuade themselves of the absolute rightness, the essential reasonableness of what they desire. Nor will they be able, without some kind of intellectual rationalization of these desires, to persuade other men, with less immediate cause for discontent, to join them. Emotion cannot be communicated by a direct contagion. It must be passed from man to man by means of a verbal medium. Now words, unless they are mere onomatopœic exclamations, appeal to the emotions through the understanding. Feelings are communicated by means of ideas, which are their intellectual equivalent; at the sound of the words conveying the ideas the appropriate emotion is evoked. Thus, theory is seen to be doubly important, first, as providing a higher, philosophical justification for feelings and wishes, and second, as making possible the communication of feeling from one man to another. "The equality of all men" and "natural rights" are examples of simple intellectual generalizations which have justified emotions of discontent and hatred, and at the same time have rendered them easily communicable. The rise and progress of any democratic movement may be schematically represented in some such way as this: Power is in the

hands of a government that injures the material interests, or in some way outrages the feelings, of all, or at least an influential fraction of its subjects. The subjects are discontented and desire to change the existing government for one which shall be, for their purposes, better. But discontent and desire for change are not in themselves enough to drive men to action. They require a cause which they can believe to be absolutely, and not merely relatively and personally, good. By postulating (quite gratuitously) the congenital equality of all men, by assuming the existence of certain "natural rights" (the term is entirely meaningless), existing absolutely, in themselves and apart from any society in which such rights might be exercised, the discontented are able to justify their discontent, and at the same time to communicate it by means of easily remembered intellectual formulas to their less discontented fellows.

THEORY GETS OUT OF HAND

The invention of transcendental reasons to justify actions dictated by self-interest, instinct, or prejudice would be harmless enough if the justificatory philosophy ceased to exist with the accomplishment of the particular action it was designed to justify. But once it has been called into existence, a metaphysic is difficult to kill. Men will not let it go, but persist in elaborating the system, in drawing with a perfect logic ever fresh conclusions from the original assumptions. These assumptions, which are accepted as axiomatic, may be demonstrably false. But the arguments by which conclusions are reached may be logically flawless. In that case, the conclusions will be what the logicians call "hypothetically necessary." That is to say that, granted the truth of the assumptions, the conclusions are necessarily true. If the assumptions are false, the conclusions are necessarily false. It may be remarked, in passing, that the hypothetical necessity of the conclusions of a logically correct argument has often and quite unjustifiably been regarded as implying the absolute necessity of the assumptions from which the argument starts.

In the case of the theory of democracy the original assumptions are these: that reason is the same and entire in all men, and that all men are naturally equal. To these assumptions are attached several corollaries: that men are nat-

urally good as well as naturally reasonable; that they are the product of their environment; that they are indefinitely educable. The main conclusions derivable from these assumptions are the following: that the state ought to be organized on democratic lines; that the governors should be chosen by universal suffrage; that the opinion of the majority on all subjects is the best opinion; that education should be universal, and the same for all citizens. The primary assumptions, as we have seen, are almost certainly false; but the logic by which the metaphysicians of democracy deduced the conclusions was sound enough. Given the assumptions, the conclusions were necessary.

In the early stages of that great movement which has made the whole of the West democratic, there was only discontent and a desire for such relatively small changes in the mode of government as would increase its efficiency and make it serve the interests of the discontented. A philosophy was invented to justify the malcontents in their demand for change; the philosophy was elaborated; conclusions were relentlessly drawn; and it was found that, granted the assumptions on which the philosophy was based, Logic demanded that the changes in the existing institutions should be, not small, but vast, sweeping, and comprehensive. Those who rationalize their desires for the purpose of persuading themselves and others that these desires are in accord with nature and reason find themselves persuading the world of the rightness and reasonableness of many ideas and plans of action of which they had, originally, never dreamed. Whatever is, is right. Becoming familiar, a dogma automatically becomes right. Notions which for one generation are dubious novelties become for the next absolute truths, which it is criminal to deny and a duty to uphold. The malcontents of the first generation invent a justifying philosophy. The philosophy is elaborated, conclusions are logically drawn. Their children are brought up with the whole philosophy (remote conclusion as well as primary assumption), which becomes, by familiarity, not a reasonable hypothesis, but actually a part of the mind, conditioning and, so to speak, canalizing all rational thought. For most people, nothing which is contrary to any system of ideas with which they have been brought up since childhood can possibly be reasonable.

New ideas are reasonable if they can be fitted into an already familiar scheme, unreasonable if they cannot be made to fit. Our intellectual prejudices determine the channels along which our reason shall flow.

Of such systems of intellectual prejudices some seem merely reasonable, and some are sacred as well as reasonable. It depends on the kind of entity to which the prejudices refer. In general it may be said that intellectual prejudices about non-human entities appear to the holder of them as merely reasonable, while prejudices about human entities strike him as being sacred as well as reasonable. Thus, we all believe that the earth moves round the sun, and that the sun is at a distance of some ninety million miles from our planet. We believe, even though we may be quite incapable of demonstrating the truth of either of these propositions—and the vast majority of those who believe in the findings of modern astronomy do so as an act of blind faith, and would be completely at a loss if asked to show reasons for their belief. We have a prejudice in favour of modern astronomy. Having been brought up with it, we find it reasonable, and any new idea which contradicts the findings of contemporary astronomy strikes us as absurd. But it does not strike us as morally reprehensible. Our complex of what may be called astronomy-prejudices is only reasonable, not sacred.

THE NEARER, THE MORE SACRED

There was a time, however, when men's astronomy-prejudices were bound up with a great human activity—religion. For their contemporaries the ideas of Copernicus¹¹ and Galileo were not merely absurd, as contradicting the established intellectual prejudices, they were also immoral. The established prejudices were supported by high religious authority. For its devotees, the local and contemporary brand of religion is "good," "sacred," "right," as well as reasonable and true. Anything which contradicts any part of the cult is therefore not only false and unreasonable, but also bad, unholy, and wrong. As the Copernican ideas became more familiar, they seemed less frightful. Brought up in a heliocentric system, the religious folk of ensuing generations accepted

¹¹ Nikolaus Copernicus (1473–1543), Polish astronomer.

without demur the propositions which to their fathers had seemed absurd and wicked. History repeated itself when, in the middle of the nineteenth century, Darwin published his *Origin of Species*. The uproar was enormous. The theory of natural selection seemed much more criminal than the Copernican theory of planetary motion. Wickedness in these matters is proportionate to the distance from ourselves. Copernicus and Galileo had propounded unorthodox views about the stars. It was a crime, but not a very grave one; the stars are very remote. Darwin and the Darwinians propounded unorthodox views about man himself. Their crime was therefore enormous. The dislike of the Darwinian hypothesis is by no means confined to those who believe in the literal truth of the Book of Genesis. One does not have to be an orthodox Christian to object to what seems an assault on human dignity, uniqueness, and superiority.

DEMOCRACY AS A RELIGION

The prejudices in favour of democracy belong to the second class; they seem, to those who cherish them, sacred as well as reasonable, morally right as well as true. Democracy is natural, good, just, progressive, and so forth. The opponents of it are reactionary, bad, unjust, antinatural, etc. For vast numbers of people the idea of democracy has become a religious idea, which it is a duty to try to carry into practice in all circumstances, regardless of the practical requirements of each particular case. The metaphysic of democracy which was in origin the rationalization of certain French and English men's desires for the improvement of their governments, has become a universally and absolutely true theology which it is all humanity's highest duty to put into practice. Thus, India must have democracy, not because democratic government would be better than the existing undemocratic government—it would almost certainly be incomparably worse—but because democracy is everywhere and in all circumstances right. The transformation of the theory of democracy into theology has had another curious result: it has created a desire for progress in the direction of more democracy among numbers of people whose material interests are in no way harmed, and are even actively advanced, by the existing form of

government which they desire to change. This spread of socialism among the middle classes, the spontaneous granting of humanitarian reforms by power-holders to whose material advantages it would have been to wield their power ruthlessly and give none of it away—these are phenomena which have become so familiar that we have almost ceased to comment on them. They show how great the influence of a theory can be when by familiarity it has become a part of the mind of those who believe in it. In the beginning is desire; desire is rationalized; logic works on the rationalization and draws conclusions; the rationalization, with all these conclusions, undreamed of in many cases by those who first desired and rationalized, becomes one of the prejudices of men in the succeeding generations; the prejudice determines their judgment of what is right and wrong, true and false; it gives direction to their thoughts and desires; it drives them into action. The result is, that a man whose interests are bound up with the existing order of things will desire to make changes in that order much more sweeping than those desired by his grandfather, though the latter's material interests were genuinely injured by it. Man shall not live by bread alone. The divine injunction was unnecessary. Man never has lived by bread alone, but by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of every conceivable God. There are occasions when it would be greatly to man's advantage if he did confine himself for a little exclusively to bread.

IRWIN EDMAN
1896—

The general reader is indebted to the specialist who writes of his subject in understandable terms. Thomas Huxley, defender of Darwinism, did this for nineteenth-century science, as have Sir Arthur Eddington and Sir James Jeans for certain branches of modern science. William James, with his gift for concrete expression, reduced philosophical abstractions to the language of daily life. And Irwin Edman, professor of philosophy at Columbia University, is hardly less gifted in that way. No ivory-tower philosopher, he is not unlike Joseph Addison, who aspired to bring philosophy "out of closets

and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables and in coffee-houses." Or better yet, Edman finds philosophy a living thing in the thoughts and experiences of us all, just as he found it in his own childhood musings. Among his books are The Contemporary and His Soul (1932), Fountainheads of Freedom (1941), and Philosopher's Quest (1947).

INTIMATIONS OF PHILOSOPHY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD¹

It is possible, I suspect, for most people at all interested in philosophy to put their finger on the time and the book that first introduced them to the "subject." Philosophy in my own mind will always be associated with Bakewell's *Source Book in Ancient Philosophy*, which contains fragments remaining from the early Greeks: Thales, Anaximander, Heraclitus, and Empedocles. The names themselves sounded like incantations. I had an early impression (from which I have not yet recovered) that Greek philosophers in the Ionian Peninsula for some strange reason wrote in fragments. As a freshman, too, I vaguely had the idea that Bakewell had with his own hands gathered together these fragments at Yale, or had composed them there, and that the learned professor was himself somehow the source of Greek philosophy. I shall also associate my first bookish relations with philosophy with that great grey volume, translated from unintelligible German into formidable English: Paulsen's *Introduction to Philosophy*. There I gathered that philosophy consisted of an astounding number of isms, with innumerable sub-isms, and that somewhere in that ismatic jungle lay the Truth. Finally, by myself, outside of class, I discovered the little yellow book in the Home University Library, J. A. Thomson's *Introduction to Science*, which opened up the various branches of knowledge and their interrelations and made me feel that with sufficient time and diligence I could become one of the masters—in outline—of all that was to be known.

But there is a moment, or kind of moment, harder to identify. It occurs usually, I suspect,

¹ From *Philosopher's Holiday* by Irwin Edman. Copyright 1938 by Irwin Edman. Reprinted by permission of The Viking Press, Inc., New York.

before one knows what the word "philosophy" is, or when one vaguely associates the word "philosophical" with Red Indians burning in stubborn and dignified fortitude at the stake, or with a man watching the ruins and embers of his house, or hearing of the death or elopement of his wife, with grave serenity. Some experience, some word, or some odd fancy crossing one's inexperienced mind—and one is in the presence of, and feels, the delicious, puzzling incitement (without knowing either phrase) of philosophical issues and ultimate things. I have friends who occasionally report instances of such early speculative awakening in their small children, and I know that, from John Locke² down, the baby has been a favourite illustration of philosophers—the baby putting together the colour and sound and taste and smell and feel of an orange and saying: "Lo! it is an object, it is an orange!"

Being childless, I have only the smallest stock of illustrations of this philosophical awakening among children, though I gather from my friends that their infant sons are all metaphysicians. I know, for instance, that Ian, aged nine, reads Gibbon, and I hear from his father that his mind is as sceptical and circumspect as that of Hume.³ I did once take a walk with a child who asked suddenly: "Who made the world?" For the sake of brevity I replied: "God." "Who made God?" was the next question. To reply that God was a First Cause, the Uncreated Creator of all things, seemed a stiff dose for a child and would only bring on further questions. I said I would tell him later. But for the awakening of the philosophical impulse in children I can only refer to one autobiographical instance, and I shall try to keep out of my remembrance such sophisticated gloss as a later education in philosophy gave me. I am convinced, as I look back, that all the great issues, Freedom and Determinism, God, Immortality, the reality of the external world, and the nature of reality itself, are first stumbled upon when one is very young. I can even imagine that some day a psychiatrist will prove that speculative interests are early childhood fixations and that the metaphysician is an infant trailing clouds of religious complexes from the nursery.

² English philosopher (1632–1704).

³ David Hume (1711–1776), Scottish philosopher.

Time is certainly the pet theme of much contemporary thought, and I had as certainly not read the modern physicists or Einstein's early work at the age of thirteen. But it was then, if I remember, that I myself first hit upon that perplexity, current in philosophy since Plato defined Time as the moving picture of eternity, a phrase itself puzzle enough. I remember one day coming to my older sister and saying I was bothered about Time. She was, as she is still, full of sound sense and human perception and has never allowed herself to be distracted by nonsense, however elaborate and imposing. She is a philosopher free from cobwebs.

"What do you mean," she said, "you are bothered by time?"

"Well," I said, "take today, for instance. It's really here right now, this very minute, for instance, isn't it?"

"Yes, of course," she said, and turned back to the piano on which she was playing one-half of Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* arranged for four hands.

"But wait a minute," I said, "tomorrow today will be yesterday, won't it? It will be gone. And tomorrow is not here yet, and it really isn't at all. It's all very puzzling. What is Time?"

"Time for you to go to bed," she said briskly and, refusing to be entangled any further in aerie irrelevance and childishness, she turned back again to the Andante.

I did go to bed, but I did not sleep. For I was obsessed by the awful unreality of something I had hitherto taken for granted. There was, I mused, last summer on the Jersey coast—the long summer afternoons, the tang of the salt spray as the breakers broke round one as one waded into the surf, the agreeable burning warmth of the sun as one basked on the beach. But *that* was last summer, and it no longer was. It was, I suddenly realized with awe, the Past. But what was the Past? And where was it? And now and here, as I lay in bed this winter evening in a New York apartment, listening to my sister playing the piano, Time itself moved on, and tomorrow this dreaming about the past would be the Past, too. It made me feel uneasy. I got no further before I fell asleep.

I thought about it often in the next weeks. Thought is too systematic a word for what I

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to my understanding and imagination. Many years later Santayana invented for such dreams, such passing appearances, such momentary objects of intuition, the term "essences." I had not realized until I began to recall these early explorations of epistemology that I had come upon essences long ago.

It was through Julian, too, at the same time, that I first began to think about Freedom and Determinism, Fate and Chance, Necessity and Accident, though, of course, not remotely in those terms. My friend and I used to discuss occasionally the accident that had brought us together in a friendship that, we were certain, would never end. It was a lucky accident, we decided. But the very luck of it, we decided, *proved* that it was something more than luck; that it *could* not have been an accident. For look, we unanimously agreed, our parents, who had not known each other, must first have decided to come to the same place and, all unknown to each other, to rent houses directly opposite each other. It was not an accident. It was an inevitable chain; it was *intended*. It was Fate. And it was part of Fate, we warmly agreed, that we should be friends forever. Fate and Freedom, these are familiar preoccupations of theologians from St. Paul and St. Augustine down. So are death and immortality. Many philosophical conceptions, I was to learn later, have their origins in the mind of the child and the mind of the savage. There is a whole library about primitive conceptions of the soul. The appearance of dead men in dreams, if I remember, is supposed to lead the primitive warrior to believe that his dead friends and enemies live in another world.

I cannot say that I can recall having been concerned very early with the nature of the soul or the problem of immortality. Nor early to have brooded upon death. Death was what happened to *old* people, people in their forties and fifties or seventies; to people's grandparents, not to anybody one really knew or played with. The death of a boy in our group—Herbert, the fat, good-natured, not very literary member of our Benjamin Franklin Club—first gave me pause and led me to think of the quite incredible fact of death. When older people died, it was as if they had simply gone off or moved away. And in any case one had never known them very well, and adults, besides, did

strange things. But Herbert, the liveliest of all, simply gone, stretched out in a coffin and carried away to be buried! It was far more upsetting than when Mr. S., the father of one of my friends, died. That was sad and sudden. He came home from a trip, had pneumonia; they brought an oxygen tent for him to breathe in, and three days later he was gone. But *he* was bald-headed and had always seemed incredibly old; he was fifty. It seemed odd not to see him emerge at the aristocratically late hour of a quarter to nine and in his top hat leisurely set off for the local rather than the urgent express train on the Elevated. His son, my chum, wore a black tie and mourning-band and was not allowed to go to the theatre and acquired for a while a special dignity and importance. But that was different. The death of one of us, a contemporary, was another matter. The very young believe not in immortal life, but in eternal life here on earth; it struck me as incredible that anyone, any young person, should really die, simply cease to be. And yet I am convinced that one's adult philosophical opinions are formed in embryo very early, if one is going to have them at all. For it never seemed to me that my friend was living as an angel in some other world. He had ceased simply to be. Death was the end, and there both the incredibility and the sadness of it lay. Death, like birth, was a fact of existence, as inevitable and as natural. I vaguely felt that as a child; I definitely think that now.

But the intimations of immortality that Wordsworth speaks of have, of course, nothing to do with an after-life. They have to do with a sense of something "far more deeply inter-fused," a presence of something permeatingly beautiful in the crass or exquisite surface of things. Like every child I felt, especially, I think, in the art of music, an adumbration of something acute in poignancy and intensity, yet otherworldly in its distance from ordinary objects. It doesn't matter much that it was nothing more musically profound than "Angel's Serenade" or *Kammenoi Ostrov* or the *Tannhäuser* Bacchanal that gave me this sense, or that it seldom came from anything commonly called real. If it did not come from music, it came from poetry, and the poetry, too, did not have to be profound.

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into question for me by the fact that this friend of mine had to work after school and that he had to stay in the city in the summer. But it was not only his example, it was his instruction that made me query the operations of right and wrong in the small world I knew. Ben F. was an Austrian immigrant, two or three years older than myself; he seemed to me to look quite grown up. He certainly had read grown-up books. Within a year I was pattering after him a denunciation of the capitalist system, and I accompanied him to Madison Square Garden to cheer, for twenty minutes, Eugene V. Debs. I did not quite know anything about Marx's labour theory of value, but I knew people were underpaid, that the rich exploited the poor, that society must be made over, that there must be equality of opportunity and reward for all. Then, among other things, Ben wouldn't have to work afternoons and could spend his summer vacations in the country, like me, perhaps with me. My economic understanding was primitive enough, and my enthusiasm for social justice as vague as it was enthusiastic. But such as they were, they led me to the portals of moral philosophy. Perhaps, I began to suspect, all that I thought just and proper was itself a middle-class family prejudice. There must be other ways of living, other ways of looking at right and wrong in the world.

I suspect many moral philosophers have begun through being thus accidentally disquieted at about the age of thirteen, and the search for the Good has begun usually because some boy somewhere discovered early that there was something wrong with the *good* people he knew and found people outside his own family who had other standards of good than he had ever dreamed of. But in my own case, the reflection upon the good life had a long intermission and I was not consciously aware that there was such a thing as moral philosophy until long after I had stumbled upon it. Just about this time I discovered poetry, and then I quite forgot the Good Society, and the evils of the one in which I comfortably, and Ben uncomfortably, lived.

It turned out that I was not to think much more about "philosophy" in the strict sense until my freshman year in college. Such general ideas as a high-school pupil gets in America

come, I think, largely from literature and history. There is a superstition even among college administrators that philosophy is a subject too "deep" and too "hard" for the underclassman. I picked up (most high-school pupils do) such logic as I got from geometry or outlining Burke's Speech on Conciliation, and such moral philosophy as filtered through in the *Sir Roger de Coverley Papers* and the *Idylls of the King* and the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*. But as I recall these early intimations of philosophical thought, I wonder why, as in France, philosophy cannot be begun earlier. The themes of reality and unreality, of good and evil, of fate and necessity, of determinism and freedom, the method of thinking itself, the being or the illusion of time are surely themes that early haunt the imagination of all but the most dull among the adolescents. Once in the Public Library I browsed among the "100" books, where the inventor of the Dewey decimal system long since elected to place philosophy. The librarian put me off onto *The Three Musketeers* and *Les Misérables*. But I rather wish now that youngsters were brought to philosophy when it naturally springs upon their imaginations. When they come upon it in college it is a subject to be studied. But I am sure many of them, like myself, come upon it much earlier. The stick broken in the water, the sense of something deep and far, felt by the sea or in the hills on a summer day, the puzzle and the pathos of time, the uncasiness about the good, have raised questions that one ought not to have to wait until late in one's college career to hear treated as questions worthy of being answered—or being asked.

JOHN BOYNTON PRIESTLEY

1894-

John Boynton Priestley, an English writer, is probably as well known in America as in England. His reputation rests chiefly on his novels and essays, but he has also written travel books, plays, literary studies, and biography. To the English Men of Letters series he contributed a life of George Meredith, and in Figures in Modern Literature he portrayed a number of his contemporaries. Priestley knows the United States at first hand, having lectured in this

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time I go. I visit one of these places for some socks, let us say, and in the window there are some socks at two-and-sixpence that will do excellently. I enter the shop and the dapper man who looks like the proprietor of a troupe of performing seals comes forward, and I mumble something about half-crown socks. Then, with a slight gesture of contempt, he turns away and beckons an assistant. Whatever I ask for, it is always the same; he turns away with a slight but quite perceptible gesture of contempt. (I wish sometimes I was immensely rich and could walk into one of these places and, in reply to the shop-walker, say very quietly, "Er—I've—er—come to buy the shop." What would he do then?) An assistant then comes forward and cries loudly and cheerfully, "Socks! Yessir! This way, sir!" And then, noticing me more particularly, a certain air of lassitude creeps over him, a hint of weariness and disillusion finds its way into his voice, as he says, more meditatively, "Oh—yes—socks." All this time there has been no word of the price, no mention of half-crown, and I wonder if the assistant understands. He pulls out several boxes, from which he takes a great many pairs of socks, opulent socks, elegant socks, grave and chaste socks, but all socks with an air; and as he spreads them out he becomes lyrical and moving in their praise.

"What—er—are the prices of—er—?" I venture to ask. His face falls. I have ruined one of his great moments, and I realize it and am a little sick at heart. He looks faintly surprised. "Oh, let me see," he murmurs, "twelve-and-six, ten shillings, and seven-and-six." I set my teeth, for this is the time to assert my manhood. "Oh, those are not what I want," I cry, with an affectation of boisterousness and good-fellowship, "but some at half-a-crown." I say this in such a way as to suggest that I am not trying to economize but have a whimsical desire for the half-crown article, that if I were really *buying socks* I should insist upon having the more expensive ones, but at the moment I am trifling with socks, merely seeing what can be got for a half-crown, indulging an elegant whim.

"Oh!—half-crown," the assistant repeats, icily, all his fires fading out as he wearily returns the real socks to their boxes. (The snob!—for two blazing seconds, I wave the red flag,

storm the Bastille,⁵ and sit at Lenin's⁶ right hand.) And then we begin to trade, soullessly and with mutual contempt.

That is the trick these haberdashers always play me, whatever I may happen to want. I am convinced that it is a trick, probably carefully taught and rehearsed in one of those courses on Salesmanship. The whole business is craftily stage-managed right from the moment one enters the shop. Its object is to undermine one's self-respect at the start, so that the only possible way to restore it is to buy the most expensive things in the place. It is a trick that works well with a good many men (it is useless against women, who return contempt for contempt and with interest), and it has caught me out on occasion but not for some time now. This, however, is only the beginning of my discomfort, which rapidly increases when I have to try on things. The large bright mirrors in these places always make me look a fool. I hate to stand in front of them, for I look an absurd shape, curiously top-heavy, badly dressed, and, for some mysterious reason, disgustingly ill-shaven.

The mirrors in the hat-shops are the worst. By some devilry they always make me look sillier and sillier with every succeeding hat I try on, until at length, in desperation, I take the first one and carry it away without another single glance at the mirrors, which are, I am sure, the fruit of much midnight trafficking with the powers of darkness. That this is no mere idle fancy of mine is proved by the fact that while my attendant hatter, by some amazing effort of will, keeps solemn and grave, the other assistants, passing and re-passing and catching glimpses of my reflection, or rather, distortion, always have knowing and evil grins spread across their faces. But even then, notwithstanding their evil mirrors, I take more kindly to the hatters than to the other haberdashers, perhaps because of the mad one, who is one of my favourite characters in literature. Indeed, I believe that eventually we shall learn to understand each other, the hatters and I. Only the

⁵ French prison destroyed by the French populace, July 14, 1789, at the outbreak of the Revolution.

⁶ Nikolai Lenin (1870–1924), Russian communist leader.

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not partly leaves and vegetable mold myself?—
a man of infinite horsepower, yet partly leaves.

Stay with me on 62 and it will take you into Concord. As I say, it was a delicious evening. The snake had come forth to die in a bloody S on the highway, the wheel upon its head, its bowels flat now and exposed. The turtle had come up too to cross the road and die in the attempt, its hard shell smashed under the rubber blow, its intestinal yearning (for the other side of the road) forever squashed. There was a sign by the wayside which announced that the road had a "cotton surface." You wouldn't know what that is, but neither, for that matter, did I. There is a cryptic ingredient in many of our modern improvements—we are awed and pleased without knowing quite what we are enjoying. It is something to be traveling on a road with a cotton surface.

The civilization round Concord to-day is an odd distillation of city, village, farm, and manor. The houses, yards, fields look not quite suburban, not quite rural. Under the bronze beech and the blue spruce of the departed baron grazes the milch goat of the heirs. Under the porte-cochère² stands the reconditioned station wagon; under the grape arbor sit the puppies for sale. (But why do men degenerate ever? What makes families run out?)

It was June and everywhere June was publishing her immemorial stanza: in the lilacs, in the syringa, in the freshly edged paths and the sweetness of moist beloved gardens, and the little wire wickets that preserve the tulips' front. Farmers were already moving the fruits of their toil into their yards, arranging the rhubarb, the asparagus, the strictly fresh eggs on the painted stands under the little shed roofs with the patent shingles. And though it was almost a hundred years since you had taken your ax and started cutting out your home on Walden Pond, I was interested to observe that the philosophical spirit was still alive in Massachusetts: in the center of a vacant lot some boys were assembling the framework of a rude shelter, their whole mind and skill concentrated in the rather inauspicious helter-skelter of studs and rafters. They too were escaping from town, to live naturally, in a rich blend of savagery and philosophy.

² a carriage porch.

That evening, after supper at the inn, I strolled out into the twilight to dream my shapeless transcendental dreams and see that the car was locked up for the night (first open the right front door, then reach over, straining, and pull up the handles of the left rear and the left front till you hear the click, then the handle of the right rear, then shut the right front but open it again, remembering that the key is still in the ignition switch, remove the key, shut the right front again with a bang, push the tiny keyhole cover to one side, insert key, turn, and withdraw). It is what we all do, Henry. It is called locking the car. It is said to confuse thieves and keep them from making off with the laprobe. Four doors to lock behind one robe. The driver himself never uses a laprobe, the free movement of his legs being vital to the operation of the vehicle; so that when he locks the car it is a pure and unselfish act. I have in my life gained very little essential heat from laprobes, yet I have ever been at pains to lock them up.

The evening was full of sounds, some of which would have stirred your memory. The robins still love the elms of New England villages at sundown. There is enough of the thrush in them to make song inevitable at the end of day, and enough of the tramp to make them hang round the dwelling of men. A robin, like many another American, dearly loves a white house with green blinds. Concord is still full of them.

Your fellow-townsmen were stirring abroad—not many afoot, most of them in their cars; and the sound which they made in Concord at evening was a rustling and a whispering. The sound lacks steadfastness and is wholly unlike that of a train. A train, as you know who lived so near the Fitchburg line, whistles once or twice sadly and is gone, trailing a memory in smoke, soothing to ear and mind. Automobiles, skirting a village green, are like flies that have gained the inner ear—they buzz, cease, pause, start, shift, stop, halt, brake, and the whole effect is a nervous polytone curiously disturbing.

As I wandered along, the toc toc of ping pong balls drifted from an attic window. In front of the Reuben Brown house a Buick was drawn up. At the wheel, motionless, his hat upon his head, a man sat, listening to Amos and Andy on the radio (it is a drama of many

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heap of stones, Henry. In fact the hillside itself seems faded, brow-beaten; a few tall skinny pines, bare of lower limbs, a smattering of young maples in suitable green, some birches and oaks, and a number of trees felled by the last big wind. It was from the bole of one of these fallen pines, torn up by the roots, that I extracted the stone which I added to the cairn—a sentimental act in which I was interrupted by a small terrier from a nearby picnic group, who confronted me and wanted to know about the stone.

I sat down for a while on one of the posts of your house to listen to the bluebottles and the dragonflies. The invaded glade sprawled shabby and mean at my feet, but the flies were tuned to the old vibration. There were the remains of a fire in your ruins, but I doubt that it was yours; also two beer bottles trodden into the soil and become part of earth. A young oak had taken root in your house, and two or three ferns, unrolling like the ticklers at a banquet. The only other furnishings were a DuBarry pattern sheet, a page torn from a picture magazine, and some crusts in wax paper.

Before I quit I walked clear round the pond and found the place where you used to sit on the N. E. side to get the sun in the fall, and the beach where you got sand for scrubbing your floor. On the eastern side of the pond, where the highway borders it, the State has built dressing rooms for swimmers, a float with diving towers, drinking fountains of porcelain, and rowboats for hire. The pond is in fact a State Preserve, and carries a twenty-dollar fine for picking wild flowers, a decree signed in all solemnity by your fellow-citizens Walter C. Wardwell, Erson B. Barlow, and Nathaniel I. Bowditch. There was a smell of creosote where they had been building a wide wooden stair-

way to the road and the parking area. Swimmers and boaters were arriving; bodies splashed vigorously into the water and emerged wet and beautiful in the bright air. As I left, a boatload of town boys were splashing about in mid-pond, kidding and fooling, the young fellows singing at the tops of their lungs in a wild chorus:

*Amer-ica, A-mer-i-ca, God shed
his grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shi-ning sea!*

I walked back to town along the railroad, following your custom. The rails were expanding noisily in the hot sun, and on the slope of the roadbed the wild grape and the blackberry sent up their creepers to the track.

The expense of my brief sojourn in Concord was:

Canvas shoes	\$1.95	
Baseball bat25	} gifts to take back to a boy
Left-handed fielder's glove	1.25	
Hotel and meals	4.25	
In all	\$7.70	

As you see, this amount was almost what you spent for food for eight months.³ I cannot defend the shoes or the expenditure for shelter and food: they reveal a meanness and grossness in my nature which you would find contemptible. The baseball equipment, however, is the sort of impediment with which you were never on even terms. You must remember that the house where you practiced the sort of economy which I respect was haunted only by mice and squirrels. You never had to cope with a shortstop.

³ Thoreau's expense for food from July 4th to March 1st was \$8.74. See *Walden*, chap. 1.

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PART IV

BIOGRAPHY AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY

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"History is a continuous, systematic, written narrative, in order of time, of past events as relating to a particular people, country, period, or person." This definition, however formidable, describes an important literary type as well as a major subdivision with which we are directly concerned. For biography is a written account of a person's life, or an account of the lives of any small and closely knit group, such as a family. A further subdivision is autobiography: a record of a person's life written by himself.

For several reasons biography should be considered in the somewhat larger frame of history itself. In its earliest forms biography was a part of the folklore and myths of mankind. Somewhat later examples of biography were brief bits appearing in historical passages where events in the life of a whole people or country were being recorded. Biography evolved from history. Again, as John Donne has written, "No man is an Iland, intire of it selfe; everyman is a peece of the continent, a part of the maine. . . ." To relate the life story of an individual one must record at least some aspects of the subject's period and region as well as his associations with groups of people. In some respects, therefore, biography is but a key to unlock the door to an understanding of this wider frame of reference. Consequently, biographies sometimes carry such titles as "The Life and Times of —" or "— and the Civil War."

History is also allied with biography and autobiography in reverse fashion. Journals, diaries, and even some "travel books" are the material of autobiography and biography and occasionally contribute to the writing of history itself. Carlyle, indeed, once defined history as "the essence of innumerable biographies," and

Emerson has said, "There is properly no history, only biography."

History, more often than biography, is concerned with direct exposition and, except in the hands of master historians, possesses few refinements, little polish, and scant creative imagination. Gibbon, Macaulay, Carlyle, and Parkman—to name but a few eminent historians—were capable of writing with skilled craftsmanship, yet superior biography and autobiography are more literary in both style and technique than is most history. As a definite, widely accepted type they deserve separate attention.

Biography has been a popular form of reading from its beginnings. Sketches of kings and members of the ruling class thrilled readers some two thousand years ago with their emphasis upon martial and other adventurous deeds. Readers vicariously experienced activity, securing release and a form of escape apparently no less popular then than they are today. Curiosity about others is as old as the human race, and its potency and prevalence have increased rather than decreased through the centuries. Within the past century our curiosity about others, great and small, has resulted in both a major industry and a major literary type. Biography and autobiography in books, magazines, motion pictures, and radio are a twentieth-century flood which shows no signs of receding.

To be sure, modern readers are not always so absorbed with literal accounts of striking deeds as readers and listeners were twenty centuries ago. But eagerness to know the intimate details of others' lives, curiosity about people's attainments, about their strengths and weaknesses, their ways of speaking and thinking and

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ever, the profile is both more and less than the biographies of Plutarch, with all their gifts of portraiture. It may be defined as biography in which, superimposed upon an account of the subject's heredity, environment, and accomplishments, is an attempted evaluation, often somewhat ironic, of his dominant characteristics and traits. It requires "who's who" details plus anecdotal material plus character analysis. A profile, as its name indicates, is not a full-length portrait; it merely seizes upon highlights and bears somewhat the relation to a full-length biography that a short story does to a novel.

The Gospels and Plutarch's *Lives* are prototypes of older biography. One or the other was a pattern for Tacitus, for Suetonius, or for the monastic chronicler. With the Renaissance, however, came an increased interest in biography. As people turned from worship of caste and authority to a consideration of their fellow men, they became better acquainted with man as man. A fresh sense of the value of the individual reached from Italy and France in the fifteenth century, and in the sixteenth century and later produced lasting results in England and all Europe. This Revival of Learning was concerned not alone with the culture of earlier times but with the dignity and essential worth of the common man. As scholasticism declined, humanism flourished, and biography and autobiography later began to flower. Biographical dictionaries and such collections as Vasari's *Lives* (cf. Robert Browning, I, 158) reflected a demand for information about people. The New Learning also produced Cellini's *Autobiography*, for artists and writers began to realize that they themselves, and not alone the governing classes, were worthy of notice. Cellini's realistic self-portrait tells much of his own inner life and provides fascinating sidelights on fellow artists, nobles, and kings. Among English works should be mentioned Izaak Walton's *Lives* (Donne, Herbert, and others) and Thomas Fuller's *History of the Worthies of England* (1662).

An important manifestation of the intellectual rebirth which was the Renaissance was the keeping of diaries and writing of memoirs. Diaries had been common for centuries, but few had been published or had put emphasis upon a personal record of events or upon self-revelation as did those of John Evelyn and

Samuel Pepys. (Neither was published until the nineteenth century. Evelyn's *Diary* in 1818, Pepys's in 1815.) Evelyn's account covered most of his life, 1620-1706, whereas Pepys (1633-1703) confined his record to nine years, 1660-1669. They differ widely in character, also. Evelyn was a public figure whose simple, clear statements record the feelings of a pious Royalist gentleman. Pepys was relatively less well known in his time but is now one of the best-known Englishmen of any time through the intimate details of his foibles and the glimpses of Restoration life which his unabashed *Diary* affords. He was truly a creative artist who could reveal himself objectively. His portrayal of himself as fretful, vain, childish, as a devotee of wine, women, and song, was as candid and externalized as though he were writing of someone else. Unique as autobiography, Pepys's *Diary* had considerable influence upon those later biographers who attempted as intimate and revealing treatments of their subjects' virtues and faults as did Pepys of his own.

The seventeenth century produced two classics of autobiography. The eighteenth produced what has deservedly been called the greatest biography in any language. James Boswell's *The Life of Samuel Johnson* (1791) resulted from the fortunate meeting of two remarkable personalities: England's great holder of wide-reaching and influential opinions and the most indefatigable biographer of all time. Boswell, Johnson's friend and confidant for more than twenty years, was able to provide and interpret with sensitive insight hundreds of small external details such as would have delighted Plutarch. More importantly, he was able to synthesize his material so thoroughly that Johnson seems not the subject of a biography but a flesh-and-blood character, breathing, talking, roaring. Such re-creation has been the vain pursuit of biographers ever since.

Boswell felt not only that Johnson's faults and defects were a part of the man but that their delineation would make him appear more real and human. Unlike earlier biographers he attempted neither to glorify his subject nor to admit minor flaws for the purpose of preaching sermons or drawing morals. Adhering to neither the "whitewash" nor the didactic theory of biography, he may be said to belong to what has

actually did, I am sure. I did not try to solve the problem. I displayed no precocious dialectic virtuosity. I "thought" about it in that I felt about it seriously. I repeatedly had a sense of the dreamlike though intense quality of time past and remembered, the odd unreality of time sure to come but not yet here, the wavering evanescence of the present. Or, as I put it to myself, yesterday is gone; today is going, always going; tomorrow is coming but it *hasn't* come. I used to try to explain it all to people, to the Negro elevator boy, particularly; he seemed to be the only one who would listen, though he said: "You shouldn't worry yo' head about that!" I don't think I found out until five or six years later that I was far from the only one who had been bemused or befuddled by the theme. I had a secret feeling that there was something special, private, and abnormal about being worried about such things, just as a child may go on a long time thinking he is the only one bemused and befuddled by sex.

But Time was not the only philosophical problem of which I had an early intimation. I was to learn at college, by way of Paulsen's book, of something called the epistemological problem. How do we *know*, and how do we know that we know? I was to learn of metaphysics, the attempt to define scrupulously what was really real. But epistemology and metaphysics came by anticipation into my ken long before I knew the words or the professional arguments about them, or knew that there were grown men who spent their whole lives debating such issues and were paid by universities for doing so and for teaching others how to do it. I cannot lay claim myself to having hit upon the intimations of these things. It was Julian L., now, I am told, a much sought after pediatricist in New York, who was the agent to bring epistemology and metaphysics (though he, too, did not know the words) to my fourteen-year-old observation. The fact he pointed at, I discovered much later, is time and again used as a conventional illustration in philosophical treatises.

It was in the mountains on the afternoon of a hot July day. We had been talking drowsily under a tree by the side of a brook. I was almost asleep. Julian was stirring a stick in the water.

"The stick looks broken, doesn't it?" he said.

I looked up vaguely. "Yes, what of it?" I said. I sometimes shared my sister's realism.

"But it isn't; that's only the shadow in the water; it's *unreal*," said Julian. He lapsed into silence, still stirring the stick. "But there's a real shadow," he said; "the shadow itself is *real*, all right."

"Yes," I said. "I'm going to sleep for a while."

Julian's remark made little immediate impression. The reality of a shadow, the unreality of a broken stick did not seem to matter very much amid this sunlight on the summer green. But days later, walking by the brook again with Julian and happening to stir a stick in it myself, my friend's comments of the other day suddenly came back with unexpected cogency and vividness into my mind.

"The shadow in a way *is* real," I suddenly said to Julian. Then two fourteen-year-old epistemologists, sitting by a mountain stream, wrestled dialectically, within the limits of their abilities, with the Real and the Unreal, how we knew anything really, and whether seeing was believing. I soon wearied of the controversy—as I have often done since. The whole problem, I somehow felt even then, was artificial, as I now think I have sound reasons for believing it to be. But the theme haunted me, and often that summer I reverted to it. Dreams, too, were like shadows, and the things one remembered were like dreams. I tried, without success even by my own fourteen-year-old standards, to write a poem about it. Indeed, even now it seems to me that the whole matter is a better theme for poetry than inquiry, and is poetic in its origins and fruits rather than primarily a genuine problem for analysis. The net effect for the time being was to make me a solitary solipsist—how I should have loved the words had I known them!—and I would pretend for as long as I could, till I was too hungry or too tired, that our house, my bed, the meat and milk and eggs at supper, the other summer visitors, Julian himself, were merely shadows or dreams in my mind, and that I myself perhaps was a dream. I seem to remember my mother found me particularly and annoyingly absent-minded the next week or two. It was fun to treat the world round about me as apparitions

⁴ one who believes that nothing but the self exists.

SAMUEL PEPYS

Despite his somewhat frivolous and dissipated activities, Samuel Pepys was a conscientious, patriotic public servant and administrator whose services to the English Admiralty (Navy) were numerous and prolonged. His patriotic concern and personal courage are nowhere better illustrated than in the dramatic passages which follow, covering portions of five days in 1666 during which the Great Fire of London was raging. For additional information concerning Samuel Pepys (1633–1703) see II, 289.

[THE GREAT FIRE]

2nd (Lord's day). Some of our mayds sitting up late last night to get things ready against our feast to-day, Jane called us up about three in the morning, to tell us of a great fire they saw in the City. So I rose and slipped on my night-gowne, and went to her window, and thought it to be on the back-side of Marke-lane at the farthest; but, being unused to such fires as followed, I thought it far enough off; and so went to bed again and to sleep. About seven rose again to dress myself, and there looked out at the window, and saw the fire not so much as it was and further off. So to my closett to set things to rights after yesterday's cleaning. By and by Jane comes and tells me that she hears that above 300 houses have been burned down to-night by the fire we saw, and that it is now burning down all Fish-street, by London Bridge. So I made myself ready presently, and walked to the Tower, and there got up upon one of the high places, Sir J. Robinson's little son going up with me; and there I did see the houses at that end of the bridge all on fire, and an infinite great fire on this and the other side the end of the bridge; which, among other people, did trouble me for poor little Michell and our Sarah on the bridge. So down, with my heart full of trouble, to the Lieutenant of the Tower, who tells me that it begun this morning

in the King's baker's house in Pudding-lane, and that it hath burned St. Magnus's Church and most part of Fish-street already. So I down to the water-side, and there got a boat and through bridge, and there saw a lamentable fire. Poor Michell's house, as far as the Old Swan, already burned that way, and the fire running further, that in a very little time it got as far as the Steele-yard, while I was there. Everybody endeavouring to remove their goods, and flinging into the river or bringing them into lighters that lay off; poor people staying in their houses as long as till the very fire touched them, and then running into boats, or clambering from one pair of stairs by the water-side to another. And among other things, the poor pigeons, I perceive, were loth to leave their houses, but hovered about the windows and balconys till they were, some of them burned, their wings, and fell down. Having staid, and in an hour's time seen the fire rage every way, and nobody, to my sight, endeavouring to quench it, but to remove their goods, and leave all to the fire, and having seen it get as far as the Steele-yard, and the wind mighty high and driving it into the City; and every thing, after so long a drought, proving combustible, even the very stones of churches, and among other things the poor steeple by which pretty Mrs. — lives, and whereof my old schoolfellow Elborough is parson, taken fire in the very top, and there burned till it fell down: I to White Hall (with a gentleman with me who desired to go off from the Tower, to see the fire, in my boat); to White Hall, and there up to the King's closett in the Chappell, where people come about me, and I did give them an account dismayed them all, and word was carried in to the King. So I was called for, and did tell the King and Duke of Yorke what I saw, and that unless his Majesty did command houses to be pulled down nothing could stop the fire. They seemed much troubled, and the King commanded me to go to my Lord Mayor from him,

and command him to spare no houses, but to pull down before the fire every way. The Duke of York bid me tell him that if he would have any more soldiers he shall; and so did my Lord Arlington afterwards, as a great secret. Here meeting with Captain Cocke, I in his coach, which he lent me, and Creed with me to Paul's, and there walked along Watling-street, as well as I could, every creature coming away laden with goods to save, and here and there sick people carried away in beds. Extraordinary good goods carried in carts and on backs. At last met my Lord Mayor in Canning-street, like a man spent, with a handkercher about his neck. To the King's message he cried, like a fainting woman, "Lord! what can I do? I am spent: people will not obey me. I have been pulling down houses; but the fire overtakes us faster than we can do it." That he needed no more soldiers; and that, for himself, he must go and refresh himself, having been up all night. So he left me, and I him, and walked home, seeing people all almost distracted, and no manner of means used to quench the fire. The houses, too, so very thick thereabouts, and full of matter for burning, as pitch and tarr, in Thames-street; and warehouses of oyle, and wines, and brandy, and other things. Here I saw Mr. Isaake Houblon, the handsome man, prettily dressed and dirty, at his door at Dowgate, receiving some of his brothers' things, whose houses were on fire; and, as he says, have been removed twice already; and he doubts (as it soon proved) that they must be in a little time removed from his house also, which was a sad consideration. And to see the churches all filling with goods by people who themselves should have been quietly there at this time. By this time it was about twelve o'clock; and so home, and there find my guests, which was Mr. Wood and his wife Barbary Sheldon, and also Mr. Moone: she mighty fine, and her husband, for aught I see, a likely man. But Mr. Moone's design and mine, which was to look over my closett and please him with the sight thereof, which he hath long desired, was wholly disappointed; for we were in great trouble and disturbance at this fire, not knowing what to think of it. However, we had an extraordinary good dinner, and as merry as at this time we could be. While at dinner Mrs. Batelier come to enquire after Mr. Woolfe and Stanes (who, it

seems, are related to them), whose houses in Fish-street are all burned, and they in a sad condition. She would not stay in the fright. Soon as dined, I and Moone away, and walked through the City, the streets full of nothing but people and horses and carts loaden with goods, ready to run over one another, and removing goods from one burned house to another. They now removing out of Canning-streete (which received goods in the morning) into Lombard-streete, and further; and among others I now saw my little goldsmith, Stokes, receiving some friend's goods, whose house itself was burned the day after. We parted at Paul's; he home, and I to Paul's Wharf, where I had appointed a boat to attend me, and took in Mr. Carcasse and his brother, whom I met in the streete, and carried them below and above bridge to and again to see the fire, which was now got further, both below and above, and no likelihood of stopping it. Met with the King and Duke of York in their barge, and with them to Queenhithe, and there called Sir Richard Browne to them. Their order was only to pull down houses apace, and so below bridge at the waterside; but little was or could be done, the fire coming upon them so fast. Good hopes there was of stopping it at the Three Cranes above, and at Buttolph's Wharf below bridge, if care be used; but the wind carries it into the City, so as we know not by the water-side what it do there. River full of lighters and boats taking in goods, and good goods swimming in the water, and only I observed that hardly one lighter or boat in three that had the goods of a house in, but there was a pair of Virginalls¹ in it. Having seen as much as I could now, I away to White Hall by appointment, and there walked to St. James's Parke, and there met my wife and Creed and Wood and his wife, and walked to my boat; and there upon the water again, and to the fire up and down, it still encreasing, and the wind great. So near the fire as we could for smoke; and all over the Thames, with one's face in the wind, you were almost burned with a shower of fire-drops. This is very true; so as houses were burned by these drops and flakes of fire, three or four, nay,

¹ a small harpsichord of rectangular shape, with the strings stretched parallel to the keyboard, the earlier types placed on a table; common in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; also used in the plural.

five or six houses, one from another. When we could endure no more upon the water, we to a little ale-house on the Bankside, over against the Three Cranes, and there staid till it was dark almost, and saw the fire grow; and, as it grew darker, churches and houses, as far as we could see up the hill of the City, in a most horrid malicious bloody flame, not like the fine flame of an ordinary fire. Barbary and her husband away before us. We staid till, it being darkish, we saw the fire as only one entire arch of fire from this to the other side the bridge, and in a bow up the hill for an arch of above a mile long: it made me weep to see it. The churches, houses, and all on fire and flaming at once; and a horrid noise and flames made, and the cracking of houses at their ruine. So home with a sad heart, and there find every body discouraging and lamenting the fire; and poor Tom Hater come with some few of his goods saved out of his house, which is burned upon Fish-streete Hill. I invited him to lie at my house, and did receive his goods, but was deceived in his lying there, the newes coming every moment of the growth of the fire; so as we were forced to begin to pack up our owne goods, and prepare for their removal; and did by moonshine (it being brave dry, and moonshine, and warm weather) carry much of my goods into the garden, and Mr. Hater and I did remove my money and iron chests into my cellar, as thinking that the safest place. And got my bags of gold into my office, ready to carry away, and my chief papers of accounts also there, and my tallys into a box by themselves. So great was our fear, as Sir W. Batten hath carts come out of the country to fetch away his goods this night. We did put Mr. Hater, poor man, to bed a little; but he got but very little rest, so much noise being in my house, taking down of goods.

3rd. About four o'clock in the morning, my Lady Batten sent me a cart to carry away all my money, and plate, and best things, to Sir W. Rider's at Bednall-greene. Which I did, riding myself in my night-gowne in the cart; and, Lord! to see how the streets and the highways are crowded with people running and riding, and getting of carts at any rate to fetch away things. I find Sir W. Rider tired with being called up all night, and receiving things from several friends. His house full of goods, and much of Sir W. Batten's and Sir W. Pen's. I am

eased at my heart to have my treasure so well secured. Then home, with much ado to find a way, nor any sleep all this night to me nor my poor wife. But then and all this day she and I, and all my people labouring to get away the rest of our things, and did get Mr. Tooker to get me a lighter to take them in, and we did carry them (myself some) over Tower Hill, which was by this time full of people's goods, bringing their goods thither; and down to the lighter, which lay at the next quay, above the Tower Docke. And here was my neighbour's wife, Mrs. ———, with her pretty child, and some few of her things, which I did willingly give way to be saved with mine; but there was no passing with any thing through the postern, the crowd was so great. The Duke of Yorke come this day by the office, and spoke to us, and did ride with his guard up and down the City to keep all quiet (he being now General, and having the care of all). This day, Mercer being not at home, but against her mistress's order gone to her mother's, and my wife going thither to speak with W. Hewer, met her there, and was angry, and her mother saying that she was not a 'prentice girl, to ask leave every time she goes abroad, my wife with good reason was angry, and, when she came home, bid her be gone again. And so she went away, which troubled me, but yet less than it would, because of the condition we are in, fear of coming into in a little time of being less able to keepe one in her quality. At night lay down a little upon a quilt of W. Hewer's in the office, all my owne things being packed up or gone; and after me my poor wife did the like, we having fed upon the remains of yesterday's dinner, having no fire nor dishes, nor any opportunity of dressing any thing.

4th. Up by break of day to get away the remainder of my things; which I did by a lighter at the Iron gate:² and my hands so few, that it was the afternoon before we could get them all away. Sir W. Pen and I to Tower-streete, and there met the fire burning three or four doors beyond Mr. Howell's, whose goods, poor man, his trays, and dishes, shovells, &c., were flung all along Tower-street in the kennels, and people working therewith from one end to the other; the fire coming on in that narrow streete,

² Irongate Stairs, located at the foot of Little Tower Hill.

on both sides, with infinite fury. Sir W. Batten not knowing how to remove his wine, did dig a pit in the garden, and laid it in there; and I took the opportunity of laying all the papers of my office that I could not otherwise dispose of. And in the evening Sir W. Pen and I did dig another, and put our wine in it; and I my Parmazan cheese, as well as my wine and some other things. The Duke of Yorke was at the office this day, at Sir W. Pen's; but I happened not to be within. This afternoon, sitting melancholy with Sir W. Pen in our garden, and thinking of the certain burning of this office, without extraordinary means, I did propose for the sending up of all our workmen from Woolwich and Deptford yards (none whereof yet appeared), and to write to Sir W. Coventry to have the Duke of Yorke's permission to pull down houses, rather than lose this office, which would much hinder the King's business. So Sir W. Pen he went down this night, in order to the sending them up tomorrow morning; and I wrote to Sir W. Coventry about the business, but received no answer. This night Mrs. Turner (who, poor woman, was removing her goods all this day, good goods into the garden, and knows not how to dispose of them), and her husband supped with my wife and I at night, in the office, upon a shoulder of mutton from the cook's, without any napkin or any thing, in a sad manner, but were merry. Only now and then walking into the garden, and saw how horribly the sky looks, all on a fire in the night, was enough to put us out of our wits; and, indeed, it was extremely dreadful, for it looks just as if it was at us, and the whole heaven on fire. I after supper walked in the darke down to Tower-streete, and there saw it all on fire, at the Trinity House on that side, and the Dolphin Taverne on this side, which was very near us; and the fire with extraordinary vehemence. Now begins the practice of blowing up of houses in Tower-streete, those next the Tower, which at first did frighten people more than any thing; but it stopped the fire where it was done, it bringing down the houses to the ground in the same places they stood, and then it was easy to quench what little fire was in it, though it kindled nothing almost. W. Hewer this day went to see how his mother did, and comes late home, telling us how he hath been forced to remove her to Islington, her house in Pye-corner

being burned; so that the fire is got so far that way, and all the Old Bayly,³ and was running down to Fleete-streete; and Paul's is burned, and all Cheapside. I wrote to my father this night, but the post-house being burned, the letter could not go.

5th. I lay down in the office again upon W. Hewer's quilt, being mighty weary, and sore in my feet with going till I was hardly able to stand. About two in the morning my wife calls me up and tells me of new cries of fire, it being come to Barkeing Church, which is the bottom of our lane. I up, and finding it so, resolved presently to take her away, and did, and took my gold, which was about £2,350, W. Hewer, and Jane, down by Proundy's boat to Woolwich; but, Lord! what a sad sight it was by moone-light to see the whole City almost on fire, that you might see it plain at Woolwich, as if you were by it. There, when I come, I find the gates shut, but no guard kept at all, which troubled me, because of discourse now begun, that there is plot in it, and that the French had done it. I got the gates open, and to Mr. Shelden's, where I locked up my gold, and charged my wife and W. Hewer never to leave the room without one of them in it, night or day. So back again, by the way seeing my goods well in the lighters at Deptford, and watched well by people. Home, and whereas I expected to have seen our house on fire, it being now about seven o'clock, it was not. But to the fire, and there find greater hopes than I expected; for my confidence of finding our Office on fire was such, that I durst not ask any body how it was with us, till I come and saw it not burned. But going to the fire, I find by the blowing up of houses, and the great helpe given by the workmen out of the King's yards, sent up by Sir W. Pen, there is a good stop given to it, as well as at Markelane end as ours; it having only burned the dyall of Barking Church, and part of the porch, and was there quenched. I up to the top of Barking steeple, and there saw the saddest sight of desolation that I ever saw; every where great fires, oyle-cellars, and brimstone, and other things burning. I became afraid to stay there long, and therefore down again as fast as I could, the fire being spread as far as I could see it; and to Sir W. Pen's, and there eat a

³ Old Bailey, the principal criminal court of London.

piece of cold meat, having eaten nothing since Sunday, but the remains of Sunday's dinner. Here I met with Mr. Young and Whistler; and having removed all my things, and received good hopes that the fire at our end is stopped, they and I walked into the town, and find Fan-
church-streete, Gracious-streete, and Lombard-
streete all in dust. The Exchange a sad sight,
nothing standing there, of all the statues or pil-
lars, but Sir Thomas Gresham's picture in the
corner. Walked into Moorefields (our feet ready
to burn, walking through the towne among the
hot coles), and find that full of people, and
poor wretches carrying their goods there, and
every body keeping his goods together by them-
selves (and a great blessing it is to them that
it is fair weather for them to keep abroad night
and day); drank there, and paid twopence for
a plain penny loaf. Thence homeward, having
passed through Cheapside and Newgate Mar-
ket, all burned, and seen Anthony Joyce's house
in fire. And took up (which I keep by me) a
piece of glasse of Mercers' Chappell in the
streete, where much more was, so melted and
buckled with the heat of the fire like parch-
ment. I also did see a poor cat taken out of a
hole in the chimney, joyning to the wall of the
Exchange, with the hair all burned off the
body, and yet alive. So home at night, and find
there good hopes of saving our office; but great
endeavours of watching all night, and having
men ready; and so we lodged them in the office,
and had drink and bread and cheese for them.
And I lay down and slept a good night about
midnight, though when I rose I heard that there
had been a great alarme of French and Dutch
being risen,⁴ which proved nothing. But it is a
strange thing to see how long this time did look
since Sunday, having been always full of vari-
ety of actions, and little sleep, that it looked
like a week or more, and I had forgot almost the
day of the week.

6th. Up about five o'clock, and there met Mr.
Cawden at the gate of the office (I intending to
go out, as I used, every now and then to-day, to
see how the fire is) to call our men to Bishop's-
gate, where no fire had yet been near, and
there is now one broke out: which did give
great grounds to people, and to me too, to think

⁴ Since there was no obvious origin of the fire, Londoners attributed its outbreak to a plot by "the French, Hollanders, and fanatic party."

that there is some kind of plot in this (on which
many by this time have been taken, and it hath
been dangerous for any stranger to walk in the
streets), but I went with the men, and we did
put it out in a little time; so that that was well
again. It was pretty to see how hard the women
did work in the cannells, sweeping of water;
but then they would scold for drink, and be as
drunk as devils. I saw good butts of sugar broke
open in the street, and people go and take
handsfull out, and put into beer, and drink it.
And now all being pretty well, I took boat, and
over to Southwarke, and took boat on the other
side the bridge, and so to Westminster, thinking
to shift myself, being all in dirt from top to bot-
tom; but could not there find any place to buy a
shirt or pair of gloves, Westminster Hall being
full of people's goods, those in Westminster
having removed all their goods, and the Ex-
chequer money put into vessels to carry to Non-
such; but to the Swan, and there was trimmed;
and then to White Hall, but saw nobody; and so
home. A sad sight to see how the River looks:
no houses nor church near it, to the Temple,
where it stopped. At home, did go with Sir W.
Batten, and our neighbour, Knightly (who, with
one more, was the only man of any fashion left
in all the neighbourhood *thereabouts*, they all
removing their goods and leaving their houses
to the mercy of the fire), to Sir R. Ford's, and
there dined in an earthen platter—a fried breast
of mutton; a great many of us, but very merry,
and indeed as good a meal, though as ugly a
one, as ever I had in my life. Thence down to
Deptford, and there with great satisfaction
landed all my goods at Sir G. Carteret's safe,
and nothing missed I could see, or hurt. This
being done to my great content, I home, and to
Sir W. Batten's, and there with Sir R. Ford, Mr.
Knightly, and one Withers, a professed lying
rogue, supped well, and mighty merry, and our
fears over.

JAMES BOSWELL

James Boswell, the son of a Scottish judge, today would be called a lionizer or autograph hunter, but his curiosity, vanity, and desire for association with important men of his time led him to great achievement. Forsaking the legal career for which he had been trained, seeking success in politics or literature, Boswell had the acumen

to recognize greatness in Johnson, sufficient steadfastness and devotion to endure rebuffs, inexhaustible energy, and a superb sense of artistic values. The first of the following passages describes Boswell's introduction to Johnson, when he was twenty-two and Johnson fifty-four. The second deals with Johnson's Dictionary, which was begun in 1747 and published in 1755. Here included is Dr. Johnson's famous letter to Lord Chesterfield, sometimes called a "literary declaration of independence." Additional comment on James Boswell (1740–1795) and *The Life of Samuel Johnson* will be found on II, 289.

[BOSWELL MEETS JOHNSON]

1763: Aetat. 54. This is to me a memorable year; for in it I had the happiness to obtain the acquaintance of that extraordinary man whose memoirs I am now writing; an acquaintance which I shall ever esteem as one of the most fortunate circumstances in my life. Though then but two-and-twenty, I had for several years read his works with delight and instruction, and had the highest reverence for their author, which had grown up in my fancy into a kind of mysterious veneration, by figuring to myself a state of solemn elevated abstraction, in which I supposed him to live in the immense metropolis of London. Mr. Gentleman, a native of Ireland, who passed some years in Scotland as a player,¹ and as an instructor in the English language, a man whose talents and worth were depressed by misfortunes, had given me a representation of the figure and manner of DICTIONARY JOHNSON! as he was then generally called;² and during my first visit to London, which was for three months in 1760, Mr. Derrick the poet, who was Gentleman's friend and countryman, flattered me with hopes that he would introduce me to Johnson, an honour of which I was very ambitious. But he never found an opportunity; which made me

¹ actor.

² "As great men of antiquity such as *Scipio Africanus* had an epithet added to their names, in consequence of some celebrated action, so my illustrious friend was often called *Dictionary Johnson*, from that wonderful achievement of genius and labour, his 'Dictionary of the English Language,' the merit of which I contemplate with more and more admiration." (Boswell's note.)

doubt that he had promised to do what was not in his power; till Johnson some years afterwards told me, 'Derrick, Sir, might very well have introduced you. I had a kindness for Derrick, and am sorry he is dead.'

In the summer of 1761 Mr. Thomas Sheridan was at Edinburgh, and delivered lectures upon the English Language and Publick Speaking to large and respectable audiences. I was often in his company, and heard him frequently expatiate upon Johnson's extraordinary knowledge, talents, and virtues, repeat his pointed sayings, describe his particularities, and boast of his being his guest sometimes till two or three in the morning. At his house I hoped to have many opportunities of seeing the sage, as Mr. Sheridan obligingly assured me I should not be disappointed.

When I returned to London in the end of 1762, to my surprise and regret I found an irreconcilable difference had taken place between Johnson and Sheridan. A pension of two hundred pounds a year had been given to Sheridan. Johnson, who, as has been already mentioned, thought slightly of Sheridan's art, upon hearing that he was also pensioned, exclaimed, 'What! have they given *him* a pension? Then it is time for me to give up mine.' Whether this proceeded from a momentary indignation, as if it were an affront to his exalted merit that a player should be rewarded in the same manner with him, or was the sudden effect of a fit of peevishness, it was unluckily said, and, indeed, cannot be justified. Mr. Sheridan's pension was granted to him not as a player, but as a sufferer in the cause of government, when he was manager of the Theatre Royal in Ireland, when parties ran high in 1753.³ And it must also be allowed that he was a man of literature, and had considerably improved the arts of reading and speaking with distinctness and propriety.

Besides, Johnson should have recollected that Mr. Sheridan taught pronunciation to Mr. Alexander Wedderburne, whose sister was married

³ On March 2, 1754 (Boswell's 1753 is inaccurate), Sheridan's theater was devastated by an angry audience. Sheridan had refused to permit an actor to repeat, at the audience's demand, lines spoken against the government, and Sheridan himself had refused to appear on the stage to explain his reason for the prohibition.

to Sir Harry Erskine, an intimate friend of Lord Bute, who was the favourite of the King; and surely the most outrageous Whig will not maintain, that, whatever ought to be the principle in the disposal of *offices*, a *pension* ought never to be granted from any bias of court connection. Mr. Macklin, indeed, shared with Mr. Sheridan the honour of instructing Mr. Wedderburne; and though it was too late in life for a Caledonian to acquire the genuine English cadence, yet so successful were Mr. Wedderburne's instructors, and his own unabating endeavours, that he got rid of the coarse part of his Scotch accent, retaining only as much of the 'native wood-note wild,'⁴ as to mark his country; which, if any Scotchman should affect to forget, I should heartily despise him. Notwithstanding the difficulties which are to be encountered by those who have not had the advantage of an English education, he by degrees formed a mode of speaking, to which Englishmen do not deny the praise of elegance. Hence his distinguished oratory, which he exerted in his own country as an advocate in the Court of Session, and a ruling elder of the *Kirk*, has had its fame and ample reward, in much higher spheres. When I look back on this noble person at Edinburgh, in situations so unworthy of his brilliant powers, and behold LORD LOUGHBOROUGH⁵ at London, the change seems almost like one of the metamorphoses in Ovid; and as his two preceptors, by refining his utterance, gave currency to his talents, we may say in the words of that poet, '*Nam vos mutastis*.'⁶

I have dwelt the longer upon this remarkable instance of successful parts and assiduity, because it affords animating encouragement to other gentlemen of North-Britain to try their fortunes in the southern part of the Island, where they may hope to gratify their utmost ambition; and now that we are one people by the Union, it would surely be illiberal to maintain, that they have not an equal title with the natives of any other part of his Majesty's dominions.

⁴ From Milton's *L'Allegro* l. 134 (see I, 222).

⁵ Alexander Wedderburne was Lord Loughborough.

⁶ Of bodies changed to various forms I sing:
Ye Gods, from whom these miracles did spring,
Inspire . . .

DRYDEN, *Ov. Met.*, I, i.

Johnson complained that a man who disliked him repeated his sarcasm to Mr. Sheridan, without telling him what followed, which was, that after a pause he added, 'However, I am glad that Mr. Sheridan has a pension, for he is a very good man.' Sheridan could never forgive this hasty contemptuous expression. It rankled in his mind; and though I informed him of all that Johnson said, and that he would be very glad to meet him amicably, he positively declined repeated offers which I made, and once went off abruptly from a house where he and I were engaged to dine, because he was told that Dr. Johnson was to be there. I have no sympathetic feeling with such persevering resentment. It is painful when there is a breach between those who have lived together socially and cordially; and I wonder that there is not, in all such cases, a mutual wish that it should be healed. I could perceive that Mr. Sheridan was by no means satisfied with Johnson's acknowledging him to be a good man. That could not sooth his injured vanity. I could not but smile, at the same time that I was offended, to observe Sheridan in the *Life of Swift*, which he afterwards published, attempting, in the writhings of his resentment, to depreciate Johnson, by characterising him as '*A writer of gigantick fame in these days of little men*;' that very Johnson whom he once so highly admired and venerated.

This rupture with Sheridan deprived Johnson of one of his most agreeable resources for amusement in his lonely evenings; for Sheridan's well-informed, animated, and bustling mind never suffered conversation to stagnate; and Mrs. Sheridan was a most agreeable companion to an intellectual man. She was sensible, ingenious, unassuming, yet communicative. I recollect, with satisfaction, many pleasing hours which I passed with her under the hospitable roof of her husband, who was to me a very kind friend. Her novel, entitled *Memoirs of Miss Sydney Biddulph*, contains an excellent moral, while it inculcates a future state of retribution; and what it teaches is impressed upon the mind by a series of as deep distress as can affect humanity, in the amiable and pious heroine who goes to her grave unrelieved, but resigned, and full of hope of 'heaven's mercy.' Johnson paid her this high compliment upon it: 'I know not, Madam, that you have a right,

upon moral principles, to make your readers suffer so much.'

Mr. Thomas Davies the actor, who then kept a bookseller's shop in Russel-street, Covent-garden, told me that Johnson was very much his friend, and came frequently to his house, where he more than once invited me to meet him; but by some unlucky accident or other he was prevented from coming to us.

Mr. Thomas Davies was a man of good understanding and talents, with the advantage of a liberal education. Though somewhat pompous, he was an entertaining companion; and his literary performances⁷ have no inconsiderable share of merit. He was a friendly and very hospitable man. Both he and his wife, (who has been celebrated for her beauty,) though upon the stage for many years, maintain an uniform decency of character; and Johnson esteemed them, and lived in as easy an intimacy with them as with any family which he used to visit. Mr. Davies recollected several of Johnson's remarkable sayings, and was one of the best of the many imitators of his voice and manner, while relating them. He increased my impatience more and more to see the extraordinary man whose works I highly valued, and whose conversation was reported to be so peculiarly excellent.

At last, on Monday the 16th of May, when I was sitting in Mr. Davies's back-parlour, after having drunk tea with him and Mrs. Davies, Johnson unexpectedly came into the shop; and Mr. Davies having perceived him through the glass-door in the room in which we were sitting, advancing towards us,—he announced his awful approach to me, somewhat in the manner of an actor in the part of Horatio, when he addresses Hamlet on the appearance of his father's ghost, 'Look, my Lord, it comes.' I found that I had a very perfect idea of Johnson's figure, from the portrait of him painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds soon after he had published his Dictionary, in the attitude of sitting in his easy chair in deep meditation, which was the first picture his friend did for him, which Sir Joshua very kindly presented to me, and from which an engraving has been made for this work. Mr. Davies mentioned my name, and re-

spectfully introduced me to him. I was much agitated; and recollecting his prejudice against the Scotch, of which I had heard much, I said to Davies, 'Don't tell where I come from.'—
5 'From Scotland,' cried Davies, roguishly. 'Mr. Johnson, (said I) I do indeed come from Scotland, but I cannot help it.' I am willing to flatter myself that I meant this as light pleasantry to sooth and conciliate him, and not as an humiliating abasement at the expence of my country. But however that might be, this speech was somewhat unlucky; for with that quickness of wit for which he was so remarkable, he seized the expression 'come from Scotland,' which I
15 used in the sense of being of that country; and, as if I had said that I had come away from it, or left it, retorted, 'That, Sir, I find, is what a very great many of your countrymen cannot help.' This stroke stunned me a good deal; and when we had sat down, I felt myself not a little embarrassed, and apprehensive of what might come next. He then addressed himself to Davies: 'What do you think of Garrick? He has refused me an order for the play for Miss Williams, because he knows the house will be full,
25 and that an order would be worth three shillings.' Eager to take any opening to get into conversation with him, I ventured to say, 'O, Sir, I cannot think Mr. Garrick would grudge such a trifle to you.' 'Sir, (said he, with a stern look,) I have known David Garrick longer than you have done: and I know no right you have to talk to me on the subject.' Perhaps I deserved this check; for it was rather presumptuous in me, an entire stranger, to express any doubt of the justice of his animadversion upon his old acquaintance and pupil.⁸ I now felt myself much mortified, and began to think that the hope which I had long indulged of obtaining his acquaintance was blasted. And, in truth,
40 had not my ardour been uncommonly strong, and my resolution uncommonly persevering, so

⁸ "That this was a momentary sally against Garrick there can be no doubt; for at Johnson's desire he had, some years before, given a benefit-night at his theatre to this very person, by which she had got two hundred pounds. Johnson, indeed, upon all other occasions, when I was in his company, praised the very liberal charity of Garrick. I once mentioned to him, 'It is observed, Sir, that you attack Garrick yourself, but will suffer nobody else to do it.' Johnson, (smiling) 'Why, Sir, that is true.'" (Boswell's note.)

⁷ *Memoirs of the Life of Garrick, 1780; Dramatic Miscellanies, 1785.*

rough a reception might have deterred me for ever from making any further attempts. Fortunately, however, I remained upon the field not wholly discomfited; and was soon rewarded by hearing some of his conversation, of which I preserved the following short minute, without marking the questions and observations by which it was produced.

'People (he remarked) may be taken in once, who imagine that an authour is greater in private life than other men. Uncommon parts require uncommon opportunities for their exertion.'

'In barbarous society, superiority of parts is of real consequence. Great strength or great wisdom is of much value to an individual. But in more polished times there are people to do every thing for money; and then there are a number of other superiorities, such as those of birth and fortune, and rank, that dissipate men's attention, and leave no extraordinary share of respect for personal and intellectual superiority. This is wisely ordered by Providence, to preserve some equality among mankind.'

'Sir, this book ("The Elements of Criticism,"⁹ which he had taken up,) is a pretty essay, and deserves to be held in some estimation, though much of it is chimerical.'

Speaking of one who with more than ordinary boldness attacked public measures and the royal family, he said,

'I think he is safe from the law, but he is an abusive scoundrel; and instead of applying to my Lord Chief Justice to punish him, I would send half a dozen footmen and have him well ducked.'

'The notion of liberty amuses the people of England, and helps to keep off the *tædium vitæ*. When a butcher tells you that *his heart bleeds for his country*, he has, in fact, no uneasy feeling.'

'Sheridan will not succeed at Bath with his oratory. Ridicule has gone down before him, and, I doubt, Derrick is his enemy.'¹⁰

'Derrick may do very well, as long as he can

outrun his character; but the moment his character gets up with him, it is all over.'

It is, however, but just to record, that some years afterwards, when I reminded him of this sarcasm, he said, 'Well, but Derrick has now got a character that he need not run away from.'

I was highly pleased with the extraordinary vigour of his conversation, and regretted that I was drawn away from it by an engagement at another place. I had, for a part of the evening, been left alone with him, and had ventured to make an observation now and then, which he received very civilly; so that I was satisfied that though there was a roughness in his manner, there was no ill-nature in his disposition. Davies followed me to the door, and when I complained to him a little of the hard blows which the great man had given me, he kindly took upon him to console me by saying, 'Don't be uneasy. I can see he likes you very well.'

A few days afterwards I called on Davies, and asked him if he thought I might take the liberty of waiting on Mr. Johnson at his Chambers in the Temple. He said I certainly might, and that Mr. Johnson would take it as a compliment. So upon Tuesday the 24th of May, after having been enlivened by the witty sallies of Messieurs Thornton, Wilkes, Churchill and Lloyd, with whom I had passed the morning, I boldly repaired to Johnson. His Chambers were on the first floor of No. 1, Inner-Temple-lane, and I entered them with an impression given me by the Reverend Dr. Blair, of Edinburgh, who had been introduced to him not long before, and described his having 'found the Giant in his den;' an expression, which, when I came to be pretty well acquainted with Johnson, I repeated to him, and he was diverted at this picturesque account of himself. Dr. Blair had been presented to him by Dr. James Fordyce. At this time the controversy concerning the pieces published by Mr. James Macpherson, as translations of Ossian,¹¹ was at its height. Johnson had all along denied their authenticity; and, what was still more provoking to their admirers, maintained that they had no merit. The subject having been introduced by Dr. Fordyce, Dr.

⁹ by Henry Home, Lord Kames, 3 vols., Edinburgh, 1762.

¹⁰ "Mr. Sheridan was then reading lectures upon Oratory at Bath, where Derrick was Master of the Ceremonies; or, as the phrase is, King." (Boswell's note.)

¹¹ a legendary hero and poet of the third century. In 1762-1763 James Macpherson published poetry (or rhythmic prose) which was claimed to be a translation of Ossian.

Blair, relying on the internal evidence of their antiquity, asked Dr. Johnson whether he thought any man of a modern age could have written such poems? Johnson replied, 'Yes, Sir, many men, many women, and many children.' Johnson, at this time, did not know that Dr. Blair had just published a Dissertation, not only defending their authenticity, but seriously ranking them with the poems of Homer and Virgil; and when he was afterwards informed of this circumstance, he expressed some displeasure at Dr. Fordyce's having suggested the topick, and said, 'I am not sorry that they got thus much for their pains. Sir, it was like leading one to talk of a book, when the authour is concealed behind the door.'

He received me very courteously; but, it must be confessed, that his apartment, and furniture, and morning dress, were sufficiently uncouth. His brown suit of cloaths looked very rusty; he had on a little old shrivelled unpowdered wig, which was too small for his head; his shirt-neck and knees of his breeches were loose; his black worsted stockings ill drawn up; and he had a pair of unbuckled shoes by way of slippers. But all these slovenly particularities were forgotten the moment that he began to talk. Some gentlemen, whom I do not recollect, were sitting with him; and when they went away, I also rose; but he said to me, 'Nay, don't go.'—'Sir, (said I,) I am afraid that I intrude upon you. It is benevolent to allow me to sit and hear you.' He seemed pleased with this compliment, which I sincerely paid him, and answered, 'Sir, I am obliged to any man who visits me.'—I have preserved the following short minute of what passed this day.

'Madness frequently discovers itself merely by unnecessary deviation from the usual modes of the world. My poor friend Smart shewed the disturbance of his mind, by falling upon his knees, and saying his prayers in the street, or in any other unusual place. Now although, rationally speaking, it is greater madness not to pray at all, than to pray as Smart did, I am afraid there are so many who do not pray, that their understanding is not called in question.'

Concerning this unfortunate poet, Christopher Smart, who was confined in a mad-house, he had, at another time, the following conversation with Dr. Burney.—BURNLEY. 'How does poor Smart do, Sir; is he likely to recover?'

JOHNSON. 'It seems as if his mind had ceased to struggle with the disease; for he grows fat upon it.' BURNLEY. 'Perhaps, Sir, that may be from want of exercise.' JOHNSON. 'No, sir; he has partly as much exercise as he used to have, for he digs in the garden. Indeed, before his confinement, he used for exercise to walk to the alehouse; but he was *carried* back again. I did not think he ought to be shut up. His infirmities were not noxious to society. He insisted on people praying with him; and I'd as lief pray with Kit Smart as any one else. Another charge was, that he did not love clean linen; and I have no passion for it.'

Johnson continued. 'Mankind have a great aversion to intellectual labour; but even supposing knowledge to be easily attainable, more people would be content to be ignorant than would take even a little trouble to acquire it.'

'The morality of an action depends on the motive from which we act. If I fling half a crown to a beggar with intention to break his head, and he picks it up and buys victuals with it, the physical effect is good; but, with respect to me, the action is very wrong. So, religious exercises, if not performed with an intention to please God, avail us nothing. As our Saviour says of those who perform them from other motives, "Verily they have their reward."'¹²

'The Christian religion has very strong evidences. It, indeed, appears in some degree strange to reason; but in History we have undoubted facts, against which, in reasoning *à priori*, we have more arguments than we have for them; but then, testimony has great weight, and casts the balance. I would recommend to every man whose faith is yet unsettled, Grotius, —Dr. Pearson, —and Dr. Clarke.'

Talking of Garrick, he said, 'He is the first man in the world for sprightly conversation.'

When I rose a second time he again pressed me to stay, which I did.

He told me, that he generally went abroad at four in the afternoon, and seldom came home till two in the morning. I took the liberty to ask if he did not think it wrong to live thus, and not make more use of his great talents. He owned it was a bad habit. On reviewing, at the distance of many years, my journal of this period, I wonder how, at my first visit, I ventured

¹² Matthew 6:16.

to talk to him so freely, and that he bore it with so much indulgence.

Before we parted, he was so good as to promise to favour me with his company one evening at my lodgings; and, as I took my leave, shook me cordially by the hand. It is almost needless to add, that I felt no little elation at having now so happily established an acquaintance of which I had been so long ambitious.

My readers will, I trust, excuse me for being thus minutely circumstantial, when it is considered that the acquaintance of Dr. Johnson was to me a most valuable acquisition, and laid the foundation of whatever instruction and entertainment they may receive from my collections concerning the great subject of the work which they are now perusing.

[JOHNSON AND THE DICTIONARY]

1754: Actat. 45. The Dictionary, we may believe, afforded Johnson full occupation this year. As it approached to its conclusion, he probably worked with redoubled vigour, as seamen increase their exertion and alacrity when they have a near prospect of their haven.

Lord Chesterfield, to whom Johnson had paid the high compliment of addressing to his Lordship the Plan of his Dictionary, had behaved to him in such a manner as to excite his contempt and indignation. The world has been for many years amused with a story confidently told, and as confidently repeated with additional circumstances, that a sudden disgust was taken by Johnson upon occasion of his having been one day kept long in waiting in his Lordship's antechamber, for which the reason assigned was, that he had company with him; and that at last, when the door opened, out walked Colley Cibber; and that Johnson was so violently provoked when he found for whom he had been so long excluded, that he went away in a passion, and never would return. I remember having mentioned this story to George Lord Lyttelton, who told me, he was very intimate with Lord Chesterfield; and holding it as a well-known truth, defended Lord Chesterfield, by saying, that 'Cibber, who had been introduced familiarly by the back-stairs, had probably not been there above ten minutes.' It may seem strange even to entertain a doubt con-

cerning a story so long and so widely current, and thus implicitly adopted, if not sanctioned, by the authority which I have mentioned, but Johnson himself assured me, that there was not the least foundation for it. He told me, that there never was any particular incident which produced a quarrel between Lord Chesterfield and him; but that his Lordship's continued neglect was the reason why he resolved to have no connection with him. When the Dictionary was upon the eve of publication, Lord Chesterfield, who, it is said, had flattered himself with expectations that Johnson would dedicate the work to him, attempted, in a courtly manner, to sooth, and insinuate himself with the Sage, conscious, as it should seem, of the cold indifference with which he had treated its learned authour; and further attempted to conciliate him, by writing two papers in "The World," in recommendation of the work; and it must be confessed, that they contain some studied compliments, so finely turned, that if there had been no previous offence, it is probable that Johnson would have been highly delighted. Praise, in general, was pleasing to him; but by praise from a man of rank and elegant accomplishments, he was peculiarly gratified. . . .

This courtly device failed of its effect. Johnson, who thought that 'all was false and hollow,' despised the honeyed words, and was even indignant that Lord Chesterfield should, for a moment, imagine, that he could be the dupe of such an artifice. His expression to me concerning Lord Chesterfield, upon this occasion, was, 'Sir, after making great professions, he had, for many years, taken no notice of me; but when my Dictionary was coming out, he fell a scribbling in "The World" about it. Upon which, I wrote him a letter expressed in civil terms, but such as might shew him that I did not mind what he said or wrote, and that I had done with him.'

This is that celebrated letter of which so much has been said, and about which curiosity has been so long excited, without being gratified. I for many years solicited Johnson to favour me with a copy of it, that so excellent a composition might not be lost to posterity. He delayed from time to time to give it me; till at last in 1781, when we were on a visit at Mr.

¹ *Paradise Lost*, Book II, l. 112 (see I, 93).

Dilly's, at Southill in Bedfordshire, he was pleased to dictate it to me from memory. He afterwards found among his papers a copy of it, which he had dictated to Mr. Baretti, with its title and corrections, in his own hand-writing. This he gave to Mr. Langton; adding, that if it were to come into print, he wished it to be from that copy. By Mr. Langton's kindness, I am enabled to enrich my work with a perfect transcript of what the world has so eagerly desired to see.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE EARL
OF CHESTERFIELD.

'February 7, 1755.

'MY LORD,

I HAVE been lately informed, by the proprietor of the World, that two papers, in which my Dictionary is recommended to the publick, were written by your Lordship. To be so distinguished, is an honour, which, being very little accustomed to favours from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your Lordship, I was over powered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address; and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *Le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*;—that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending; but I found my attendance so little encouraged, that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your Lordship in publick, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

Seven years, my Lord, have now past, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it, at last, to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a Patron before.

The shepherd in Virgil grew at last ac-

quainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

'Is not a Patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the Publick should consider me as owing that to a Patron, which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favourer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have been long awakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation.

'My Lord,

'Your Lordship's most humble,

'Most obedient servant,

'SAM. JOHNSON.'

While this was the talk of the town, (says Dr. Adams, in a letter to me) I happened to visit Dr. Warburton, who finding that I was acquainted with Johnson, desired me earnestly to carry his compliments to him, and to tell him, that he honoured him for his manly behaviour in rejecting these condescensions of Lord Chesterfield, and for resenting the treatment he had received from him, with a proper spirit. Johnson was visibly pleased with this compliment, for he had always a high opinion of Warburton.—Indeed, the force of mind which appeared in this letter, was congenial with that which Warburton himself amply possessed.

There is a curious minute circumstance which struck me, in comparing the various edi-

³ possible allusion to the death of Johnson's wife.

⁴ "The *English Dictionary* was written with little assistance of the learned, and without any patronage of the great; not in the soft obscurities of retirement, or under the shelter of academick bowers, but amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow." (Johnson's *Preface to Dictionary*.)

² the conqueror of the conqueror of the earth.

tions of Johnson's imitations of Juvenal. In the tenth Satire, one of the couplets upon the vanity of wishes even for literary distinction stood thus:

'Yet think what ills the scholar's life assail,

Toil, envy, want, the *garret*, and the jail.'

But after experiencing the uneasiness which Lord Chesterfield's fallacious patronage made him feel, he dismissed the word *garret* from the sad group, and in all the subsequent editions the line stands

'Toil, envy, want, the *Patron*,⁵ and the jail.'

That Lord Chesterfield must have been mortified by the lofty contempt, and polite, yet keen satire with which Johnson exhibited him to himself in this letter, it is impossible to doubt. He, however, with that glossy duplicity which was his constant study, affected to be quite unconcerned. Dr. Adams mentioned to Mr. Robert Dodsley that he was sorry Johnson had written his letter to Lord Chesterfield. Dodsley, with the true feelings of trade, said 'he was very sorry too; for that he had a property in the Dictionary, to which his Lordship's patronage might have been of consequence.' He then told Dr. Adams, that Lord Chesterfield had shewn him the letter. 'I should have imagined (replied Dr. Adams) that Lord Chesterfield would have concealed it.' 'Poh! (said Dodsley) do you think a letter from Johnson could hurt Lord Chesterfield? Not at all, Sir. It lay upon his table, where any body might see it. He read it to me; said, "this man has great powers," pointed out the severest passages, and observed how well they were expressed.' This air of indifference, which imposed upon the worthy Dodsley, was certainly nothing but a specimen of that dissimulation which Lord Chesterfield inculcated as one of the most essential lessons for the conduct of life.⁶ His Lordship endeavoured to justify himself to Dodsley from the charges brought against him by Johnson; but we may judge of the flimsiness of his defence, from his having excused his neglect of Johnson, by saying that 'he had heard he had changed his lodgings, and did not know where he lived;' as if there could have been the smallest difficulty to inform

himself of that circumstance, by inquiring in the literary circle with which his Lordship was well acquainted, and was, indeed, himself one of its ornaments.

5 Dr. Adams expostulated with Johnson, and suggested, that his not being admitted when he called on him, was, probably, not to be imputed to Lord Chesterfield, for his Lordship had declared to Dodsley, that 'he would have turned off the best servant he ever had, if he had known that he denied him to a man who would have been always more than welcome;' and, in confirmation of this, he insisted on Lord Chesterfield's general affability and easiness of access, especially to literary men. 'Sir, (said Johnson) that is not Lord Chesterfield; he is the proudest man this day existing.' 'No, (said Dr. Adams) there is one person, at least, as proud; I think, by your own account, you are the prouder man of the two.' 'But mine (replied Johnson, instantly) was *defensive* pride.' This, as Dr. Adams well observed, was one of those happy turns for which he was so remarkably ready.

25 Johnson having now explicitly avowed his opinion of Lord Chesterfield, did not refrain from expressing himself concerning that nobleman with pointed freedom: "This man (said he) I thought had been a Lord among wits; 30 but, I find, he is only a wit among Lords!"

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

35 *One of the foremost figures in eighteenth-century America, Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790) became famous not only for his rags-to-riches story but for his vigorous participation in public life. Printer, inventor, scientist, diplomat, statesman, homespun philosopher—his activities ran the gamut. A prolific editorial, pamphlet, and letter writer, Franklin set down many of his theories and observations as he moved briskly from task to task. At sixteen, as 40 "Silence Dogood," he questioned church-state unity, religious hypocrisy, the Boston magistrates, and the Mathers. "A Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and Pain," 1725, was an expression of his early moral convictions. Experiments and Observations on Electricity, 1751, is a collection of letters on scientific findings. In 1757 came the famous*

⁵ Johnson's *Dictionary* defines *patron* as "commonly a wretch who supports with insolence, and is paid with flattery."

⁶ Chesterfield's *Letters to His Son*, 1774.

The Way to Wealth. The Interest of Great Britain Considered with Regard to Her Colonies, 1760, is indicative of Franklin's expansion into the realm of international affairs. The Autobiography, 1790, 1868, reveals his characteristic matter-of-factness, simplicity of style, and insatiable zeal for knowledge.

FROM THE *Autobiography*

Josiah, my father, married young, and carried his wife with three children into New England, about 1682. The conventicles having been forbidden by law, and frequently disturbed, induced some considerable men of his acquaintance to remove to that country, and he was prevailed with to accompany them thither, where they expected to enjoy their mode of religion with freedom. By the same wife he had four children more born there, and by a second wife ten more, in all seventeen; of which I remember thirteen sitting at one time at his table, who all grew up to be men and women, and married; I was the youngest son, and the youngest child but two, and was born in Boston, New England. My mother, the second wife, was Abiah Folger, daughter of Peter Folger, one of the first settlers of New England, of whom honorable mention is made by Cotton Mather, in his church history of that country, entitled *Magnalia Christi Americana*, as "*a godly, learned Englishman*," if I remember the words rightly. I have heard that he wrote sundry small occasional pieces, but only one of them was printed, which I saw now many years since. It was written in 1675, in the home-spun verse of that time and people, and addressed to those then concerned in the government there. It was in favor of liberty of conscience, and in behalf of the Baptists, Quakers, and other sectaries that had been under persecution, ascribing the Indian wars, and other distresses that had befallen the country, to that persecution, as so many judgments of God to punish so heinous an offense, and exhorting a repeal of those uncharitable laws. The whole appeared to me as written with a good deal of decent plainness and manly freedom. The six concluding lines I remember, though I have forgotten the two first of the stanza; but the purport of them was, that his censures proceeded

from good-will, and, therefore, he would be known to be the author.

"Because to be a libeller (says he)

I hate it with my heart;

From Sherburne town, where now I dwell

My name I do put here;

Without offense your real friend,

It is Peter Folger."

My elder brothers were all put apprentices to different trades. I was put to the grammar-school at eight years of age, my father intending to devote me, as the tithe of his sons, to the service of the Church. My early readiness in learning to read (which must have been very early, as I do not remember when I could not read), and the opinion of all his friends, that I should certainly make a good scholar, encouraged him in this purpose of his. My uncle Benjamin, too, approved of it, and proposed to give me all his short-hand volumes of sermons, I suppose as a stock to set up with, if I would learn his character. I continued, however, at the grammar-school not quite one year, though in that time I had risen gradually from the middle of the class of that year to be head of it, and farther was removed into the next class above it, in order to go with that into the third at the end of the year. But my father, in the meantime, from a view of the expense of a college education, which having so large a family he could not well afford, and the mean living many so educated were afterwards able to obtain—reasons that he gave to his friends in my hearing—altered his first intention, took me from the grammar-school, and sent me to a school for writing and arithmetic, kept by a then famous man, Mr. George Brownell, very successful in his profession generally, and that by mild, encouraging methods. Under him I acquired fair writing pretty soon, but I failed in the arithmetic, and made no progress in it. At ten years old I was taken home to assist my father in his business, which was that of a tallow-chandler and sope-boiler; a business he was not bred to, but had assumed on his arrival in New England, and on finding his dying trade would not maintain his family, being in little request. Accordingly, I was employed in cutting wick for the candles, filling the dipping mold and the molds for cast candles, attending the shop, going of errands, etc.

I disliked the trade, and had a strong inclination for the sea, but my father declared against it; however, living near the water, I was much in and about it, learnt early to swim well, and to manage boats; and when in a boat or canoe with other boys, I was commonly allowed to govern, especially in any case of difficulty; and upon other occasions I was generally a leader among the boys, and sometimes led them into scrapes, of which I will mention one instance, as it shows an early projecting public spirit, tho' not then justly conducted.

There was a salt-marsh that bounded part of the mill-pond, on the edge of which, at high water, we used to stand to fish for minnows. By much tramping, we had made it a mere quagmire. My proposal was to build a wharff there fit for us to stand upon, and I showed my comrades a large heap of stones, which were intended for a new house near the marsh, and which would very well suit our purpose. Accordingly, in the evening, when the workmen were gone, I assembled a number of my play-fellows, and working with them diligently like so many emmets, sometimes two or three to a stone, we brought them all away and built our little wharff. The next morning the workmen were surprised at missing the stones, which were found in our wharff. Inquiry was made after the removers; we were discovered and complained of; several of us were corrected by our fathers; and, though I pleaded the usefulness of the work, mine convinced me that nothing was useful which was not honest.

I think you may like to know something of his person and character. He had an excellent constitution of body, was of middle stature, but well set, and very strong; he was ingenious, could draw prettily, was skilled a little in music, and had a clear pleasing voice, so that when he played psalm tunes on his violin and sung withal, as he sometimes did in an evening after the business of the day was over, it was extremely agreeable to hear. He had a mechanical genius too, and, on occasion, was very handy in the use of other tradesmen's tools; but his great excellence lay in a sound understanding and solid judgment in prudential matters, both in private and publick affairs. In the latter, indeed, he was never employed, the numerous family he had to educate and the straitness of his circumstances keeping him

close to his trade; but I remember well his being frequently visited by leading people, who consulted him for his opinion in affairs of the town or of the church he belonged to, and showed a good deal of respect for his judgment and advice: he was also much consulted by private persons about their affairs when any difficulty occurred, and frequently chosen an arbitrator between contending parties. At his table he liked to have, as often as he could, some sensible friend or neighbor to converse with, and always took care to start some ingenious or useful topic for discourse, which might tend to improve the minds of his children. By this means he turned our attention to what was good, just, and prudent in the conduct of life; and little or no notice was ever taken of what related to the victuals on the table, whether it was well or ill dressed, in or out of season, of good or bad flavor, preferable or inferior to this or that other thing of the kind, so that I was bro't up in such a perfect inattention to those matters as to be quite indifferent what kind of food was set before me, and so unobservant of it, that to this day if I am asked I can scarce tell a few hours after dinner what I dined upon. This has been a convenience to me in travelling, where my companions have been sometimes very unhappy for want of a suitable gratification of their more delicate, because better instructed, tastes and appetites.

My mother had likewise an excellent constitution: she suckled all her ten children. I never knew either my father or mother to have any sickness but that of which they dy'd, he at 89, and she at 85 years of age. They lie buried together at Boston, where I some years since placed a marble over their grave, with this inscription:

JOSIAH FRANKLIN,
and
ABIAH his wife,
lie here interred.
They lived lovingly together in wedlock
fifty-five years,
Without an estate, or any gainful employment,
By constant labor and industry,
with God's blessing,
They maintained a large family
comfortably,
and brought up thirteen children

and seven grandchildren
reputably.
From this instance, reader,
Be encouraged to diligence in thy calling,
And distrust not Providence.
He was a pious and prudent man;
She, a discreet and virtuous woman.
Their youngest son,
In filial regard to their memory,
Places this stone.
J. F. born 1655, died 1744. Ætat 89.
A. F. born 1667, died 1752, — 85.

By my rambling digressions I perceive myself to be grown old. I us'd to write more methodically. But one does not dress for private company as for a publick ball. 'Tis perhaps only negligence.

To return: I continued thus employed in my father's business for two years, that is, till I was twelve years old; and my brother John, who was bred to that business, having left my father, married, and set up for himself at Rhode Island, there was all appearance that I was destined to supply his place, and become a tallow-chandler. But my dislike to the trade continuing, my father was under apprehensions that if he did not find one for me more agreeable, I should break away and get to sea, as his son Josiah had done, to his great vexation. He therefore sometimes took me to walk with him, and see joiners, bricklayers, turners, braziers, etc., at their work, that he might observe my inclination, and endeavor to fix it on some trade or other on land. It has ever since been a pleasure to me to see good workmen handle their tools; and it has been useful to me, having learnt so much by it as to be able to do little jobs myself in my house when a workman could not readily be got, and to construct little machines for my experiments, while the intention of making the experiment was fresh and warm in my mind. My father at last fixed upon the cutler's trade, and my uncle Benjamin's son Samuel, who was bred to that business in London, being about that time established in Boston, I was sent to be with him some time on liking. But his expectations of a fee with me displeasing my father, I was taken home again.

From a child I was fond of reading, and all the little money that came into my hands was ever laid out in books. Pleased with the *Pil-*

grim's Progress, my first collection was of John Bunyan's works in separate little volumes. I afterward sold them to enable me to buy R. Burton's *Historical Collections*; they were small chapmen's books, and cheap, 40 or 50 in all. My father's little library consisted chiefly of books in polemic divinity, most of which I read, and have since often regretted that, at a time when I had such a thirst for knowledge, more proper books had not fallen in my way, since it was now resolved I should not be a clergyman. *Plutarch's Lives* there was in which I read abundantly, and I still think that time spent to great advantage. There was also a book of De Foe's, called an *Essay on Projects*, and another of Dr. Mather's, called *Essays to Do Good*, which perhaps gave me a turn of thinking that had an influence on some of the principal future events of my life.

This bookish inclination at length determined my father to make me a printer, though he had already one son (James) of that profession. In 1717 my brother James returned from England with a press and letters to set up his business in Boston. I liked it much better than that of my father, but still had a hankering for the sea. To prevent the apprehended effect of such an inclination, my father was impatient to have me bound to my brother. I stood out some time, but at last was persuaded, and signed the indentures when I was yet but twelve years old. I was to serve as an apprentice till I was twenty-one years of age, only I was to be allowed journeyman's wages during the last year. In a little time I made great proficiency in the business, and became a useful hand to my brother. I now had access to better books. An acquaintance with the apprentices of booksellers enabled me sometimes to borrow a small one, which I was careful to return soon and clean. Often I sat up in my room reading the greatest part of the night, when the book was borrowed in the evening and to be returned early in the morning, lest it should be missed or wanted.

And after some time an ingenious tradesman, Mr. Matthew Adams, who had a pretty collection of books, and who frequented our printing-house, took notice of me, invited me to his library, and very kindly lent me such books as I chose to read. I now took a fancy to poetry, and made some little pieces; my brother, think-

ing it might turn to account, encouraged me, and put me on composing occasional ballads. One was called *The Lighthouse Tragedy*, and contained an account of the drowning of Captain Worthilake, with his two daughters: the other was a sailor's song, on the taking of Teach (or Blackbeard) the pirate. They were wretched stuff, in the Grub-street-ballad style; and when they were printed he sent me about the town to sell them. The first sold wonderfully, the event being recent, having made a great noise. This flattered my vanity; but my father discouraged me by ridiculing my performances, and telling me verse-makers were generally beggars. So I escaped being a poet, most probably a very bad one; but as prose writing has been of great use to me in the course of my life, and was a principal means of my advancement, I shall tell you how, in such a situation, I acquired what little ability I have in that way.

There was another bookish lad in the town, John Collins by name, with whom I was intimately acquainted. We sometimes disputed, and very fond we were of argument, and very desirous of confuting one another, which disputatious turn, by the way, is apt to become a very bad habit, making people often extremely disagreeable in company by the contradiction that is necessary to bring it into practice; and thence, besides souring and spoiling the conversation, is productive of disgusts and, perhaps enmities where you may have occasion for friendship. I had caught it by reading my father's books of dispute about religion. Persons of good sense, I have since observed, seldom fall into it, except lawyers, university men, and men of all sorts that have been bred at Edinburgh.

A question was once, somehow or other, started between Collins and me, of the propriety of educating the female sex in learning, and their abilities for study. He was of opinion that it was improper, and that they were naturally unequal to it. I took the contrary side, perhaps a little for dispute's sake. He was naturally more eloquent, had a ready plenty of words; and sometimes, as I thought, bore me down more by his fluency than by the strength of his reasons. As we parted without settling the point, and were not to see one another again for some time, I sat down to put my ar-

guments in writing, which I copied fair and sent to him. He answered, and I replied. Three or four letters of a side had passed, when my father happened to find my papers and read them. Without entering into the discussion, he took occasion to talk to me about the manner of my writing; observed that, though I had the advantage of my antagonist in correct spelling and pointing (which I ow'd to the printing-house), I fell far short in elegance of expression, in method and in perspicuity, of which he convinced me by several instances. I saw the justice of his remarks, and thence grew more attentive to the manner in writing, and determined to endeavor at improvement.

About this time I met with an odd volume of the *Spectator*.¹ It was the third. I had never before seen any of them. I bought it, read it over and over, and was much delighted with it. I thought the writing excellent, and wished, if possible, to imitate it. With this view I took some of the papers, and, making short hints of the sentiment in each sentence, laid them by a few days, and then, without looking at the book, try'd to compleat the papers again, by expressing each hinted sentiment at length, and as fully as it had been expressed before, in any suitable words that should come to hand. Then I compared my *Spectator* with the original, discovered some of my faults, and corrected them. But I found I wanted a stock of words, or a readiness in recollecting and using them, which I thought I should have acquired before that time if I had gone on making verses; since the continual occasion for words of the same import, but of different length, to suit the measure, or of different sound for the rhyme, would have laid me under a constant necessity of searching for variety, and also have tended to fix that variety in my mind, and make me master of it. Therefore I took some of the tales and turned them into verse; and, after a time, when I had pretty well forgotten the prose, turned them back again. I also sometimes jumbled my collections of hints into confusion, and after some weeks endeavored to reduce them into the best order, before I began to form the full sentences and compleat the paper. This was to teach me method in the arrangement of thoughts. By comparing my work afterwards

¹ See II, 38. Ed.

with the original, I discovered many faults and amended them; but I sometimes had the pleasure of fancying that, in certain particulars of small import, I had been lucky enough to improve the method or the language, and this encouraged me to think I might possibly in time come to be a tolerable English writer, of which I was extremely ambitious. My time for these exercises and for reading was at night, after work or before it began in the morning, or on Sundays, when I contrived to be in the printing-house alone, evading as much as I could the common attendance on public worship which my father used to exact on me when I was under his care, and which indeed I still thought a duty, though I could not, as it seemed to me, afford time to practise it.

When about 16 years of age I happened to meet with a book, written by one Tryon, recommending a vegetable diet. I determined to go into it. My brother, being yet unmarried, did not keep house, but boarded himself and his apprentices in another family. My refusing to eat flesh occasioned an inconveniency, and I was frequently chid for my singularity. I made myself acquainted with Tryon's manner of preparing some of his dishes, such as boiling potatoes or rice, making hasty pudding, and a few others, and then proposed to my brother, that if he would give me, weekly, half the money he paid for my board, I would board myself. He instantly agreed to it, and I presently found that I could save half what he paid me. This was an additional fund for buying books. But I had another advantage in it. My brother and the rest going from the printing-house to their meals, I remained there alone, and, despatching presently my light repast, which often was no more than a bisket or a slice of bread, a handful of raisins or a tart from the pastry-cook's, and a glass of water, had the rest of the time till their return for study, in which I made the greater progress, from that greater clearness of head and quicker apprehension which usually attend temperance in eating and drinking.

And now it was that, being on some occasion made ashamed of my ignorance in figures, which I had twice failed in learning when at school, I took Cocker's book of Arithmetick, and went through the whole by myself with great ease. I also read Seller's and Sherry's

books of Navigation, and became acquainted with the little geometry they contain; but never proceeded far in that science. And I read about this time Locke² *On Human Understanding*, and the *Art of Thinking*, by Messrs. du Port Royal.

While I was intent on improving my language, I met with an English grammar (I think it was Greenwood's), at the end of which there were two little sketches of the arts of rhetoric and logic, the latter finishing with a specimen of a dispute in the Socratic method; and soon after I procur'd Xenophon's *Memorable Things of Socrates*, wherein there are many instances of the same method. I was charm'd with it, adopted it, dropt my abrupt contradiction and positive argumentation, and put on the humble inquirer and doubter. And being then, from reading Shaftesbury and Collins, become a real doubter in many points of our religious doctrine, I found this method safest for myself and very embarrassing to those against whom I used it; therefore I took a delight in it, practis'd it continually, and grew very artful and expert in drawing people, even of superior knowledge, into concessions, the consequences of which they did not foresee, entangling them in difficulties out of which they could not extricate themselves, and so obtaining victories that neither myself nor my cause always deserved. I continu'd this method some few years, but gradually left it, retaining only the habit of expressing myself in terms of modest diffidence; never using, when I advanced anything that may possibly be disputed, the words *certainly*, *undoubtedly*, or any others that give the air of positiveness to an opinion; but rather say, I conceive or apprehend a thing to be so and so; it appears to me, or *I should think it so or so*, for such and such reasons; or *I imagine it to be so*; or *it is so*, if *I am not mistaken*. This habit, I believe, has been of great advantage to me when I have had occasion to inculcate my opinions, and persuade men into measures that I have been from time to time engag'd in promoting; and, as the chief ends of conversation are to *inform* or to be *informed*, to *please* or to *persuade*, I wish well-meaning, sensible men would not lessen their power of doing good by a positive, assuming manner, that seldom fails

² See II, 26. Ed.

to disgust, tends to create opposition, and to defeat every one of those purposes for which speech was given to us, to wit, giving or receiving information or pleasure. For, if you would inform, a positive and dogmatical manner in advancing your sentiments may provoke contradiction and prevent a candid attention. If you wish information and improvement from the knowledge of others, and yet at the same time express yourself as firmly fix'd in your present opinions, modest, sensible men, who do not love disputation, will probably leave you undisturbed in the possession of your error. And by such a manner, you can seldom hope to recommend yourself in *pleasing* your hearers, or to persuade those whose concurrence you desire.

THOMAS HENRY HUXLEY

An early believer in the theory of evolution, Thomas Henry Huxley (1825–1895) states his scientific credo and the controlling influences of his life in the final three paragraphs of his Autobiography, written in 1889. Huxley successfully wrote and lectured to popularize Darwin's ideas and other scientific thought of his time; moreover, much of his work (Man's Place in Nature, for example) is as alive and sound today as it was in 1863. For further biographical information and for additional examples of Huxley's unadorned but effective expository style, see II, 152.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY¹

And when I consider, in one view, the many things . . . which I have upon my hands, I feel the burlesque of being employed in this manner at my time of life. But, in another view, and taking in all circumstances, these things, as trifling as they may appear, no less than things of greater importance, seem to be put upon me to do.—Bishop Butler to the Duchess of Somerset

The "many things" to which the Duchess's correspondent here refers are the repairs and improvements of the episcopal seat at Auck-

land. I doubt if the great apologist, greater in nothing than in the simple dignity of his character, would have considered the writing an account of himself as a thing which could be put upon him to do whatever circumstances might be taken in. But the good bishop lived in an age when a man might write books and yet be permitted to keep his private existence to himself; in the pre-Boswellian epoch, when the germ of the photographer lay concealed in the distant future, and the interviewer who pervades our age was an unforeseen, indeed unimaginable, birth of time.

At present, the most convinced believer in the aphorism *Bene qui latuit, bene vixit*,² is not always able to act up to it. An importunate person informs him that his portrait is about to be published and will be accompanied by a biography which the importunate person proposes to write. The sufferer knows what that means; either he undertakes to revise the "biography" or he does not. In the former case, he makes himself responsible; in the latter, he allows the publication of a mass of more or less fulsome inaccuracies for which he will be held responsible by those who are familiar with the prevalent art of self-advertisement. On the whole, it may be better to get over the "burlesque of being employed in this manner" and do the thing himself.

It was by reflections of this kind that, some years ago, I was led to write and permit the publication of the subjoined sketch.

I was born about eight o'clock in the morning on the 4th of May, 1825, at Ealing, which was, at that time, as quiet a little country village as could be found within a half-a-dozen miles of Hyde Park Corner. Now it is a suburb of London, with, I believe, 30,000 inhabitants. My father was one of the masters in a large semi-public school which at one time had a high reputation. I am not aware that any portents preceded my arrival in this world, but, in my childhood, I remember hearing a traditional account of the manner in which I lost the chance of an endowment of great practical value. The windows of my mother's room were open, in consequence of the unusual warmth

¹ From *Collected Essays* by T. H. Huxley, copyright 1893, 1894. Reprinted by permission of D. Appleton-Century Company.

² "He who has kept himself well concealed has lived well." (Ovid, *Tristia*, III, iv, 25.)

of the weather. For the same reason, probably, a neighboring beehive had swarmed, and the new colony, pitching on the window-sill, was making its way into the room when the horrified nurse shut down the sash. If that well-meaning woman had only abstained from her ill-timed interference, the swarm might have settled on my lips,³ and I should have been endowed with that mellifluous eloquence which, in this country, leads far more surely than worth, capacity, or honest work, to the highest places in Church and State. But the opportunity was lost, and I have been obliged to content myself through life with saying what I mean in the plainest of plain language, than which, I suppose, there is no habit more ruinous to a man's prospects of advancement.

Why I was christened Thomas Henry I do not know; but it is a curious chance that my parents should have fixed for my usual denomination upon the name of that particular Apostle with whom I have always felt most sympathy. Physically and mentally I am the son of my mother so completely—even down to peculiar movements of the hands, which made their appearance in me as I reached the age she had when I noticed them—that I can hardly find any trace of my father in myself, except an inborn faculty for drawing, which unfortunately, in my case, has never been cultivated, a hot temper, and that amount of tenacity of purpose which unfriendly observers sometimes call obstinacy.

My mother was a slender brunette, of an emotional and energetic temperament, and possessed of the most piercing black eyes I ever saw in a woman's head. With no more education than other women of the middle classes in her day, she had an excellent mental capacity. Her most distinguishing characteristic, however, was rapidity of thought. If one ventured to suggest she had not taken much time to arrive at any conclusion, she would say, "I cannot help it, things flash across me." That peculiarity has been passed on to me in full strength; it has often stood me in good stead; it has sometimes played me sad tricks; and it has always been a danger. But, after all, if my time were to come over again, there is nothing I would less will-

ingly part with than my inheritance of mother wit.

I have next to nothing to say about my childhood. In later years my mother, looking at me almost reproachfully, would sometimes say, "Ah! you were such a pretty boy!" whence I had no difficulty in concluding that I had not fulfilled my early promise in the matter of looks. In fact, I have a distinct recollection of certain curls of which I was vain, and of a conviction that I closely resembled that handsome, courtly gentleman, Sir Herbert Oakley, who was vicar of our parish, and who was as a god to us country folk, because he was occasionally visited by the then Prince George of Cambridge.⁴ I remember turning my pinafore wrong side forward in order to represent a surplice, and preaching to my mother's maids in the kitchen as nearly as possible in Sir Herbert's manner one Sunday morning when the rest of the family were at church. That is the earliest indication I can call to mind of the strong clerical affinities which my friend Mr. Herbert Spencer⁵ has always ascribed to me, though I fancy they have for the most part remained in a latent state.

My regular school training was of the briefest, perhaps fortunately, for though my way of life has made me acquainted with all sorts and conditions of men, from the highest to the lowest, I deliberately affirm that the society I fell into at school was the worst I have ever known. We boys were average lads, with much the same inherent capacity for good and evil as any others; but the people who were set over us cared about as much for our intellectual and moral welfare as if they were baby-farmers. We were left to the operation of the struggle for existence among ourselves, and bullying was the least of the ill practices current among us. Almost the only cheerful reminiscence in connection with the place which arises in my mind is that of a battle I had with one of my classmates, who had bullied me until I could stand it no longer. I was a very slight lad, but there was a wild-cat element in me which, when roused, made up for lack of weight, and I licked my adversary effectually. However, one

⁴ a grandson of George III.

⁵ Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), an English philosopher who championed Darwin's theory of evolution.

³ In Greek mythology, many poets are said to have had honey deposited on their lips.

of my first experiences of the extremely rough-and-ready nature of justice, as exhibited by the course of things in general, arose out of the fact that I—the victor—had a black eye, while he—the vanquished—had none, so that I got into disgrace and he did not. We made it up, and thereafter I was unmolested. One of the greatest shocks I ever received in my life was to be told a dozen years afterwards by the groom who brought me my horse in a stable-yard in Sydney that he was my quondam antagonist. He had a long story of family misfortune to account for his position, but at that time it was necessary to deal very cautiously with mysterious strangers in New South Wales, and on inquiry I found that the unfortunate young man had not only been “sent out,” but had undergone more than one colonial conviction.

As I grew older, my great desire was to be a mechanical engineer, but the fates were against this and, while very young, I commenced the study of medicine under a medical brother-in-law. But, though the Institute of Mechanical Engineers would certainly not own me, I am not sure that I have not all along been a sort of mechanical engineer in *partibus infidelium*.⁶ I am now occasionally horrified to think how very little I ever knew or cared about medicine as the art of healing. The only part of my professional course which really and deeply interested me was physiology, which is the mechanical engineering of living machines; and, notwithstanding that natural science has been my proper business, I am afraid there is very little of the genuine naturalist in me. I never collected anything, and species work was always a burden to me; what I cared for was the architectural and engineering part of the business, the working out of the wonderful unity of plan in the thousands and thousands of diverse living constructions, and the modifications of similar apparatuses to serve diverse ends. The extraordinary attraction I felt towards the study of the intricacies of living structure nearly proved fatal to me at the outset. I was a mere boy—I think between thirteen and fourteen years of age—when I was taken by some older student friends of mine to the first *post-mortem* examination I ever attended. All my life I have been most unfortunately sensitive to the dis-

agreeables which attend anatomical pursuits, but on this occasion my curiosity overpowered all other feelings, and I spent two or three hours in gratifying it. I did not cut myself, and none of the ordinary symptoms of dissection-poison supervened, but poisoned I was somehow, and I remember sinking into a strange state of apathy. By way of a last chance, I was sent to the care of some good, kind people, friends of my father's, who lived in a farmhouse in the heart of Warwickshire. I remember staggering from my bed to the window on the bright spring morning after my arrival, and throwing open the casement. Life seemed to come back on the wings of the breeze, and to this day the faint odor of wood-smoke, like that which floated across the farm-yard in the early morning, is as good to me as the “sweet south upon a bed of violets.” I soon recovered, but for years I suffered from occasional paroxysms of internal pain, and from that time my constant friend, hypochondriacal dyspepsia, commenced his half century of co-tenancy of my fleshly tabernacle.

Looking back on my *Lehrjahre*,⁷ I am sorry to say that I do not think that any account of my doings as a student would tend to edification. In fact, I should distinctly warn ingenuous youth to avoid imitating my example. I worked extremely hard when it pleased me, and when it did not—which was a very frequent case—I was extremely idle (unless making caricatures of one's pastors and masters is to be called a branch of industry), or else wasted my energies in wrong directions. I read everything I could lay hands upon, including novels, and took up all sorts of pursuits to drop them again quite as speedily. No doubt it was very largely my own fault, but the only instruction from which I ever obtained the proper effect of education was that which I received from Mr. Wharton Jones, who was the lecturer on physiology at the Charing Cross School of Medicine. The extent and precision of his knowledge impressed me greatly, and the severe exactness of his method of lecturing was quite to my taste. I do not know that I have ever felt so much respect for anybody as a teacher before or since. I worked hard to obtain his approbation, and he was extremely kind

⁶ in the religion of infidels.

⁷ student years.

and helpful to the youngster who, I am afraid, took up more of his time than he had any right to do. It was he who suggested the publication of my first scientific paper—a very little one—in the *Medical Gazette* of 1845, and most kindly corrected the literary faults which abounded in it, short as it was; for at that time, and for many years afterwards, I detested the trouble of writing, and would take no pains over it.

It was in the early spring of 1846, that, having finished my obligatory medical studies and passed the first M.D. examination at the London University,—though I was still too young to qualify at the College of Surgeons—I was talking to a fellow-student (the present eminent physician, Sir Joseph Fayrer), and wondering what I should do to meet the imperative necessity for earning my own bread, when my friend suggested that I should write to Sir William Burnett, at that time Director-General for the Medical Service of the Navy, for an appointment. I thought this rather a strong thing to do, as Sir William was personally unknown to me, but my cheery friend would not listen to my scruples, so I went to my lodgings and wrote the best letter I could devise. A few days afterwards I received the usual official circular acknowledgment, but at the bottom there was written an instruction to call at Somerset House on such a day. I thought that looked like business, so at the appointed time I called and sent in my card, while I waited in Sir William's ante-room. He was a tall, shrewd-looking old gentleman, with a broad Scotch accent—and I think I see him now as he entered with my card in his hand. The first thing he did was to return it, with the frugal reminder that I should probably find it useful on some other occasion. The second was to ask whether I was an Irishman. I suppose the air of modesty about my appeal must have struck him. I satisfied the Director-General that I was English to the backbone, and he made some inquiries as to my student career, finally desiring me to hold myself ready for examination. Having passed this, I was in Her Majesty's Service, and entered on the books of Nelson's old ship, the *Victory*, for duty at Haslar Hospital, about a couple of months after I made my application.

My official chief as Haslar was a very remarkable person, the late Sir John Richardson,

an excellent naturalist, and far-famed as an indomitable Arctic traveller. He was a silent, reserved man, outside the circle of his family and intimates; and, having a full share of youthful vanity, I was extremely disgusted to find that "Old John," as we irreverent youngsters called him, took not the slightest notice of my worshipful self either the first time I attended him, as it was my duty to do, or for some weeks afterwards. I am afraid to think of the lengths to which my tongue may have run on the subject of the churlishness of the chief, who was, in truth, one of the kindest-hearted and most considerate of men. But one day, as I was crossing the hospital square, Sir John stopped me, and heaped coals of fire on my head by telling me that he had tried to get me one of the resident appointments, much coveted by the assistant surgeons, but that the Admiralty had put in another man. "However," said he, "I mean to keep you here till I can get you something you will like," and turned upon his heel without waiting for the thanks I stammered out. That explained how it was I had not been packed off to the West Coast of Africa like some of my juniors, and why, eventually, I remained, all together, seven months at Haslar.

After a long interval, during which "Old John" ignored my existence almost as completely as before, he stopped me again as we met in a casual way, and describing the service on which the *Rattlesnake* was likely to be employed, said that Captain Owen Stanley, who was to command the ship, had asked him to recommend an assistant surgeon who knew something of science; would I like that? Of course I jumped at the offer. "Very well, I give you leave; go to London at once and see Captain Stanley." I went, saw my future commander, who was very civil to me, and promised to ask that I should be appointed to his ship, as in due time I was. It is a singular thing that, during the few months of my stay at Haslar, I had among my messmates two future Directors-General of the Medical Service of the Navy (Sir Alexander Armstrong and Sir John Watt-Reid), with the present President of the College of Physicians and my kindest of doctors, Sir Andrew Clark.

Life on board Her Majesty's ship in those days was a very different affair from what it is now, and ours was exceptionally rough, as we

were often many months without receiving letters or seeing any civilized people but ourselves. In exchange we had the interest of being about the last voyagers, I suppose, to whom it could be possible to meet with people who knew nothing of firearms—as we did on the south coast of New Guinea—and of making acquaintance with a variety of interesting savage and semi-civilized people. But, apart from experience of this kind and the opportunities offered for scientific work, to me, personally, the cruise was extremely valuable. It was good for me to live under sharp discipline; to be down on the realities of existence by living on bare necessities; to find out how extremely well worth living life seemed to be when one woke up from a night's rest on a soft plank, with the sky for canopy and cocoa and weevilly biscuit the sole prospect for breakfast; and, more especially, to learn to work for the sake of what I got for myself out of it, even if it all went to the bottom and I along with it. My brother officers were as good fellows as sailors ought to be and generally are, but, naturally, they neither knew nor cared anything about my pursuits, nor understood why I should be so zealous in pursuit of the objects which my friends, the middies, christened "Buffons," after the title conspicuous on a volume of the *Suites à Buffon*,⁸ which stood on my shelf in the chart room. (1707–1788), famous French naturalist.

During the four years of our absence, I sent home communication after communication to the "Linnean Society,"⁹ with the same result as that obtained by Noah when he sent the raven out of his ark. Tired at last of hearing nothing about them, I determined to do or die, and in 1849 I drew up a more elaborate paper and forwarded it to the Royal Society. This was my dove, if I had only known it. But owing to the movements of the ship, I heard nothing of that either until my return to England in the latter end of the year 1850, when I found that it was printed and published, and that a huge packet of separate copies awaited me. When I hear some of my young friends complain of want of sympathy and encouragement, I am in-

clined to think that my naval life was not the least valuable part of my education.

Three years after my return were occupied by a battle between my scientific friends on the one hand and the Admiralty on the other, as to whether the latter ought, or ought not, to act up to the spirit of a pledge they had given to encourage officers who had done scientific work by contributing to the expense of publishing mine. At last the Admiralty, getting tired, I suppose, cut short the discussion by ordering me to join a ship, which thing I declined to do, and as Rastignac, in the *Père Goriot* says to Paris, I said to London "*à nous deux*."¹⁰ I desired to obtain a Professorship of either Physiology or Comparative Anatomy, and as vacancies occurred I applied, but in vain. My friend, Professor Tyndall, and I were candidates at the same time, he for the Chair of Physics and I for that of Natural History in the University of Toronto, which, fortunately, as it turned out, would not look at either of us. I say fortunately, not from any lack of respect for Toronto, but because I soon made up my mind that London was the place for me, and hence I have steadily declined the inducements to leave it, which have at various times been offered. At last, in 1854, on the translation of my warm friend Edward Forbes, to Edinburgh, Sir Henry de la Beche, the Director-General of the Geological Survey, offered me the post Forbes vacated of Paleontologist and Lecturer on Natural History. I refused the former point blank, and accepted the latter only provisionally, telling Sir Henry that I did not care for fossils, and that I should give up Natural History as soon as I could get a physiological post. But I held the office for thirty-one years, and a large part of my work has been paleontological.

At that time I disliked public speaking, and had a firm conviction that I should break down every time I opened my mouth. I believe I had every fault a speaker could have (except talking at random or indulging in rhetoric), when I spoke to the first important audience I ever addressed, on a Friday evening at the Royal Institution, in 1852. Yet, I must confess to having been guilty, *malgré moi*, of as much public speaking as most of my contemporaries, and

⁸ supplementary volumes to the *Natural History*.

⁹ a scientific society founded in 1788 for research in zoology and botany, named for the Swedish naturalist, Karl Linnaeus (1707–1778).

¹⁰ "The conflict is between us," Rastignac's last words to Paris in Balzac's *Le Père Goriot*.

for the last ten years it ceased to be so much of a bugbear to me. I used to pity myself for having to go through this training, but I am now more disposed to compassionate the unfortunate audiences, especially my ever friendly hearers at the Royal Institution, who were the subjects of my oratorical experiments.

The last thing that it would be proper for me to do would be to speak of the work of my life, or to say at the end of the day whether I think I have earned my wages or not. Men are said to be partial judges of themselves. Young men may be; I doubt if old men are. Life seems terribly foreshortened as they look back, and the mountain they set themselves to climb in youth turns out to be a mere spur of immeasurably higher ranges when, by failing breath, they reach the top. But if I may speak of the objects I have had more or less definitely in view since I began the ascent of my hillock, they are briefly these: To promote the increase of natural knowledge and to forward the application of scientific methods of investigation to all the problems of life to the best of my ability, in the conviction which has grown with my growth and strengthened with my strength, that there is no alleviation for the sufferings of mankind except veracity of thought and of action, and the resolute facing of the world as it is when the garment of make-believe by which pious hands have hidden its uglier features is stripped off.

It is with this intent that I have subordinated any reasonable, or unreasonable, ambition for scientific fame which I may have permitted myself to entertain to other ends; to the popularization of science; to the development and organization of scientific education; to the endless series of battles and skirmishes over evolution; and to untiring opposition to that ecclesiastical spirit, that clericalism, which in England, as everywhere else, and to whatever denomination it may belong, is the deadly enemy of science.

In striving for the attainment of these objects I have been but one among many, and I shall be well content to be remembered, or even not remembered, as such. Circumstances, among which I am proud to reckon the devoted kindness of many friends, have led to my occupation of various prominent positions, among which the Presidency of the Royal Society is

the highest. It would be mock modesty on my part, with these and other scientific honors which have been bestowed upon me, to pretend that I have not succeeded in the career which I have followed, rather because I was driven into it than of my own free will; but I am afraid I should not count even these things as marks of success if I could not hope that I had somewhat helped that movement of opinion which has been called the New Reformation.

WILLIAM HENRY HUDSON

William Henry Hudson (1841–1922), a naturalist without sentimentalism and a writer without pretense, was born in South America. He lived in exotic surroundings until he came to England at the age of twenty-eight. In 1900 he became a British subject. Among his better-known books are Idle Days in Patagonia, 1893; Green Mansions, 1904; and A Shepherd's Life, 1910. His autobiography, Far Away and Long Ago, 1918, from which "Death of an Old Dog" is selected, is reflective and emotional rather than factual. That is, Hudson was more concerned in the why and how of his life than in what actually happened. This moving account of the death of a dog and of a child's first consciousness of man's mortality is representative of Hudson's sensitive but never maudlin style.

DEATH OF AN OLD DOG¹

Caesar was an old valued dog, although of no superior breed: he was just an ordinary dog of the country, short-haired, with long legs and a blunt muzzle. The ordinary dog or native cur was about the size of a Scotch collie; Caesar was quite a third larger, and it was said of him that he was as much above all other dogs of the house, numbering about twelve or fourteen, in intelligence and courage as in size. Naturally, he was the leader and master of the whole pack, and when he got up with an awful growl, baring his big teeth, and hurled himself on the

¹ Taken from *Far Away and Long Ago*, by W. H. Hudson, published and copyright 1918 by E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York. Renewed 1946. Reprinted by permission of E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., and of J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd.

others to chastise them for quarrelling or any other infringement of dog law, they took it lying down. He was a black dog, now in his old age sprinkled with white hairs all over his body, the face and legs having gone quite grey. Caesar in a rage, or on guard at night, or when driving cattle in from the plains, was a terrible being; with us children he was mild-tempered and patient, allowing us to ride on his back, just like old Pechicho the sheep-dog. . . . Now, in his decline, he grew irritable and surly, and ceased to be our playmate. The last two or three months of his life were very sad, and when it troubled us to see him so gaunt, with his big ribs protruding from his sides, to watch his twitchings when he dozed, groaning and wheezing the while, and marked, too, how painfully he struggled to get up on his feet, we wanted to know why it was so—why we could not give him something to make him well? For answer they would open his great mouth to show us his teeth—the big blunt canines and old molars worn down to stumps. Old age was what ailed him—he was thirteen years old, and that did verily seem to me a great age, for I was not half that, yet it seemed to me that I had been a very, very long time in the world.

No one dreamed of such a thing as putting an end to him—no hint of such a thing was ever spoken. It was not the custom in that country to shoot an old dog because he was past work. I remember his last day, and how often we came to look at him and tried to comfort him with warm rugs and the offer of food and drink where he was lying in a sheltered place, no longer able to stand up. And that night he died: we knew it as soon as we were up in the morning. Then, after breakfast, during which we had been very solemn and quiet, our schoolmaster said: "We must bury him to-day—at twelve o'clock, when I am free, will be the best time; the boys can come with me, and old John can bring his spade." This announcement greatly excited us, for we had never seen a dog buried, and had never even heard of such a thing having ever been done.

About noon that day old Caesar, dead and stiff, was taken by one of the workmen to a green open spot among the old peach trees, where his grave had already been dug. We followed our schoolmaster and watched while the body was lowered and the red earth shov-

elled in. The grave was deep, and Mr. Trigg assisted in filling it, puffing very much over the task and stopping at intervals to mop his face with his coloured cotton handkerchief.

Then, when all was done, while we were still standing silently around, it came into Mr. Trigg's mind to improve the occasion. Assuming his schoolroom expression he looked round at us and said solemnly: "That's the end. Every dog has his day and so has every man; and the end is the same for both. We die like old Caesar, and are put into the ground and have the earth shovelled over us."

Now these simple, common words affected me more than any other words I have heard in my life. They pierced me to the heart. I had heard something terrible—too terrible to think of, incredible—and yet—and yet if it was not so, why had he said it? Was it because he hated us, just because we were children and he had to teach us our lessons, and wanted to torture us? Alas! no, I could not believe that! Was this, then, the horrible fate that awaited us all?

. . . the pain continued and increased until it was no longer to be borne; then I sought my mother, first watching until she was alone in her room. Yet when with her I feared to speak lest with a word she should confirm the dreadful tidings. Looking down, she all at once became alarmed at the sight of my face, and began to question me. Then, struggling against my tears, I told her of the words which had been spoken at the old dog's burial, and asked her if it was true, if I—if she—if all of us had to die and be buried in the ground? She replied that it was not wholly true; it was only true in a way, since our bodies had to die and be buried in the earth, but we had an immortal part which could not die. It was true that old Caesar had been a good, faithful dog, and felt and understood things almost like a human being, and most persons believed that when a dog died he died wholly and had no after-life. We could not know that; some very great, good men had thought differently; they believed that the animals, like us, would live again. That was also her belief—her strong hope; but we could not know for certain, because it had been hidden from us. For ourselves, we knew that we could not really die, because God Himself, who made us and all things, had told us so,

and His promise of eternal life had been handed down to us in His Book—in the Bible.

To all this and much more I listened trembling, with a fearful interest, and when I had once grasped the idea that death when it came to me, as it must, would leave me alive after all—that, as she explained, the part of me that really mattered, the myself, the I am I, which knew and considered things, would never perish, I experienced a sudden immense relief. When I went out from her side again I wanted to run and jump for joy and cleave the air like a bird. For I had been in prison and had suffered torture, and was now free again—death would not destroy me!

There was another result of my having unburdened my heart to my mother. She had been startled at the poignancy of the feeling I had displayed, and, greatly blaming herself for having left me too long in that ignorant state, began to give me religious instruction. It was too early, since at that age it was not possible for me to rise to the conception of an immaterial world. That power, I imagine, comes later to the normal child at the age of ten or twelve. To tell him when he is five or six or seven that God is in all places at once and sees all things, only produces the idea of a wonderfully active and quick-sighted person, with eyes like a bird's, able to see what is going on all round. . . .

There were other occurrences about that time to keep the thoughts and fear of death alive. One day a traveller came to the gate, and, after unsaddling his horse, went about sixty or seventy yards away to a shady spot, where he sat down on the green slope of the foss to cool himself. He had been riding many hours in a burning sun, and wanted cooling. He attracted everybody's attention on his arrival by his appearance: middle-aged, with good features and curly brown hair and beard, but huge—one of the biggest men I had ever seen; his weight could not have been under about seventeen stone. Sitting or reclining on the grass, he fell asleep, and rolling down the slope fell with a tremendous splash into the water, which was about six feet deep. So loud was the splash that it was heard by some of the men at work in the barn, and running out to ascertain the cause, they found out what had happened. The man had gone under and did not rise; with

a good deal of trouble he was raised up and drawn with ropes to the top of the bank.

I gazed on him lying motionless, to all appearances stone dead—the huge, ox-like man I had seen less than an hour ago, when he had excited our wonder at his great size and strength, and now still in death—dead as old Caesar under the ground with the grass growing over him! Meanwhile the men who had hauled him out were busy with him, turning him over and rubbing his body, and after about twelve or fifteen minutes there was a gasp and signs of returning life, and by and by he opened his eyes. The dead man was alive again; yet the shock to me was just as great and the effect as lasting as if he had been truly dead.

Another instance which will bring me down to the end of my sixth year and the conclusion of this sad chapter. At this time we had a girl in the house, whose sweet face is one of a little group of half a dozen which I remember most vividly. She was a niece of our shepherd's wife, an Argentine woman married to an Englishman, and came to us to look after the smaller children. She was nineteen years old, a pale, slim, pretty girl, with large dark eyes and abundant black hair. Margarita had the sweetest smile imaginable, the softest voice and gentlest manner, and was so much loved by everybody in the house that she was like one of the family. Unhappily she was consumptive, and after a few months had to be sent back to her aunt. Their little place was only half a mile or so from the house, and every day my mother visited her, doing all that was possible with such skill and remedies as she possessed to give her ease, and providing her with delicacies. The girl did not want a priest to visit her and prepare her for death; she worshipped her mistress, and wished to be of the same faith, and in the end she died a pervert or convert, according to this or that person's point of view.

The day after her death we children were taken to see our beloved Margarita for the last time; but when we arrived at the door, and the others following my mother went in, I alone hung back. They came out and tried to persuade me to enter, even to pull me in, and described her appearance to excite my curiosity. She was lying all in white, with her black hair combed out and loose, on her white bed, with

our flowers on her breast and at her sides, and looked very, very beautiful. It was all in vain. To look on Margarita dead was more than I could bear. I was told that only her body of clay was dead—the beautiful body we had come to say good-bye to; that her soul—she herself, our loved Margarita—was alive and happy, far, far happier than any person could ever be on this earth; that when her end was near she had smiled very sweetly, and assured them that all fear of death had left her—that God was taking her to Himself. Even this was not enough to make me face the awful sight of Margarita dead; the very thought of it was an intolerable weight on my heart; but it was not grief that gave me this sensation, much as I grieved; it was solely my fear of death.

GILES LYTTON STRACHEY

Giles Lytton Strachey (1880–1932) remarked in his preface to Eminent Victorians that “it is perhaps as difficult to write a good life as to live one.” Unwilling himself to lead a life circumscribed by Victorian restrictions, he was similarly unwilling to deify his subjects. Consequently, Strachey’s “new biography” marked a turning against commemoration and eulogy, a striving for accurate and searching psychological and historical evaluation. Typical of his skeptical attitude toward life and toward all his subjects are the final three words of “Dr. Arnold.” In this sketch and in other portraits in Eminent Victorians, in Queen Victoria, 1921, Elizabeth and Essex, 1928, and Portraits in Miniature, 1931, Strachey’s learning, research, selectivity of detail, and irony earn him his position as perhaps the best-known and most respected of twentieth-century biographers.

DR. ARNOLD¹

In 1827 the headmastership of Rugby school fell vacant, and it became necessary for the twelve trustees, noblemen and gentlemen of Warwickshire, to appoint a successor to the post. Reform was in the air—political, social, religious; there was even a feeling abroad that

our great public schools were not quite all that they should be, and that some change or other—no one precisely knew what—but *some* change in the system of their management, was highly desirable. Thus it was natural that when the twelve noblemen and gentlemen, who had determined to be guided entirely by the merits of the candidates, found among the testimonials pouring in upon them a letter from Dr. Hawkins, the Provost of Oriel, predicting that if they elected Mr. Thomas Arnold he would “change the face of education all through the public schools of England,” they hesitated no longer: obviously, Mr. Thomas Arnold was their man. He was elected therefore; received, as was fitting, priest’s orders; became, as was no less fitting, a Doctor of Divinity; and in August, 1828, took up the duties of his office.

All that was known of the previous life of Dr. Arnold seemed to justify the prediction of the Provost of Oriel, and the choice of the Trustees. The son of a respectable Collector of Customs, he had been educated at Winchester and at Oxford, where his industry and piety had given him a conspicuous place among his fellow-students. It is true that, as a school-boy, a certain pomposness in the style of his letters home suggested to the more clear-sighted among his relatives the possibility that young Thomas might grow up into a prig; but, after all, what else could be excepted from a child who, at the age of three, had been presented by his father, as a reward for proficiency in his studies, with the twenty-four volumes of Smollett’s *History of England*? His career at Oxford had been a distinguished one, winding up with an Oriel fellowship. It was at about this time that the smooth and satisfactory progress of his life was for a moment interrupted: he began to be troubled by religious doubts. These doubts, as we learn from one of his contemporaries, who afterwards became Mr. Justice Coleridge,

were not low nor rationalistic in their tendency, according to the bad sense of that term; there was no indisposition in him to believe merely because the article transcended his reason; he doubted the proof and the interpretation of the textual authority.

In his perturbation, Arnold consulted Keble, who was at that time one of his closest friends, and a Fellow of the same College.

¹ From *Eminent Victorians* by Lytton Strachey. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc., and of Chatto & Windus.

The subject of these distressing thoughts [Keble wrote to Coleridge] is that most awful one, on which all very inquisitive reasoning minds are, I believe, most liable to such temptations—I mean, the doctrine of the blessed Trinity. Do not start, my dear Coleridge; I do not believe that Arnold has any serious scruples of the understanding about it, but it is a defect of his mind that he cannot get rid of a certain feeling of objections.

What was to be done? Keble's advice was peremptory. Arnold was "bid to pause in his inquiries, to pray earnestly for help and light from above, and turn himself more strongly than ever to the practical duties of a holy life." He did so, and the result was all that could be wished. He soon found himself blessed with perfect peace of mind, and a settled conviction.

One other difficulty, and one only, we hear of, at this period of his life. His dislike of early rising amounted, we are told, "almost to a constitutional infirmity." This weakness too he overcame, yet not quite so successfully as his doubts upon the doctrine of the Trinity. For in after life the Doctor would often declare "that early rising continued to be a daily effort to him, and that in this instance he never found the truth of the usual rule, that all things are made easy by custom."

He married young, and settled down in the country as a private tutor for youths preparing for the Universities. There he remained for ten years—happy, busy, and sufficiently prosperous. Occupied chiefly with his pupils, he nevertheless devoted much of his energy to wider interests. He delivered a series of sermons in the parish church; and he began to write a History of Rome, in the hope, as he said, that its tone might be such "that the strictest of what is called the Evangelical party would not object to putting it into the hands of their children." His views on the religious and political condition of the country began to crystallise. He was alarmed by the "want of Christian principle in the literature of the day," looking forward anxiously to "the approach of a greater struggle between good and evil than the world has yet seen"; and, after a serious conversation with Dr. Whately, began to conceive the necessity of considerable alterations in the Church Establishment. All who knew him during these years were profoundly impressed by the earnestness of his religious convictions and feel-

ings, which, as one observer said, "were ever bursting forth." It was impossible to disregard his "deep consciousness of the invisible world" and "the peculiar feeling of love and adoration which he entertained towards our Lord Jesus Christ." "His manner of awful reverence when speaking of God or of the Scriptures" was particularly striking. "No one could know him even a little," said another friend, "and not be struck by his absolute wrestling with evil, so that like St. Paul he seemed to be battling with the wicked one, and yet with a feeling of God's help on his side."

Such was the man who, at the age of thirty-three, became head master of Rugby. His outward appearance was the index of his inward character: everything about him denoted energy, earnestness, and the best intentions. His legs, perhaps, were shorter than they should have been; but the sturdy athletic frame, especially when it was swathed (as it usually was) in the flowing robes of a Doctor of Divinity, was full of an imposing vigour; and his head, set decisively upon the collar, stock, and bands of ecclesiastical tradition, clearly belonged to a person of eminence. The thick, dark clusters of his hair, his bushy eyebrows and curling whiskers, his straight nose and bulky chin, his firm and upward-curving lower lip—all these revealed a temperament of ardour and determination. His eyes were bright and large; they were also obviously honest. And yet—why was it?—was it in the lines of the mouth or the frown on the forehead?—it was hard to say, but it was unmistakable—there was a slightly puzzled look upon the face of Dr. Arnold.

And certainly, if he was to fulfil the prophecy of the Provost of Oriel, the task before him was sufficiently perplexing. The public schools of those days were still virgin forests, untouched by the hand of reform. Keate was still reigning at Eton; and we possess, in the records of his pupils, a picture of the public school education of the early nineteenth century, in its most characteristic state. It was a system of anarchy tempered by despotism. Hundreds of boys, herded together in miscellaneous boarding-houses, or in that grim "Long Chamber" at whose name in after years aged statesmen and warriors would turn pale, livid, badgered and over-awed by the furious incursions of an irascible little old man carrying a bundle of

birch-twigs, a life in which licensed barbarism was mingled with the daily and hourly study of the niceties of Ovidian verse. It was a life of freedom and terror, of prosody and rebellion, of interminable floggings and appalling practical jokes. Keate ruled, unaided—for the undermasters were few and of no account—by sheer force of character. But there were times when even that indomitable will was overwhelmed by the flood of lawlessness. Every Sunday afternoon he attempted to read sermons to the whole school assembled; and every Sunday afternoon the whole school assembled shouted him down. The scenes in Chapel were far from edifying; while some antique Fellow doddered in the pulpit, rats would be let loose to scurry among the legs of the exploding boys. But next morning the hand of discipline would re-assert itself; and the savage ritual of the whipping-block would remind a batch of whimpering children that, though sins against man and God might be forgiven them, a false quantity could only be expiated in tears and blood.

From two sides, this system of education was beginning to be assailed by the awakening public opinion of the upper middle classes. On the one hand, there was a desire for a more liberal curriculum; on the other, there was a demand for a higher moral tone. The growing utilitarianism of the age viewed with impatience a course of instruction which excluded every branch of knowledge except classical philology; while its growing respectability was shocked by such a spectacle of disorder and brutality as was afforded by the Eton of Keate. "The Public Schools," said the Rev. Mr. Bowdler, "are the very seats and nurseries of vice."

Dr. Arnold agreed. He was convinced of the necessity for reform. But it was only natural that to one of his temperament and education it should have been the moral rather than the intellectual side of the question which impressed itself upon his mind. Doubtless it was important to teach boys something more than the bleak rigidities of the ancient tongues; but how much more important to instil into them the elements of character and the principles of conduct! His great object, throughout his career at Rugby, was, as he repeatedly said, to "make the school a place of really Christian education." To introduce "a religious principle into education," was his "most earnest wish,"

he wrote to a friend when he first became headmaster; "but to do this would be to succeed beyond all my hopes; it would be a happiness so great, that, I think, the world would yield me nothing comparable to it." And he was constantly impressing these sentiments upon his pupils. "What I have often said before," he told them, "I repeat now: what we must look for here is, first, religious and moral principle; secondly, gentlemanly conduct; thirdly, intellectual ability."

There can be no doubt that Dr. Arnold's point of view was shared by the great mass of English parents. They cared very little for classical scholarship; no doubt they would be pleased to find that their sons were being instructed in history or in French, but their real hopes, their real wishes, were of a very different kind. "Shall I tell him to mind his work, and say he's sent to school to make himself a good scholar?" meditated old Squire Brown when he was sending off Tom for the first time to Rugby.

Well, but he isn't sent to school for that—at any rate, not for that mainly. I don't care a straw for Greek particles, or the digamma; no more does his mother. What is he sent to school for? . . . If he'll only turn out a brave, helpful, truth-telling Englishman, and a Christian, that's all I want.

That was all; and it was that that Dr. Arnold set himself to accomplish. But how was he to achieve his end? Was he to improve the character of his pupils by gradually spreading round them an atmosphere of cultivation and intelligence? By bringing them into close and friendly contact with civilised men, and even, perhaps, with civilised women? By introducing into the life of his school all that he could of the humane, enlightened, and progressive elements in the life of the community? On the whole, he thought not. Such considerations left him cold, and he preferred to be guided by the general laws of Providence. It only remained to discover what those general laws were. He consulted the Old Testament, and could doubt no longer. He would apply to his scholars, as he himself explained to them in one of his sermons, "the principle which seemed to him to have been adopted in the training of the childhood of the human race itself." He would treat the boys at Rugby as Jehovah had treated the Chosen People: he would found a

theocracy; and there should be Judges in Israel.

For this purpose, the system, prevalent in most of the public schools of the day, by which the elder boys were deputed to keep order in the class-rooms, lay ready to Dr. Arnold's hand. He found the "Præpostor" a mere disciplinary convenience, and he converted him into an organ of government. Every boy in the Sixth Form became *ipso facto* a Præpostor, with powers extending over every department of school life; and the Sixth Form as a body was erected into an authority responsible to the headmaster, and to the headmaster alone, for the internal management of the school.

This was the means by which Dr. Arnold hoped to turn Rugby into "a place of really Christian education." The boys were to work out their own salvation, like the human race. He himself, involved in awful grandeur, ruled remotely, through his chosen instruments, from an inaccessible heaven. Remotely and yet with an omnipresent force. As the Israelite of old knew that his almighty Lawgiver might at any moment thunder to him from the whirlwind, or appear before his very eyes, the visible embodiment of power or wrath, so the Rugby schoolboy walked in a holy dread of some sudden manifestation of the sweeping gown, the majestic tone, the piercing glance, of Dr. Arnold. Among the lower forms of the school his appearances were rare and transitory, and upon these young children "the chief impression," we are told, "was of extreme fear." The older boys saw more of him, but they did not see much. Outside the Sixth Form, no part of the school came into close intercourse with him; and it would often happen that a boy would leave Rugby without having had any personal communication with him at all. Yet the effect which he produced upon the great mass of his pupils was remarkable. The prestige of his presence and the elevation of his sentiments were things which it was impossible to forget. In class, every line of his countenance, every shade of his manner imprinted themselves indelibly on the minds of the boys who sat under him. One of these, writing long afterwards, has described, in phrases still impregnated with awestruck reverence, the familiar details of the scene:—"the glance with which he looked round in the few moments of silence before the

lesson began, and which seemed to speak his sense of his own position"—"the attitude in which he stood, turning over the pages of Facciolati's Lexicon, or Pole's synopsis, with his eye fixed upon the boy who was pausing to give an answer"—"the pleased look and the cheerful 'thank you,' which followed upon a successful translation"—"the fall of his countenance with its deepening severity, the stern elevation of the eyebrows, the sudden 'sit down' which followed upon the reverse"—and "the startling earnestness with which he would check in a moment the slightest approach to levity."

To be rebuked, however mildly, by Dr. Arnold was a notable experience. One boy could never forget how he drew a distinction between "mere amusement" and "such as encroached on the next day's duties," nor the tone of voice with which the Doctor added "and then it immediately becomes what St. Paul calls *revelling*." Another remembered to his dying day his reproof of some boys who had behaved badly during prayers. "Nowhere," said Dr. Arnold, "nowhere is Satan's work more evidently manifest than in turning holy things to ridicule." On such occasions, as another of his pupils described it, it was impossible to avoid "a consciousness almost amounting to solemnity" that, "when his eye was upon you, he looked into your inmost heart."

With the boys in the Sixth Form, and with them alone, the severe formality of his demeanour was to some degree relaxed. It was his wish, in his relations with the Præpostors, to allow the Master to be occasionally merged in the Friend. From time to time, he chatted with them in a familiar manner; once a term he asked them to dinner; and during the summer holidays he invited them, in rotation, to stay with him in Westmoreland.

It was obvious that the primitive methods of discipline which had reached their apogee under the dominion of Keate were altogether incompatible with Dr. Arnold's view of the functions of a headmaster and the proper governance of a public school. Clearly, it was not for such as he to demean himself by bellowing and cuffing, by losing his temper once an hour, and by wreaking his vengeance with indiscriminate flagellations. Order must be kept in other ways. The worst boys were publicly expelled; many

were silently removed; and, when Dr. Arnold considered that a flogging was necessary, he administered it with gravity. For he had no theoretical objection to corporal punishment. On the contrary, he supported it, as was his wont, by an appeal to general principles. "There is," he said, "an essential inferiority in a boy as compared with a man"; and hence "where there is no equality, the exercise of superiority implied in personal chastisement" inevitably followed. He was particularly disgusted by the view that "personal correction," as he phrased it, was an insult or a degradation to the boy upon whom it was inflicted; and to accustom young boys to think so appeared to him to be "positively mischievous."

At an age [he wrote] when it is almost impossible to find a true, manly sense of the degradation of guilt or faults, where is the wisdom of encouraging a fantastic sense of the degradation of personal correction? What can be more false, or more adverse to the simplicity, sobriety, and humbleness of mind which are the best ornaments of youth, and offer the best promise of a noble manhood?

One had not to look far, he added, for "the fruits of such a system." In Paris, during the Revolution of 1830, an officer observed a boy of twelve insulting the soldiers and

though the action was then raging, merely struck him with the flat part of his sword, as the fit chastisement for boyish impertinence. But the boy had been taught to consider his person sacred, and that a blow was a deadly insult; he therefore followed the officer, and having watched his opportunity, took deliberate aim at him with a pistol and murdered him.

Such were the alarming results of insufficient whipping.

Dr. Arnold did not apply this doctrine to the Præpostors; but the boys in the lower parts of the school felt its benefits with a double force. The Sixth Form was not only excused from chastisement; it was given the right to chastise. The younger children, scourged both by Dr. Arnold and by the elder children, were given every opportunity of acquiring the simplicity, sobriety, and humbleness of mind, which are the best ornaments of youth.

In the actual sphere of teaching, Dr. Arnold's reforms were tentative and few. He introduced modern history, modern languages,

and mathematics into the school curriculum; but the results were not encouraging. He devoted to the teaching of history one hour a week; yet, though he took care to inculcate in these lessons a wholesome hatred of moral evil, and to point out from time to time the indications of the providential government of the world, his pupils never seemed to make much progress in the subject. Could it have been that the time allotted to it was insufficient? Dr. Arnold had some suspicions that this might be the case. With modern languages there was the same difficulty. Here his hopes were certainly not excessive. "I assume it," he wrote, "as the foundation of all my view of the case, that boys at a public school never will learn to speak or pronounce French well, under any circumstances." It would be enough if they could "learn it grammatically as a dead language." But even this they very seldom managed to do.

I know too well [he was obliged to confess] that most of the boys would pass a very poor examination even in French grammar. But so it is with their mathematics; and so it will be with any branch of knowledge that is taught but seldom, and is felt to be quite subordinate to the boys' main study.

The boys' main study remained the dead languages of Greece and Rome. That the classics should form the basis of all teaching was an axiom with Dr. Arnold. "The study of language," he said, "seems to me as if it was given for the very purpose of forming the human mind in youth; and the Greek and Latin languages seem the very instruments by which this is to be effected." Certainly, there was something providential about it—from the point of view of the teacher as well as of the taught. If Greek and Latin had not been "given" in that convenient manner, Dr. Arnold, who had spent his life in acquiring those languages, might have discovered that he had acquired them in vain. As it was, he could set the noses of his pupils to the grindstone of syntax and prosody with a clear conscience. Latin verses and Greek prepositions divided between them the labours of the week. As time went on, he became, he declared, "increasingly convinced that it is not knowledge, but the means of gaining knowledge which I have to teach." The reading of the school was

devoted almost entirely to selected passages from the prose writers of antiquity. "Boys," he remarked, "do not like poetry." Perhaps his own poetical taste was a little dubious; at any rate, it is certain that he considered the Greek Tragedians greatly overrated, and that he ranked Propertius as "an indifferent poet." As for Aristophanes, owing to his strong moral disapprobation, he could not bring himself to read him until he was forty, when, it is true, he was much struck by the "Clouds." But Juvenal the Doctor could never bring himself to read at all.

Physical science was not taught at Rugby. Since, in Dr. Arnold's opinion, it was "too great a subject to be studied ἐν παρέργῳ,"² obviously only two alternatives were possible:—it must either take the chief place in the school curriculum, or it must be left out altogether. Before such a choice, Dr. Arnold did not hesitate for a moment.

Rather than have physical science the principal thing in my son's mind [he exclaimed in a letter to a friend], I would gladly have him think that the sun went round the earth, and that the stars were so many spangles set in the bright blue firmament. Surely the one thing needful for a Christian and an Englishman to study is Christian and moral and political philosophy.

A Christian and an Englishman? After all, it was not in the classroom, nor in the boarding-house, that the essential elements of instruction could be imparted which should qualify the youthful neophyte to deserve those names. The final, the fundamental lesson could only be taught in the school chapel; in the school chapel the centre of Dr. Arnold's system of education was inevitably fixed. There, too, the Doctor himself appeared in the plenitude of his dignity and his enthusiasm. There, with the morning sun shining on the freshly scrubbed faces of his three hundred pupils, or, in the dusk of evening, through a glimmer of candles, his stately form, rapt in devotion or vibrant with exhortation, would dominate the scene. Every phase of the Church service seemed to receive its supreme expression in his voice, his attitude, his look. During the Te Deum, his whole countenance would light up; and he

² "too great a subject to be studied as a by-work."

read the Psalms with such conviction that boys would often declare, after hearing him, that they understood them now for the first time. It was his opinion that the creeds in public worship ought to be used as triumphant hymns of thanksgiving, and, in accordance with this view, although unfortunately he possessed no natural gift for music, he regularly joined in the chanting of the Nicene Creed with a visible animation and a peculiar fervour, which it was impossible to forget. The Communion service he regarded as a direct and special counterpoise to that false communion and false companionship, which, as he often observed, was a great source of mischief in the school; and he bent himself down with glistening eyes, and trembling voice, and looks of paternal solicitude, in the administration of the elements. Nor was it only the different sections of the liturgy, but the very divisions of the ecclesiastical year that reflected themselves in his demeanour; the most careless observer, we are told, "could not fail to be struck by the triumphant exultation of his whole manner on Easter Sunday"; though it needed a more familiar eye to discern the subtleties in his bearing which were produced by the approach of Advent, and the solemn thoughts which it awakened of the advance of human life, the progress of the human race, and the condition of the Church of England.

At the end of the evening service the culminating moment of the week had come: the Doctor delivered his sermon. It was not until then, as all who had known him agreed, it was not until one had heard and seen him in the pulpit, that one could fully realise what it was to be face to face with Dr. Arnold. The whole character of the man—so we are assured—stood at last revealed. His congregation sat in fixed attention (with the exception of the younger boys, whose thoughts occasionally wandered), while he propounded the general principles both of his own conduct and that of the Almighty, or indicated the bearing of the incidents of Jewish history in the sixth century B.C. upon the conduct of English schoolboys in 1830. Then, more than ever, his deep consciousness of the invisible world became evident; then, more than ever, he seemed to be battling with the wicked one. For his sermons ran on the eternal themes of the darkness of

evil, the craft of the tempter, the punishment of obliquity, and he justified the persistence with which he dwelt upon these painful subjects by an appeal to a general principle: "the spirit of Elijah," he said, "must ever precede the spirit of Christ." The impression produced upon the boys was remarkable. It was noticed that even the most careless would sometimes, during the course of the week, refer almost involuntarily to the sermon of the past Sunday, as a condemnation of what they were doing. Others were heard to wonder how it was that the Doctor's preaching, to which they had attended at the time so assiduously, seemed, after all, to have such a small effect upon what they did. An old gentleman, recalling those vanished hours, tried to recapture in words his state of mind as he sat in the darkened chapel, while Dr. Arnold's sermons, with their high-toned exhortations, their grave and sombre messages of incalculable import, clothed, like Dr. Arnold's body in its gown and bands, in the traditional stiffness of a formal phraseology, reverberated through his adolescent ears. "I used," he said, "to listen to those sermons from first to last with a kind of awe."

His success was not limited to his pupils and immediate auditors. The sermons were collected into five large volumes; they were the first of their kind; and they were received with admiration by a wide circle of pious readers. Queen Victoria herself possessed a copy, in which several passages were marked in pencil, by the royal hand.

Dr. Arnold's energies were by no means exhausted by his duties at Rugby. He became known, not merely as a Headmaster, but as a public man. He held decided opinions upon a large number of topics; and he enunciated them—based as they were almost invariably upon general principles—in pamphlets, in prefaces, and in magazine articles, with an impressive self-confidence. He was, as he constantly declared, a Liberal. In his opinion, by the very constitution of human nature, the principles of progress and reform had been those of wisdom and justice in every age of the world—except one: that which had preceded the fall of man from Paradise. Had he lived then, Dr. Arnold would have been a Conservative. As it was, his liberalism was

tempered by an "abhorrence of the spirit of 1789, of the American War, of the French Economistes, and of the English Whigs of the latter part of the seventeenth century"; and he always entertained a profound respect for the hereditary peerage. It might almost be said, in fact, that he was an orthodox Liberal. He believed in toleration, too, within limits; that is to say, in the toleration of those with whom he agreed. "I would give James Mill as much opportunity for advocating his opinion," he said, "as is consistent with a voyage to Botany Bay."³ He had become convinced of the duty of sympathising with the lower orders ever since he had made a serious study of the Epistle of St. James; but he perceived clearly that the lower orders fell into two classes, and that it was necessary to distinguish between them. There were the "good poor"—and there were the others. "I am glad that you have made acquaintance with some of the good poor," he wrote to a Cambridge undergraduate; "I quite agree with you that it is most instructive to visit them." Dr. Arnold himself occasionally visited them, in Rugby; and the condescension with which he shook hands with old men and women of the working classes was long remembered in the neighbourhood. As for the others, he regarded them with horror and alarm.

The disorders in our social state [he wrote to the Chevalier Bunsen in 1834] appear to me to continue unabated. You have heard, I doubt not, of the Trades' Unions; a fearful engine of mischief, ready to riot or to assassinate; and I see no counteracting power.

On the whole, his view of the condition of England was a gloomy one. He recommended a correspondent to read

Isaiah iii., v., xxi.; Jeremiah v., xxi., xxx.; Amos ix.; and Habakkuk ii., [adding] you will be struck, I think, with the close resemblance of our own state with that of the Jews before the second destruction of Jerusalem.

When he was told that the gift of tongues had descended on the Irvingites⁴ at Glasgow, he

³ any place of detention or punishment.

⁴ members of the Catholic Apostolic Church, founded about 1832, so called because Rev. Edward Irving (1792–1834), a Scottish clergyman, was the most prominent follower.

was not surprised. "I should take it," he said, "merely as a sign of the coming of the day of the Lord." And he was convinced that the day of the Lord *was* coming—"the termination of one of the great αἰῶνες⁵ of the human race." Of that he had no doubt whatever; wherever he looked he saw "calamities, wars, tumults, pestilences, earthquakes, etc., all marking the time of one of God's peculiar seasons of visitation." His only uncertainty was whether this termination of an αἰὼν⁶ would turn out to be the absolutely final one; but that he believed "no created being knows or can know." In any case he had "not the slightest expectation of what is commonly meant by the Millennium." And his only consolation was that he preferred the present ministry, inefficient as it was, to the Tories.

He had planned a great work on Church and State, in which he intended to lay bare the causes and to point out the remedies of the evils which afflicted society. Its theme was to be, not the alliance or union, but the absolute identity of the Church and the State; and he felt sure that if only this fundamental truth were fully realised by the public, a general reformation would follow. Unfortunately, however, as time went on, the public seemed to realise it less and less. In spite of his protests, not only were Jews admitted to Parliament, but a Jew was actually appointed a governor of Christ's Hospital; and Scripture was not made an obligatory subject at the London University.

There was one point in his theory which was not quite plain to Dr. Arnold. If Church and State were absolutely identical, it became important to decide precisely which classes of persons were to be excluded, owing to their beliefs, from the community. Jews, for instance, were decidedly outside the pale; while Dissenters—so Dr. Arnold argued—were as decidedly within it. But what was the position of the Unitarians? Were they, or were they not, Members of the Church of Christ? This was one of those puzzling questions which deepened the frown upon the Doctor's forehead and intensified the pursing of his lips. He thought long and earnestly upon the sub-

ject; he wrote elaborate letters on it to various correspondents; but his conclusions remained indefinite. "My great objection to Unitarianism," he wrote, "in its present form in England, is that it makes Christ virtually dead." Yet he expressed "a fervent hope that if we could get rid of the Athanasian Creed many good Unitarians would join their fellow-Christians in bowing the knee to Him who is Lord both of the dead and the living." Amid these perplexities, it was disquieting to learn that "Unitarianism is becoming very prevalent in Boston." He inquired anxiously as to its "complexion" there; but received no illuminating answer. The whole matter continued to be wrapped in a painful obscurity: there were, he believed, Unitarians and Unitarians; and he could say no more.

In the meantime, pending the completion of his great work, he occupied himself with putting forward various suggestions of a practical kind. He advocated the restoration of the Order of Deacons, which, he observed, had long been "quoad the reality, dead"; for he believed that "some plan of this sort might be the small end of the wedge, by which Antichrist might hereafter be burst asunder like the Dragon of Bel's temple."⁷ But the Order of Deacons was never restored, and Dr. Arnold turned his attention elsewhere, urging in a weighty pamphlet the desirability of authorising military officers, in congregations where it was impossible to procure the presence of clergy, to administer the Eucharist, as well as Baptism. It was with the object of laying such views as these before the public—"to tell them plainly," as he said, "the evils that exist, and lead them, if I can, to their causes and remedies,"—that he started, in 1831, a weekly newspaper, *The Englishman's Register*. The paper was not a success, in spite of the fact that it set out to improve its readers morally and that it preserved, in every article, an avowedly Christian tone. After a few weeks, and after he had spent upon it more than £200, it came to an end.

Altogether, the prospect was decidedly discouraging. After all his efforts, the absolute

⁵ "the termination of one of the great periods of the human race."

⁶ "... this termination of a period. . . ."

⁷ According to a story formerly appearing at the end of the Book of Daniel and now in the Apocrypha, Daniel, having convinced the king that Bel was a false deity, killed the dragon.

identity of Church and State remained as unrecognised as ever.

So deeply [he was at last obliged to confess] is the distinction between the Church and the State seated in our laws, our language, and our very notions, that nothing less than a miraculous interposition of God's Providence seems capable of eradicating it.

Dr. Arnold waited in vain.

But he did not wait in idleness. He attacked the same question from another side: he explored the writings of the Christian Fathers, and began to compose a commentary on the New Testament. In his view, the Scriptures were as fit a subject as any other book for free inquiry and the exercise of the individual judgment, and it was in this spirit that he set about the interpretation of them. He was not afraid of facing apparent difficulties, of admitting inconsistencies, or even errors, in the sacred text. Thus he observed that "in Chronicles xi. 20, and xiii. 2, there is a decided difference in the parentage of Abijah's mother;"—"which," he added, "is curious on any supposition." And at one time he had serious doubts as to the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews. But he was able, on various problematical points, to suggest interesting solutions. At first, for instance, he could not but be startled by the cessation of miracles in the early Church; but on consideration he came to the conclusion that this phenomenon might be "truly accounted for by the supposition that none but the Apostles ever conferred miraculous powers, and that therefore they ceased of course after one generation." Nor did he fail to base his exegesis, whenever possible, upon an appeal to general principles. One of his admirers points out how Dr. Arnold

vindicated God's command to Abraham to sacrifice his son, and to the Jews to exterminate the nations of Canaan, by explaining the principles on which these commands were given, and their reference to the moral state of those to whom they were addressed; thereby educing light out of darkness, unravelling the thread of God's religious education of the human race, and holding up God's marvellous counsels to the devout wonder and meditation of the thoughtful believer.

There was one of his friends, however, who did not share this admiration for the Doctor's

methods of Scriptural interpretation. W. G. Ward, while still a young man at Oxford, had come under his influence, and had been for some time one of his most enthusiastic disciples. But the star of Newman was rising at the University; Ward soon felt the attraction of that magnetic power; and his belief in his old teacher began to waver. It was, in particular, Dr. Arnold's treatment of the Scriptures which filled Ward's argumentative mind, at first with distrust, and at last with positive antagonism. To subject the Bible to free inquiry, to exercise upon it the criticism of the individual judgment—where might not such methods lead? Who could say that they would not end in Socinianism?—nay, in Atheism itself? If the text of Scripture was to be submitted to the searchings of human reason, how could the question of its inspiration escape the same tribunal? And the proofs of revelation, and even of the existence of God? What human faculty was capable of deciding upon such enormous questions? And would not the logical result be a condition of universal doubt?

On a very moderate computation [Ward argued] five times the amount of a man's natural life might qualify a person endowed with extraordinary genius to have some faint notion (though even this we doubt) on which side truth lies.

It was not that he had the slightest doubt of Dr. Arnold's orthodoxy—Dr. Arnold, whose piety was universally recognised—Dr. Arnold, who had held up to scorn and execration Strauss's "Leben Jesu" without reading it. What Ward complained of was the Doctor's lack of logic, not his lack of faith. Could he not see that if he really carried out his own principles to a logical conclusion he would eventually find himself, precisely, in the arms of Strauss? The young man, whose personal friendship remained unshaken, determined upon an interview, and went down to Rugby primed with first principles, syllogisms, and dilemmas. Finding that the headmaster was busy in school he spent the afternoon reading novels on the sofa in the drawing-room. When at last, late in the evening, the Doctor returned, tired out with his day's work, Ward fell upon him with all his vigour. The contest was long and furious; it was also entirely in-

conclusive. When it was over, Ward, with none of his brilliant arguments disposed of, and none of his probing questions satisfactorily answered, returned to the University, to plunge headlong into the vortex of the Oxford Movement;⁸ and Dr. Arnold, worried, perplexed, and exhausted, went to bed, where he remained for the next thirty-six hours.

The Commentary on the New Testament was never finished, and the great work on Church and State itself remained a fragment. Dr. Arnold's active mind was diverted from political and theological speculations to the study of philology and to historical composition. His Roman History, which he regarded as "the chief monument of his historical fame" was based partly upon the researches of Niebuhr, and partly upon an aversion to Gibbon.⁹

My highest ambition [he wrote] is to make my history the very reverse of Gibbon—in this respect, that whereas the whole spirit of his work, from its low morality, is hostile to religion, without speaking directly against it, so my greatest desire would be, in my History, by its high morals and its general tone, to be of use to the cause without actually bringing it forward.

These efforts were rewarded, in 1841, by the Professorship of Modern History at Oxford. Meanwhile, he was engaged in the study of the Sanscrit and Slavonic languages, bringing out an elaborate edition of Thucydides, and carrying on a voluminous correspondence upon a multitude of topics with a large circle of men of learning. At his death, his published works, composed during such intervals as he could spare from the management of a great public school, filled, besides a large number of pamphlets and articles, no less than seventeen volumes. It was no wonder that Carlyle, after a visit to Rugby, should have characterised Dr. Arnold as a man of "unhasting, unresting diligence."

Mrs. Arnold, too, no doubt agreed with Carlyle. During the first eight years of their married life, she bore him six children; and

⁸ a movement, originated at Oxford University about 1833, toward High Church principles in the Church of England.

⁹ Edward Gibbon (1737-1794), British historian best known for *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.

four more were to follow. In this large and growing domestic circle his hours of relaxation were spent. There those who had only known him in his professional capacity were surprised to find him displaying the tenderness and jocosity of a parent. The dignified and stern headmaster was actually seen to dandle infants and to caracole upon the hearthrug on all fours. Yet, we are told, "the sense of his authority as a father was never lost in his playfulness as a companion." On more serious occasions, the voice of the spiritual teacher sometimes made itself heard. An intimate friend described how "on a comparison having been made in his family circle, which seemed to place St. Paul above St. John," the tears rushed to the Doctor's eyes and how, repeating one of the verses from St. John, he begged that the comparison might never again be made.

The longer holidays were spent in Westmoreland, where, rambling with his offspring among the mountains, gathering wild flowers, and pointing out the beauties of Nature, Dr. Arnold enjoyed, as he himself would often say, "an almost awful happiness." Music he did not appreciate, though he occasionally desired his eldest boy, Matthew, to sing him the Confirmation Hymn of Dr. Hinds, to which he had become endeared, owing to its use in Rugby chapel. But his lack of ear was, he considered, amply recompensed by his love of flowers: "they are my music," he declared. Yet, in such a matter, he was careful to refrain from an excess of feeling, such as, in his opinion, marked the famous lines of Wordsworth:

*To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.*

He found the sentiment morbid. "Life," he said, "is not long enough to take such intense interest in objects in themselves so little." As for the animal world, his feelings towards it were of a very different cast. "The whole subject," he said, "of the brute creation is to me one of such painful mystery, that I dare not approach it." The Unitarians themselves were a less distressing thought.

Once or twice he found time to visit the Continent, and the letters and journals recording in minute detail his reflections and impressions in France or Italy show us that Dr. Ar-

nold preserved, in spite of the distractions of foreign scenes and foreign manners, his accustomed habits of mind. Taking very little interest in works of art, he was occasionally moved by the beauty of natural objects; but his principal preoccupation remained with the moral aspects of things. From this point of view, he found much to reprehend in the conduct of his own countrymen. "I fear," he wrote, "that our countrymen who live abroad are not in the best possible moral state, however much they may do in science or literature." And this was unfortunate, because "a thorough English gentleman—Christian, manly, and enlightened—is more, I believe, than Guizot or Sismondi could comprehend; it is a finer specimen of human nature than any other country, I believe, could furnish." Nevertheless, our travellers would imitate foreign customs without discrimination, "as in the absurd habit of not eating fish with a knife, borrowed from the French, who do it because they have no knives fit for use." Places, no less than people, aroused similar reflections. By Pompeii, Dr. Arnold was not particularly impressed.

There is only [he observed] the same sort of interest with which one would see the ruins of Sodom and Gomorrah but indeed there is less. One is not authorised to ascribe so solemn a character to the destruction of Pompeii.

The lake of Como moved him more profoundly. As he gazed upon the overwhelming beauty around him, he thought of "moral evil," and was appalled by the contrast. "May the sense of moral evil," he prayed, "be as strong in me as my delight in external beauty, for in a deep sense of moral evil, more perhaps than in anything else, abides a saving knowledge of God!"

His prayer was answered: Dr. Arnold was never in any danger of losing his sense of moral evil. If the landscapes of Italy only served to remind him of it, how could he forget it among the boys at Rugby School? The daily sight of so many young creatures in the hands of the Evil One filled him with agitated grief.

When the spring and activity of youth [he wrote] is altogether unsanctified by anything pure and ele-

vated in its desires, it becomes a spectacle that is as dizzying and almost more morally distressing than the shouts and gambols of a set of lunatics

5 One thing struck him as particularly strange: "it is very startling," he said, "to see so much of sin combined with so little of sorrow." The naughtiest boys positively seemed to enjoy themselves most. There were moments when
10 he almost lost faith in his whole system of education, when he began to doubt whether some far more radical reforms than any he had attempted might not be necessary, before the multitude of children under his charge—shouting and gamboling, and yet plunged all the
15 while deep in moral evil—could ever be transformed into a set of Christian gentlemen. But then he remembered his general principles, the conduct of Jehovah with the Chosen People, and the childhood of the human race. No, it
20 was for him to make himself, as one of his pupils afterwards described him, in the words of Bacon, "kin to God in spirit"; he would rule the school majestically from on high. He would
25 deliver a series of sermons analysing "the six vices" by which "great schools were corrupted, and changed from the likeness of God's temple to that of a den of thieves." He would exhort, he would denounce, he would sweep through
30 the corridors, he would turn the pages of Facciolati's lexicon¹⁰ more imposingly than ever; and the rest he would leave to the Praepostors in the Sixth Form.

Upon the boys in the Sixth Form, indeed,
35 a strange burden would seem to have fallen. Dr. Arnold himself was very well aware of this. "I cannot deny," he told them in a sermon, "that you have an anxious duty—a duty which some might suppose was too heavy for
40 your years"; and every term he pointed out to them, in a short address, the responsibilities of their position, and impressed upon them "the enormous influence" they possessed "for good or for evil." Nevertheless most youths of seven-
45 teen, in spite of the warnings of their elders, have a singular trick of carrying moral burdens lightly. The Doctor might preach and look grave; but young Brooke was ready enough to preside at a fight behind the Chapel, though

¹⁰ Jacopo Facciolati (1682–1769), editor of a Latin language dictionary.

he was in the Sixth, and knew that fighting was against the rules. At their best, it may be supposed that the Præpostors administered a kind of barbaric justice; but they were not always at their best, and the pages of *Tom Brown's Schooldays* show us what was no doubt the normal condition of affairs under Dr. Arnold, when the boys in the Sixth Form were weak or brutal, and the blackguard Flashman, in the intervals of swigging brandy-punch with his boon companions, amused himself by roasting fags before the fire.

But there was an exceptional kind of boy upon whom the high-pitched exhortations of Dr. Arnold produced a very different effect. A minority of susceptible and serious youths fell completely under his sway, responded like wax to the pressure of his influence, and moulded their whole lives with passionate reverence upon the teaching of their adored master. Conspicuous among these was Arthur Clough. Having been sent to Rugby at the age of ten, he quickly entered into every phase of school life, though, we are told, "a weakness in his ankles prevented him from taking a prominent part in the games of the place." At the age of sixteen, he was in the Sixth Form, and not merely a Præpostor, but head of the School House. Never did Dr. Arnold have an apter pupil. This earnest adolescent, with the weak ankles and the solemn face, lived entirely with the highest ends in view. He thought of nothing but moral good, moral evil, moral influence, and moral responsibility. Some of his early letters have been preserved, and they reveal both the intensity with which he felt the importance of his own position, and the strange stress of spirit under which he laboured. "I have been in one continued state of excitement for at least the last three years," he wrote when he was not yet seventeen, "and now comes the time of exhaustion." But he did not allow himself to rest, and a few months later he was writing to a schoolfellow as follows:—

I verily believe my whole being is soaked through with the wishing and hoping and striving to do the school good, or rather to keep it up and hinder it from falling in this, I do think, very critical time, so that my cares and affections and conversations, thoughts, words, and deeds look to that involuntarily. I am afraid you will be inclined to think this

"cant," and I am conscious that even one's truest feelings, if very frequently put out in the light, do make a bad and disagreeable appearance; but this, however, is true, and even if I am carrying it too far, I do not think it has made me really forgetful of my personal friends, such as, in particular, Gell and Burbidge and Walrond, and yourself, my dear Simpkinson.

Perhaps it was not surprising that a young man brought up in such an atmosphere should have fallen a prey, at Oxford, to the frenzies of religious controversy; that he should have been driven almost out of his wits by the ratiocinations of W. G. Ward; that he should have lost his faith; that he should have spent the rest of his existence lamenting that loss, both in prose and verse; and that he should have eventually succumbed, conscientiously doing up brown paper parcels for Florence Nightingale.

In the earlier years of his headmastership Dr. Arnold had to face a good deal of opposition. His advanced religious views were disliked, and there were many parents to whom his system of school government did not commend itself. But in time this hostility melted away. Succeeding generations of favourite pupils began to spread his fame through the Universities. At Oxford especially men were profoundly impressed by the pious aims of the boys from Rugby. It was a new thing to see undergraduates going to Chapel more often than they were obliged, and visiting the good poor. Their reverent admiration for Dr. Arnold was no less remarkable. Whenever two of his old pupils met they joined in his praises; and the sight of his picture had been known to call forth, from one who had not even reached the Sixth, exclamations of rapture lasting for ten minutes and filling with astonishment the young men from other schools who happened to be present. He became a celebrity; he became at last a great man. Rugby prospered; its numbers rose higher than ever before; and, after thirteen years as headmaster, Dr. Arnold began to feel that his work there was accomplished, and that he might look forward either to other labours or, perhaps, to a dignified retirement. But it was not to be.

His father had died suddenly at the age of fifty-three from angina pectoris; and he himself was haunted by forebodings of an early death. To be snatched away without a warn-

ing, to come in a moment from the seductions of this World to the presence of Eternity—the most ordinary actions, the most casual remarks, served to keep him in remembrance of that dreadful possibility. When one of his little boys clapped his hands at the thought of the approaching holidays, the Doctor gently checked him, and repeated the story of his own early childhood; how his own father had made him read aloud a sermon on the text “Boast not thyself of tomorrow”; and how, within the week, his father was dead. On the title-page of his MS. volume of sermons he was always careful to write the date of its commencement, leaving a blank for that of its completion. One of his children asked him the meaning of this. “It is one of the most solemn things I do,” he replied, “to write the beginning of that sentence, and think that I may perhaps not live to finish it.”

It was noticed that in the spring of 1842 such thoughts seemed to be even more frequently than usual in his mind. He was only in his forty-seventh year, but he dwelt darkly on the fragility of human existence. Towards the end of May, he began to keep a diary—a private memorandum of his intimate communings with the Almighty. Here, evening after evening, in the traditional language of religious devotion, he humbled himself before God, prayed for strength and purity, and threw himself upon the mercy of the Most High.

Another day and another month succeed [he wrote on May 31st]. May God keep my mind and heart fixed on Him, and cleanse me from all sin. I would wish to keep a watch over my tongue, as to vehement speaking and censuring of others. . . . I would desire to remember my latter end to which I am approaching. . . . May God keep me in the hour of death, through Jesus Christ; and preserve me from every fear, as well as from presumption.

On June 2nd he wrote, “Again the day is over and I am going to rest. O Lord, preserve me this night, and strengthen me to bear whatever Thou shalt see fit to lay on me, whether pain, sickness, danger, or distress.” On Sunday, June 5th, the reading of the newspaper aroused “painful and solemn” reflections.—“So much of sin and so much of suffering in the world, as are there displayed, and no one seems able to remedy either. And then the thought of my

own private life, so full of comforts, is very startling.” He was puzzled; but he concluded with a prayer: “May I be kept humble and zealous, and may God give me grace to labour in my generation for the good of my brethren, and for His Glory!”

The end of the term was approaching, and to all appearance the Doctor was in excellent spirits. On June 11th after a hard day's work, he spent the evening with a friend in the discussion of various topics upon which he often touched in his conversation—the comparison of the art of medicine in barbarous and civilised ages, the philological importance of provincial vocabularies, and the threatening prospect of the moral condition of the United States. Left alone, he turned to his Diary.

The day after to-morrow [he wrote] is my birthday, if I am permitted to live to see it—my forty-seventh birthday since my birth. How large a portion of my life on earth is already passed! And then—what is to follow this life? How visibly my outward work seems contracting and softening away into the gentler employments of old age. In one sense, how nearly can I now say, “Vixi.” And I thank God that, as far as ambition is concerned, it is, I trust, fully mortified; I have no desire other than to step back from my present place in the world, and not to rise to a higher. Still there are works which, with God's permission, I would do before the night cometh.

Dr. Arnold was thinking of his great work on Church and State.

Early next morning he awoke with a sharp pain in his chest. The pain increasing, a physician was sent for; and in the meantime Mrs. Arnold read aloud to her husband the Fifty-first Psalm. Upon one of their boys coming into the room,

My son, thank God for me [said Dr. Arnold; and as the boy did not at once catch his meaning, he added], Thank God, Tom, for giving me this pain; I have suffered so little pain in my life that I feel it is very good for me. Now God has given it to me, and I do so thank Him for it.

Then Mrs. Arnold read from the Prayer-book the “Visitation of the Sick,” her husband listening with deep attention, and assenting with an emphatic “Yes” at the end of many of the sentences. When the physician arrived, he perceived at once the gravity of the case: it was

an attack of angina pectoris. He began to prepare some laudanum, while Mrs. Arnold went out to fetch the children. All at once, as the medical man was bending over his glasses, there was a rattle from the bed; a convulsive struggle followed; and, when the unhappy woman, with the children, and all the servants, rushed into the room, Dr. Arnold had passed from his perplexities for ever.

There can be little doubt that what he had achieved justified the prediction of the Provost of Oriel that he would "change the face of education all through the public schools of England." It is true that, so far as the actual machinery of education was concerned, Dr. Arnold not only failed to effect a change, but deliberately adhered to the old system. The monastic and literary conceptions of education, which had their roots in the Middle Ages, and had been accepted and strengthened at the revival of Learning, he adopted almost without hesitation. Under him, the public school remained, in essentials, a conventual establishment, devoted to the teaching of Greek and Latin grammar. Had he set on foot reforms in these directions, it seems probable that he might have succeeded in carrying the parents of England with him. The moment was ripe; there was a general desire for educational changes; and Dr. Arnold's great reputation could hardly have been resisted. As it was, he threw the whole weight of his influence into the opposite scale, and the ancient system became more firmly established than ever.

The changes which he did effect were of a very different nature. By introducing morals and religion into his scheme of education, he altered the whole atmosphere of Public School life. Henceforward the old rough-and-tumble, which was typified by the régime of Keate at Eton, became impossible. After Dr. Arnold, no public school could venture to ignore the virtues of respectability. Again, by his introduction of the prefectorial system, Dr. Arnold produced far-reaching effects—effects which he himself, perhaps, would have found perplexing. In his day, when the school hours were over, the boys were free to enjoy themselves as they liked; to bathe, to fish, to ramble for long afternoons in the country, collecting eggs or gathering flowers. "The taste of the boys at this period," writes an old Rugbæan who had been

under Arnold, "leaned strongly towards flowers"; the words have an odd look to-day. The modern reader of *Tom Brown's Schooldays* searches in vain for any reference to compulsory games, house colours, or cricket averages. In those days, when boys played games they played them for pleasure; but in those days the prefectorial system—the system which hands over the life of a school to an oligarchy of a dozen youths of seventeen—was still in its infancy, and had not yet borne its fruit. Teachers and prophets have strange after-histories; and that of Dr. Arnold has been no exception. The earnest enthusiast who strove to make his pupils Christian gentlemen and who governed his school according to the principles of the Old Testament has proved to be the founder of the worship of athletics and the worship of good form. Upon those two poles our public schools have turned for so long that we have almost come to believe that such is their essential nature, and that an English public schoolboy who wears the wrong clothes and takes no interest in football is a contradiction in terms. Yet it was not so before Dr. Arnold; will it always be so after him? We shall see.

GAMALIEL BRADFORD

Gamaliel Bradford (1863–1932) was unsuccessful as a poet, novelist, and playwright but he finally found his métier in biographical writing. With the publication of Lee the American, 1912, this Boston-born writer, dealing with a controversial subject, first showed his interest in "psychological biography," and followed with a long list of similar books, among them Confederate Portraits, 1914; Union Portraits, 1916; A Naturalist of Souls, 1917; Bare Souls, 1924; and Saints and Sinners, 1932. In all, Bradford composed 115 "psychographs," a term he preferred to "portraits." Psychography he has defined as "the condensed, essential, artistic presentation of character . . . it seeks to extract what is essential, what is permanent, and so vitally characteristic." His "soul pictures" have influenced and helped to popularize the modern profile. "John Brown" reveals Bradford's keen perceptions, his integrity, and his fair-mindedness. Clear style serves to mitigate both the prolixity of the selection and pos-

sible disagreement with Bradford's interpretations.

JOHN BROWN¹

1

It is always profoundly interesting to study a controversy where there is right on both sides, though neither can see the right in the other. In the American Civil War, the South, with however little fault of its own, was oppressed, smothered by the hideous burden of slavery. On the other hand, it was contending for the original principle of state vitality, the most important element in our Constitution, and one steadily undermined by Federal encroachment and above all by the War.

Up to 1861 the most intense complication of these contending principles was in Kansas. There right and wrong fought their battle with furious bitterness and with a heat of wrath and recrimination which is as pitiful as it is fascinating to behold. And into this thick and bushy tangle of motives and passions John Brown hewed unhesitatingly with the fierce and cruel axe of his unfaltering will. But, as it happens, Brown himself is as complex a puzzle as Kansas, and friends and enemies have torn his memory to pieces in the effort to make him out devil or saint; whereas he was neither, but a human being, with immense aspirations and hopes and struggles, like you or me. In any case, he was perhaps the most curious American example of the intensity of fanatical enthusiasm, and as such the analysis of his soul, with its damage and its glory, has a profound and absorbing interest.

Before beginning such analysis, however, we must have a brief summary of his remarkable career, avoiding controversy as much as is possible, where many facts and almost all motives are subject to contest. In making such a summary, we must first acknowledge indebtedness to the admirable biography of Mr. Villard,² whose thoroughness of research is equaled only by his obvious desire to be fair to all parties and all men.

Brown was born in Connecticut in 1800. His parents were of English and Dutch stock and

his stubbornness through life did not belie his heredity. He had a severe and sternly nurtured youth, growing up with the Bible in one hand and the plough in the other. In later life he wrote a brief autobiography, which depicts the struggles of his youth in the terse, tense, rude English he always used. All through it you can see the earnest, passionate, obstinate boy, with his soul set on one object, all the more furiously when he found himself balked.

The boy was married when a boy, chased fortune in strange fashion all over the country, as a tanner, as a surveyor, as a cattle-breeder, as a wool-merchant, and never once caught her. He had and bred and lost children, lost his wife, married another and had more children, illimitably. How he fed them all is a puzzle. But their feeding was simple, and their lives were simple, and their souls were simple, like his, if all souls were not so bewilderingly complex. Through these financial struggles it comes out increasingly evident that Brown was not a good man of business, though often shrewd and practical, as in his skilful classification of wools. His temperament was speculative, fed on high hopes, if little else. He worked with borrowed capital, his schemes failed, and he came to grief, like many others. Most of us believe that he was fundamentally honest. But some do not. It may be well to quote here the most scathing piece of abuse that I have met with, as an antidote to much that will come later: "I knew the old scoundrel long before the war; long before Kansas was known; long before abolition had many advocates. He tried to blow up his mother-in-law with powder; he was guilty of every meanness. He involved his father at one time in ruin, and everybody else he had anything to do with."³ So do the saints and martyrs appear to those who have suffered by them.

But if the practical world rejected Brown and misunderstood him, the unpractical had its revenge in yielding him immortal glory. He gave his life with mad abandonment to the American Negro and that sacrifice raised him on a pedestal no envy and no detraction will ever throw down. Just when Brown's devotion to the abolition cause began cannot be definitely settled. In later years he and his family

¹ From *Damaged Souls* by Gamaliel Bradford. Copyright, 1923, by Houghton Mifflin Company.

² Oswald Garrison Villard, *John Brown*, 1910.

³ Sara T. D. Robinson, *Kansas*, 1899, letter of N. Eggleston, October, 1833.

placed it very early. Mr. H. P. Wilson, who has dissected Brown's soul with searching and ingenious cruelty, but I think with utter misapprehension, believes that this early origin was invented,⁴ and that Brown's anti-slavery enthusiasm was merely a hypocritical mask, to conceal the old greed for gain which had been in so many ways disappointed. I do not see how any one who has studied Brown's life and letters with care can question his sincerity for a moment, and I believe, after a consideration of all the evidence, that the passion for freeing the slaves was early conceived and grew and broadened with years until, when he was nearly sixty years old, it broke out in the wild adventures of Kansas and Harper's Ferry.

Several of Brown's sons went to Kansas in 1854 and 1855. They were led in part, no doubt, by the enthusiasm of the free-soil movement, largely also by the instinct of adventure and of seeking fortune under new conditions. Their father was interested in their project from the first. He heard of the violence and aggression of the pro-slavery men, who were thronging into the territory from Missouri, left his wife and other children at his farm in North Elba, New York, and made his way to Kansas, well-armed, eager to help his sons, and passionately curious to see what would turn up. When he arrived, the struggle between the political parties was violently under way. Accounts vary as to the prominence of his earlier part in it. He was never a man to work with others, much less under them. He could contend, command, control: he could not obey. At any rate, he was intimately involved in the furious complications of the end of 1855 and the beginning of 1856, and his antipathy to the advocates of slavery increased in bitterness, if it could. There was wrath and recrimination everywhere, some unwarranted violence, and a luxury of threats, meaning much or little, but all serving to foment hatred. Brown made up his mind that a cruel example was needed. In May, 1856, he and a party of his followers took by night five pro-slavery men from among their Pottawatomie neighbors, men of bad character but not more criminal than others; and butchered them, literally hacked them to pieces with cutlasses. Brown always insisted, in a fashion

approaching duplicity, that he had no actual hand in the deed; but the whole responsibility was his. In any case, it was a bloody, brutal murder, and quite without immediate excuse. Brown's admirers declare that it saved Kansas to freedom. Less prejudiced historians believe that it did more harm than good.

Brown's course in the West after Pottawatomie was much what it had been before. He was engaged in several so-called battles, with a few men on each side, and behaved always with absolute intrepidity and sometimes with shrewdness. Mr. Wilson insists that his chief motive was plunder. There was plenty of disreputable plundering on both sides, horse-stealing in particular. But there can be no serious doubt that Brown regarded it all as a worthy despoiling of the Egyptians and intended religiously to devote all profit to the advancement of the cause.

In the autumn of 1856 Brown left Kansas. The year 1857 he spent in the Middle West and East, gathering funds and arousing enthusiasm in various societies and individuals, with the ostensible purpose of aiding in the Kansas struggle, but with at any rate some further and deeper plans for a more central attack upon the strongholds of slavery. In the summer of 1858 he returned to Kansas, where conditions were again acute, made a raid into Missouri, captured a considerable number of slaves, and, after a journey full of picturesque vicissitudes, carried them triumphantly to Canada where the British flag ensured their permanent freedom. John Brown never entered Kansas again.

2

As there is endless controversy over the date of Brown's first interest in slavery, so historians dispute over his conception of the Harper's Ferry adventure. If the conversation recorded by Frederick Douglass⁵ as having taken place in 1847 is to be accepted—and I think it must be in substance—Brown was at that time brooding over the details of some such scheme as he afterwards attempted to carry out. He explained to Douglass this plan for subsisting an army of whites and blacks in the mountain fastnesses and so gradually undermining the

⁴Hill Peebles Wilson, *John Brown, Soldier of Fortune*, 1913.

⁵*The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, Written by Himself*, 1883.

whole slave power. In 1849 he made a brief trip to Europe for business objects and he appears to have attempted a more or less extensive study of battles and battle-fields with a military purpose in mind. For, though he was profoundly religious and by profession a hater of war, like many another such he was a born fighter, and relished nothing more than to have God put a scourge into his hands to lash the devil.

His daughter testifies explicitly that he told her of his Harper's Ferry plan before he first went to Kansas. In the interval between his two Kansas visits the general outline of the scheme was certainly made more or less plain to some of his Eastern supporters. And in May, 1858, took place in Chatham, Canada, that singular convention of a few whites and a larger number of Negroes, which adopted the still more singular Provisional Constitution, Brown's elaborate device for governing the nation within a nation that was to be established by the gradual freeing of the Southern slaves. This instrument, with its lofty tone and its complicated discrimination of executive, legislature, judiciary, etc., seems like a Utopian parody of the Constitution of the United States, developed by a slow, thorough, narrow, limited intellect possessed and obsessed by one idea, and such was assuredly Brown's.

Any hope the inventor of this system may have had of putting it immediately into practice was thwarted by the defection of the restless, unreliable adventurer Forbes, who, after being more trusted by his leader than was any one else, deserted the cause and made perilous revelations as to the methods. Brown was obliged to defer action for a year; but his patience was as indomitable as his energy. "Young men must learn to wait. Patience is the hardest lesson to learn. I have waited for twenty years to accomplish my purpose."

At last in the summer of 1859 Brown settled himself and his little band of followers at the Kennedy Farm in Maryland, about five miles from Harper's Ferry. The followers were a somewhat heterogeneous collection. They were by no means all religious men. Perhaps they had not all been virtuous men. They were hardy, vigorous young fellows, ready to risk anything and go anywhere. Most, if not all, of them, had a superstitious horror of slavery.

And every one of them adored the old man and was willing to die for him. Just what plan of campaign Brown had adopted, if any definite, will never be known. His friends and his enemies have ingeniously supplied him with several and supported them with what they think are conclusive arguments. But the arguments are as different as the conclusions and none is convincing. Somehow or other Brown hoped to gather a nucleus of slaves and whites whose determined action in seizing Harper's Ferry would finally lead to the liberation of every Southern Negro. But the method of accomplishing this is obscure, and we are obliged largely to fall back upon Brown's trust in the guidance of God. On the one hand we are told by Salmon Brown that "Father had a peculiarity of insisting on *order*. I felt that at Harper's Ferry this very thing would be likely to trap him. He would insist on getting everything arranged just to suit him before he would consent to make a move."⁶ On the other hand, we have Brown's own impressive saying: "It is an invariable rule *with me* to be governed by circumstances; or in other words *not to do anything while I do not know what to do*." No doubt these two positions may be reconciled, but they do not make our puzzle much clearer.

At any rate, the conspirators, about twenty in all, lurked at the Kennedy Farm till the middle of October, slowly accumulating arms and supplies and keeping themselves marvelously hidden from the neighbors' curiosity. Then, on the evening of Sunday, October 16th, Brown marched out, at the head of a petty band of adventurers, to challenge deliberately a great nation by assaulting its officers and seizing its property. The complicated evolutions of Sunday night and Monday need not be traced in detail. By Monday night not only the town of Harper's Ferry but the State of Virginia and the whole country had been aroused and had grasped, at least vaguely, the enormous effrontery of Brown's undertaking. Various peaceful citizens had been killed as well as several of Brown's followers. He himself, after getting possession of the different government buildings and picking up from the surrounding country a number of slaves and also a number of slaveholders as hostages, among whom was

⁶ Villard, *op. cit.*

a member of the family of Washington, was forced to take refuge, with the remains of his band and his prisoners, in the engine-house, and continued there till Tuesday morning. But in the dull gray October dawn a detachment of United States Marines, under Colonel Robert E. Lee, broke in the doors, liberated the prisoners, and killed or captured all of the defenders. Brown was cut down fighting and received several wounds, which were at first thought to be dangerous, but which afterwards proved to be comparatively unimportant.

Virginia and the whole South were naturally infuriated. Brown was speedily tried on various charges and sentenced to be hanged. His Northern friends complained of indecent haste in the proceedings, but later historians agree that on the whole the affair was conducted with as much consideration as could have been expected. Brown bore himself through it all with the admirable dignity that he had shown from the first moment of his capture. Indeed, the testimony of his captors and interrogators to his composure and clear-headedness is as impressive as that of his prisoners to his courage and thoughtful humanity.

During the long weeks of his imprisonment the condemned traitor showed an unfailing self-possession. He discouraged all attempts at escape and urged upon his friends that as a martyr to the cause he would serve it more substantially than by any further living effort. He corresponded widely, and his numerous letters, with their poignant directness and incontrovertible sincerity, afford the best evidence of the great qualities of his character.

On the second of December, 1859, John Brown was hanged at Charlestown, Virginia. Great military preparations were made to ensure a peaceful execution of the sentence and it was carried out with every detail of decorum and decency, except that a painful delay at the last moment prolonged the prisoner's suspense. Brown's bearing was perfect, his courage and calmness without flaw. There were no heroics, no rhetoric. He took an affectionate leave of his companions in arms and gave them each a quarter of a dollar, saying that he should have no further use for money. Of an equally touching simplicity were his words, as he was driven to the gallows: "This is a beautiful country. I never had the pleasure of seeing it before," and

the phrase seems somehow to give a startling insight into the vivid and intense perception of a man who is opening his eyes upon the other world. A few hours later the eyes were closed to this, and John Brown had become a strange, great legendary figure in the complicated progress of humanity.

3

So died a typical incarnation of ideal, or fanatical, enthusiasm, a man absolutely convinced of the truth and justice of his own ideas of right and wrong, in certain points at any rate, and determined to impose them upon the world, by persuasion if possible, if not, by bloodshed, agony, and slaughter. He was a theorist, a reasoner, all the more rigorous in his theories because their scope was limited and their range narrow. You can see the rigor in the face, especially before it was bearded, in the set mouth, the cavernous eyes, the sturdy chin, the drawn brows and square forehead. There was a tremendous, indomitable stubbornness in the man. "Let the grand reason, that one course is right and another wrong, be kept continually before your own mind." He kept it always before his and walked straight on, no matter whom his footsteps shattered.

To minds of a different type, reflective, curious, analytical, there is endless interest in studying such a temperament, in weighing the good and evil of its working in the world, good and evil to itself, good and evil to the vast body of its fellow beings. Let us trace out some of the ramifications of this, as illustrated in the case of Brown.

First as to the evil, and the evil to the world at large. Such natures are intolerant; from their point of view they have the right to be so. They know what should be done and what should not. Paltry excuses, quibbling reserves, charitable allowances, what are they but devices of the Evil One, cunningly assorted to obscure the real issue between heaven and hell? "I believe in the Golden Rule and the Declaration of Independence," said Brown. "I think they both mean the same thing; and it is better that a whole generation should pass off the face of the earth—men, women, and children—by a violent death, than that one jot of either should fail in *this country*. I mean exactly *so*, sir." He meant so, he acted so, he lived so.

Such intolerance kills the quiet ease and joy of life. It kills compromise and mutual understanding, and breeds suspicion and mistrust. It breeds wrath and violence, sets father against son and brother against brother, triumphantly justifies such hideous crimes as the brutal murders on the Pottawatomic. And, alas, so often, it does all this from misapprehension, from reasoning with fierce, narrow, unenlightened logic, and reasoning wrong.

The injury of this fanatical temperament to the individual possessor of it is even more obvious than the injury to the world at large. Take intelligence. It cuts him off from curious knowledge, from wide interest in the movement of life and its varied currents and subtle developments. It makes him feel that all that does not renovate society from his point of view is frivolous and contemptible. Brown read, oh, yes, he read the Bible, always the Bible, and he read Plutarch, and he read books on military science. What if he had read Plato or Montaigne?

And beauty? What room, what leisure is there for beauty, a frivolous distraction, an idle, subtle siren which leads the soul astray from the one clear, arduous path it must forever follow? Brown loved music, loved hymns, they fed his strange melancholy, his strange exaltation. Yet probably he would have said of music, with Cowper: "If it is not used with an unfeigned reference to the worship of God, . . . it degenerates into a sensual delight and becomes a most powerful advocate for the admission of other pleasures, grosser perhaps in degree, but in their kind the same." And Brown loved nature, but we have seen that he walked through it as a man in a dream, and opened his eyes to it only when they were about to close forever.

It was the same with all the comfort of life, ease, fine clothes, delicate food, luxury, grace, elegance, and charm. The grosser man in us, the simple, natural man, unhaunted by far thoughts and tormenting scruples, enjoys these things, savors them, revels in them. But how can any one enjoy them whose mind is forever clouded with the misery of the world? How can a life be happy passed in the midst of those who suffer? To be sure, many lives are; but not this man's. He would cut off human wants, cut off superfluous desires, cut off bare needs.

Those poor Negroes were toiling under the lash, and why should he achieve felicity? He wore old, plain clothes and ate the simplest sustenance compatible with life. The painter Hunt saw him once at a social gathering refuse oysters "because 'he was not hungry.' I said to a friend—and Brown was not celebrated then, not having been hanged!—"There's something remarkable about that man. Did you ever know a man to refuse oysters at a party because he was not hungry?" He did not take champagne, because he was 'not thirsty.' Held the glass as you would hold a doll for a baby. Was not going to gorge himself—a man with such a destiny and such a work before him." When Douglass visited him in 1847, he was struck with the utter poverty of everything. "Plain as was the outside of this man's house, the inside was plainer. . . . There was an air of plainness about it which almost suggested destitution." The meal was "such as a man might relish after following the plough all day." "Innocent of paint, veneering, varnish, or table-cloth, the table announced itself unmistakably of pine and of the plainest workmanship." And while the poverty may have resulted in part from lack of business ability, it came far more from absorption in higher things. "For twenty years," said Brown, in 1858, "I have never made any business arrangement which would prevent me at any time answering the call of the Lord. I have kept my affairs in such condition that in two weeks I could wind them up and be ready to obey that call; permitting nothing to stand in the way of duty—neither wife, children, nor worldly goods."

It is equally evident that these lofty spiritual pursuits do not fit well with the lighter side of social life, with the more kindly human relations, the gay exchange of cordial, empty, daily jest and laughter. Brown had a grim, Old Testamentary humor of his own, that relaxed the iron muscles of those mouth-corners just a trifle. But did he ever laugh with abandon? He mingled with men for his own purposes, though even with those closest to him he had a strange and desperate secrecy. For ordinary social converse he had no taste and no aptitude. "I have one unconquerable weakness," he said, with a smile, in those last unsmiling days: "I have always been more afraid of being taken into an evening party of ladies and gen-

tle men, than of meeting a company of men with guns." Even the faculty of consolation, that most exquisite, tender link of friendship, was denied to him, or at least not given in large measure: "I never seemed to possess a faculty to console and comfort my friends in their grief; I am inclined, like the poor comforters of Job, to sit down in silence, lest in my miserable way I should only add to their grief."

But the crowning interest of the effect of Brown's great aim in life upon his human relations appears in his dealings with his family. He was devotedly attached to both his wives and to his numerous sons and daughters. He was thoughtful of their worldly welfare, as he saw it, to the very end. He was more than thoughtful, he was tender. He was tender to the animals with whom he dealt so much. He was tender, divinely tender with human beings. When those he loved were ill he would give up food, give up sleep, give up immediately necessary labor to tend them and watch over them with delicate, considerate care. Yet he punished with pitiless severity. When one of his sons had earned a heavy whipping, he inflicted half of it and then made the boy lash the father's own bare back till the blood came. "He compelled his wife to ride to church with him on a pillion on a young and unbroken horse he wished to tame, with the result that she was twice thrown."

Also, he must rule, dominate, control everything that came near him. He dominated animals. "He said that he could always, without moving, make a dog or cat leave the room if he wished, by his eye." Was he not one day to be ruler over thousands? If so, then surely he must dominate at home. "He was intolerant in little things and in little ways. . . . I had it from [his son] Owen, in a quiet way and from other sources in quite a loud way that in his family his methods were of the most arbitrary kind," says a not too friendly witness. Douglass, a most friendly one, observes that "he fulfilled Saint Paul's idea of the head of the family. His wife believed in him, and his children observed him with reverence."

And when a great cause demanded it, both wife and children must be sacrificed without a moment's hesitation. He said it often, and, when necessary, he did it. The little sacrifices were demanded constantly and given freely.

The supreme sacrifice was always held in readiness and accorded at the supreme moment. A son was killed in Kansas, two sons were killed at Harper's Ferry. Still he fought on, if not unmoved or without a tear, absolutely unaltered in his resolution to give what was far dearer than his own life to achieving the one great end of his and their existence on this earth. The strain of living so much apart from all he loved was terrible. It wrung his heart to think of their privation and sickness and sorrow. But even this grief was smothered in the thought of all that greater grief: "The anxiety I feel to see my wife and children once more I am unable to describe. . . . The cries of my poor sorrow-stricken despairing children, whose 'tears on their cheeks' are ever in my eye and whose sighs are ever in my ears, may, however, prevent my enjoying the happiness I so much desire."

Truly, the strain of this man's life in the grip of his overpowering obsession illuminates Heine's passionate saying: "We do not have ideas. The Idea has us and enslaves us and scourges us and drives us into the arena to fight for it like gladiators, who combat, whether they will or no."

4

And what good comes from this tyrannous mastery of an idea, to balance and compensate all the wide burden of privation and misery? Let us consider such good first as it affects the individual, then as it affects the world at large. To clarify the consideration we must dig a little more deeply into the profound tangle of motives that lies at the base of moral and spiritual, as of all other, effort.

In such a case as Brown's, the persistent, all-excluding nature of the obsession, its constant intrusion in season and out of season, its cruel dominance over all other motives and all other passions, undeniably suggests insanity. This solution has often been urged for Brown. It receives support from the man's singular and unfortunate inheritance. Insanity was rampant in his mother's family and there were a dozen instances in relatives more or less close to him. An effort was made to plead this in court. Brown himself rejected it scornfully. At the same time I think his frequent recurrence to it indicates that its shadow haunted him with

some discomfort. "I may be very insane," he wrote; "and I am so, if insane at all. But if that be so, insanity is like a very pleasant dream to me." And again, "If I am insane, of course I should think I know more than all the rest of the world. But I do not think so." Yet this is precisely what he did think, what every enthusiast and fanatic of his type thinks. In that overmastering, overwhelming assurance of knowing more than all the rest of the world, from whatever source, lies all their power—and all their weakness. In the greatest examples of the type the assurance proves itself well founded. The whole wide world comes in time to think as they did and so to justify their sacrifice and martyrdom. And it is here that more doubt arises in regard to Brown. Strong and vigorous as his intelligence was, it ran so much to the fantastic, and the conception, or misconception, of his final effort was so incoherently disastrous, that it is impossible to credit him with clear, commanding intellectual power. At the same time, it is equally impossible to describe him as in the stricter sense insane. Men who reason as consistently and will as insistently and act as persistently as he did, cannot be set apart as of diseased mind.

Yet to subordinate one's whole existence so completely to an all-engrossing purpose is beyond doubt abnormal. It absorbs life, drinks up the soul, sweeps the man out of the common course of daily interests and cares. And precisely in this absorption, in this excitement, lifting you above all earth, lies one of its charms. Such a nature as Brown's is born to struggle and fight, with something, with anything. He thought he loved peace. So he did, in theory. But the peace he loved was the peace you have to fight for. He was eager, restless. To be quiet was death, and to be comfortable, and even to be happy, was too like being quiet. "*I expect nothing but to 'endure hardness,'*" he said. He wanted nothing but to endure hardness. When he was enduring and resisting, he knew he was alive. One of the most instructive sentences he ever wrote was, "I felt for a number of years, *in earlier life, a steady, strong desire to die*; but since I saw any prospect of becoming a 'reaper' in the *great harvest*, I have not only felt quite willing to *live*, but have enjoyed life much." He probably enjoyed it most of all in prison, when only a few days of it were left him.

And besides the exhilaration of living for an ideal, there is the element of personal ambition. It is quite unnecessary to assume with Mr. Wilson that Brown was actuated entirely by vulgar greed and narrow personal vanity. Who shall say that the greatest of teachers and prophets is wholly exempt from the delight of feeling, if not saying, I did this thing? The man is worth little who has not the root of such ambition in him. Assuredly Brown had it. Did he not write of himself in youth, "He very early in life became ambitious to excel in doing anything he undertook to perform"? Did he not write in age, when treading on the heels of performance, "I have only had *this one opportunity*, in a life of nearly sixty years; and could I be continued ten times as long again, I might not again have another equal opportunity. God has honored but comparatively a *very small* part of mankind with any possible chance for such mighty and soul-satisfying rewards?"

Further, there is the delight of dominance, of controlling things and leading men, of feeling that your sole, petty, finite will is making at least a portion of the universe bow and bend before it. To some spirits the thought of this is hateful and the effort for it repulsive. To others it is the supreme joy of life. And such preeminently was Brown. He even carried the instinct so far as to find it difficult to obey when obedience is perhaps the deepest secret of final mastery. He could not work well with others. He must rule or be nothing. Both friends and enemies testify to this. "Very superstitious, very selfish and very intolerant, with great self esteem. . . . He could not brook a rival," says one witness cited by Mr. Wilson. "He doted on being the head of the heap, and he was," says Brown's brother-in-law. And his son's comment is equally decided: "The trouble is, you want your boys to be brave as tigers, and still afraid of you." While the father, meditating soberly in his Virginia prison, recognized the same weakness as clearly as any one. He writes of one of his sons, he "always has underrated himself; is bashful and retiring in his habits; is not (like his father) too much inclined to assume and dictate."

Thus, such a temper would like to control and dominate the world, but always for the world's good. In Brown at least there was not a trace of conscious desire to rule for evil or for

the gratification of any personal motive of mischief or cruelty. In spite of all he had endured and all the slights and injuries of men, he repeats over and over that no thought of revenge enters into any of his efforts. If the wicked must suffer through his action, it is because they are wicked, not because they have tormented him.

For back of all the personal elements, back even of the abstract desire to do good, there was always God, and in the study of such temperaments as Brown's the obscure, vast mystery of God must always be given the largest place. It is here, I think, chiefly that Mr. Wilson's shrewd analysis is at fault. In all the puzzles, in all the tangles, in all the inconsistencies of this strange man's life, especially in elucidating his plan, or lack of plan, before the attack on Harper's Ferry, we must look to God as the solution. He was a child of destiny, like Napoleon, but with him the destiny was the obvious, constant direction of God. "The Lord had directed him in visions what to do." "He scouted the idea of rest while he held 'a commission direct from God Almighty to act against slavery.'" "God had created him to be the deliverer to slaves the same as Moses had delivered the children of Israel." It is true that Brown several times spoke of himself as naturally sceptical. He was shrewd, hard-headed, far from disposed to accept all the fantastic quips and quirks of credulous superstition. But his intense insistence on what he did believe was all the firmer, and he did believe that God had predestined him from eternity to root out the curse from these United States, he did believe that God bade him do fierce and bloody things that that curse might be rooted out forever. In 1856 Mrs. Coleman asked him, "Then, Captain, you think that God uses you as an instrument in his hands to kill men?" And he answered, "I think he has used me as an instrument to kill men; and if I live, I think he will use me as an instrument to kill a good many more."

And if this sense of immediate direction from God, of being in the hands of God as a mighty agent for his purposes, for everlasting good, even sometimes through apparent evil, is the greatest motive for human accomplishment, is it not also the greatest source of human rapture? The joy it brings is the most

acute and exalted of all joys and the peace it gives is the deepest and the most enduring of all peace. So at least Brown found it, in his prison days, with death awaiting him, having failed in his great undertaking according to the judgment of men, but with the growing consciousness that apparent failure covered God's intention in a mightier triumph which could be made perfect only by his departure from this troubled world. He was "fully persuaded that I am worth inconceivably more to *hang* than for any other purpose." And in that persuasion his spirit found more contentment than it had known in all his restless sixty years. "Tell your father that I am quite cheerful; that I do not feel myself in the least degraded by my imprisonment, my chains, or the near prospect of the gallows. Men cannot imprison, or chain, or hang the soul." And when an effort was made to comfort him, he said, "I sleep peacefully as an infant, or if I am wakeful, glorious thoughts come to me, entertaining my mind."

It is one of the characteristics of this spiritual rapture that it is impelled to extend itself to others. None who feels the ecstasy of God upon him can refrain from communicating it, from striving passionately to make the world over and urging others to make it over also. And none strove thus with more ardor than John Brown. Something magnetic in his obsession touched men of the most diverse temperaments and powers, roused them to think and feel and work as he did.

Take his immediate followers, take that group of boys, or little more than boys, who gathered about him with unquestioning loyalty in the last desperate venture. They were not especially religious. Even Brown's own sons did not adopt his orthodox interpretation of the Bible. But every man of the company had imbibed the spirit of sacrifice, every man was ready to give his life for the cause their leader had preached to them, every man believed that what he said should be done must be done. "They perfectly worshiped the ground the old fellow trod on," said a Southern observer who had no sympathy with them except in the admiration of splendid courage.

Nor was it only over those who came under his immediate command that Brown exercised

¹ F. B. Sanborn, *Life and Letters of John Brown*, 1885.

the magnetism of inspiration and stimulus. After his capture and during his imprisonment he was surrounded by bitter enemies. But they grew to respect him and some apparently to have a personal regard for him. Even when they condemned his cause, they esteemed his spirit of sacrifice and his superb singleness of purpose. In the years before the crisis came he met some of the keenest and most intelligent men in the United States and they saw and felt in him a man of power, a man of will, a man of ideals above and beyond the common average and level of trivial earthliness. "No matter how inconsistent, impossible, and desperate a thing might appear to others, if John Brown said he would do it, he was sure to be believed. His words were never taken for empty bravado," wrote Frederick Douglass. That enthusiasts like Gerrit Smith should be carried away was perhaps natural. But Emerson was not an enthusiast, Thoreau was not, Theodore Parker was not. All these men spoke of Brown as one gifted for some divine purpose beyond mortality. All of them thanked the humble farmer and shepherd for that thrill of exaltation which is one of the greatest forces that can touch the heart. No one will call John A. Andrew an enthusiast. He was a practical man of the world, versed in the hard conduct of everyday affairs. Yet Andrew said: "Whatever might be thought of John Brown's acts, John Brown himself was right."

And the influence of such a man and such a life and such a death flowed out and on beyond the men who obeyed him, beyond the men who met him, to those who never knew him and had hardly even heard of him, to the whole country, to the wide world. The song that carries his name inspired millions throughout the great Civil War, it has inspired millions since, and John Brown's soul and sacrifice were back of the song. That is what Brown meant when he said, "I am worth inconceivably more to hang than for any other purpose." That is what men of his type achieve by their fierce struggle and their bitter self-denial and their ardent sacrifice. They make others, long years after, others who barely know their names and nothing of their history, achieve also some little or mighty sacrifice, accomplish some vast and far-reaching self-denial, that so the world, through all its doubts and complications and perplexi-

ties, may be lifted just a little towards ideal felicity. Whatever their limitations, their errors, whatever taint of earthly damage has infected their souls, it may justly be said that "these men, in teaching us how to die, have at the same time taught us how to live."

MARK TWAIN (Samuel Langhorne Clemens)

The autobiography of Mark Twain (Samuel Langhorne Clemens, 1835-1910), 1924, recalls the familiar story of his boyhood in Hannibal, Missouri, his life on the western frontier, and later travels over the United States and abroad. Its pages are alive with the vigorous humor, earthy philosophy, and rich experience which have fostered the immense popularity of his major works—The Innocents Abroad, 1869; Roughing It, 1872; Tom Sawyer, 1876; A Tramp Abroad, 1880; The Prince and the Pauper, 1882; Life on the Mississippi, 1883; The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, 1884; and A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, 1889. The vivid account of childhood impressions given in "Early Days" is significant not only for its wealth of sensory detail, but also as a revelation of the background material used particularly in the adventures of his most famous characters, Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn.

EARLY DAYS¹

It was a heavenly place for a boy, that farm of my Uncle John's. The house was a double log one, with a spacious floor (roofed in) connecting it with the kitchen. In the summer the table was set in the middle of that shady and breezy floor, and the sumptuous meals—well, it makes me cry to think of them. Fried chicken, roast pig; wild and tame turkeys, ducks, and geese; venison just killed; squirrels, rabbits, pheasants, partridges, prairie-chickens; biscuits, hot batter cakes, hot buckwheat cakes, hot "wheat bread," hot rolls, hot corn pone; fresh corn boiled on the ear, succotash, butter-beans, string-beans, tomatoes, peas, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes; buttermilk, sweet milk, "clab-

¹ From *Mark Twain's Autobiography*, Harper & Brothers. Copyright 1924, by Clara Gabrilowitsch.

ber"; watermelons, muskmelons, cantaloupes—all fresh from the garden; apple pie, peach pie, pumpkin pie, apple dumplings, peach cobbler—I can't remember the rest. The way that the things were cooked was, perhaps the main splendor—particularly a certain few of the dishes. For instance, the corn bread, the hot biscuits and wheat bread, and the fried chicken. These things have never been properly cooked in the North.—in fact, no one there is able to learn the art, so far as my experience goes. The North thinks it knows how to make corn bread, but this is mere superstition. Perhaps no bread in the world is quite so good as Southern corn bread, and perhaps no bread in the world is quite so bad as the Northern imitation of it. The North seldom tries to fry chicken, and this is well; the art cannot be learned north of the line of Mason and Dixon, nor anywhere in Europe. This is not hearsay; it is experience that is speaking. In Europe it is imagined that the custom of serving various kinds of bread blazing hot is "American," but that is too broad a spread; it is custom in the South, but is much less than that in the North. In the North and in Europe hot bread is considered unhealthy. This is probably another fussy superstition, like the European superstition that ice-water is unhealthy. Europe does not need ice-water and does not drink it; and yet, notwithstanding this, its word for it is better than ours, because it describes it, whereas ours doesn't. Europe calls it "iced" water. Our word describes water made from melted ice—a drink which has a characterless taste and which we have but little acquaintance with.

It seems a pity that the world should throw away so many good things merely because they are unwholesome. I doubt if God has given us any refreshment which, taken in moderation, is unwholesome, except microbes. Yet there are people who strictly deprive themselves of each and every eatable, drinkable, and smokable which has in any way acquired a shady reputation. They pay this price for health. And health is all they get for it. How strange it is! It is like paying out your whole fortune for a cow that has gone dry.

The farmhouse stood in the middle of a very large yard, and the yard was fenced on three sides with rails and on the rear side with high palings; against these stood the smoke-house;

beyond the palings was the orchard; beyond the orchard were the Negro quarters and the tobacco fields. The front yard was entered over a stile made of sawed-off logs of graduated heights; I do not remember any gate. In a corner of the front yard were a dozen lofty hickory trees and a dozen black walnuts, and in the nutting season riches were to be gathered there.

Down a piece, abreast the house, stood a little log cabin against the rail fence; and there the woody hill fell sharply away, past the barns, the corn-crib, the stables, and the tobacco-curing house, to a limpid brook which sang along over its gravelly bed and curved and frisked in and out and here and there and yonder in the deep shade of overhanging foliage and vines—a divine place for wading, and it had swimming pools, too, which were forbidden to us and therefore much frequented by us. For we were little Christian children and had early been taught the value of forbidden fruit.

In the little log cabin lived a bedridden whiteheaded slave woman whom we visited daily and looked upon with awe, for we believed she was upward of a thousand years old and had talked with Moses. The younger Negroes credited these statistics and had furnished them to us in good faith. We accommodated all the details which came to us about her; and so we believed that she had lost her health in the long desert trip coming out of Egypt, and had never been able to get it back again. She had a round bald place on the crown of her head, and we used to creep around and gaze at it in reverent silence, and reflect that it was caused by fright through seeing Pharaoh drowned. We called her "Aunt" Hannah, Southern fashion. She was superstitious, like the other Negroes; also, like them, she was deeply religious. Like them, she had great faith in prayer and employed it in all ordinary exigencies, but not in cases where a dead certainty of result was urgent. Whenever witches were around she tied up the remnant of her wool in little tufts, with white thread, and this promptly made the witches impotent.

All the Negroes were friends of ours, and with those of our own age we were in effect comrades. I say in effect, using the phrase as a

modification. We were comrades, and yet not comrades; color and condition interposed a subtle line which both parties were conscious of and which rendered complete fusion impossible. We had a faithful and affectionate good friend, ally, and adviser in "Uncle Dan'l," a middle-aged slave whose head was the best one in the Negro quarter, whose sympathies were wide and warm, and whose heart was honest and simple and knew no guile. He has served me well these many, many years. I have not seen him for more than half a century, and yet spiritually I have had his welcome company a good part of that time, and have staged him in books under his own name and as "Jim," and carted him all around—to Hannibal, down the Mississippi on a raft, and even across the Desert of Sahara in a balloon—and he has endured it all with the patience and friendliness and loyalty which were his birthright. It was on the farm that I got my strong liking for his race and my appreciation of certain of its fine qualities. This feeling and this estimate have stood the test of sixty years and more, and have suffered no impairment. The black face is as welcome to me now as it was then.

In my schoolboy days I had no aversion to slavery. I was not aware that there was anything wrong about it. No one arraigned it in my hearing; the local papers said nothing against it; the local pulpit taught us that God approved it, that it was a holy thing, and that the doubter need only look in the Bible if he wished to settle his mind—and then the texts were read aloud to us to make the matter sure; if the slaves themselves had an aversion to slavery, they were wise and said nothing. In Hannibal we seldom saw a slave misused; on the farm, never.

There was, however, one small incident of my boyhood days which touched this matter, and it must have meant a good deal to me or it would not have stayed in my memory, clear and sharp, vivid and shadowless, all these slow-drifting years. We had a little slave boy whom we had hired from some one, there in Hannibal. He was from the eastern shore of Maryland, and had been brought away from his family and his friends, halfway across the American continent, and sold. He was a cheery spirit, innocent and gentle, and the noisiest creature that ever was, perhaps. All day long he was

singing, whistling, yelling, whooping, laughing—it was maddening, devastating, unendurable. At last, one day, I lost all my temper, and went raging to my mother and said Sandy had been singing for an hour without a single break, and I couldn't stand it, and *wouldn't* she please shut him up. The tears came into her eyes and her lip trembled, and she said something like this:

"Poor thing, when he sings it shows that he is not remembering, and that comforts me; but when he is still I am afraid he is thinking, and I cannot bear it. He will never see his mother again; if he can sing, I must not hinder it, but be thankful for it. If you were older, you would understand me; then that friendless child's noise would make you glad."

It was a simple speech and made up of small words, but it went home, and Sandy's noise was not a trouble to me any more. She never used large words, but she had a natural gift for making small ones do effective work. She lived to reach the neighborhood of ninety years and was capable with her tongue to the last—especially when a meanness or an injustice roused her spirit. She has come handy to me several times in my books, where she figures as Tom Sawyer's Aunt Polly. I fitted her out with a dialect and tried to think up other improvements for her, but did not find any. I used Sandy once, also; it was in *Tom Sawyer*. I tried to get him to whitewash the fence, but it did not work. I do not remember what name I called him by in the book.

I can see the farm yet, with perfect clearness. I can see all its belongings, all its details; the family room of the house, with a "trundle" bed in one corner and a spinning-wheel in another—a wheel whose rising and falling wail, heard from a distance, was the mournfullest of all sounds to me, and made me homesick and low spirited, and filled my atmosphere with the wandering spirits of the dead; the vast fireplace, piled high, on winter nights, with flaming hickory logs from whose ends a sugary sap bubbled out, but did not go to waste, for we scraped it off and ate it; the lazy cat spread out on the rough hearthstones; the drowsy dogs braced against the jambs and blinking; my aunt in one chimney corner, knitting; my uncle in the other, smoking his corn-cob pipe; the slick and carpetless oak floor faintly mirroring

the dancing flame tongues and freckled with black indentations where fire coals had popped out and died a leisurely death; half a dozen children romping in the background twilight; "split"-bottomed chairs here and there, some with rockers; a cradle—out of service, but waiting, with confidence; in the early cold mornings a snuggle of children, in shirts and chemises, occupying the hearthstone and procrastinating—they could not bear to leave that comfortable place and go out on the wind-swept floor space between the house and kitchen where the general tin basin stood, and wash.

Along outside of the front fence ran the country road, dusty in the summertime, and a good place for snakes—they liked to lie in it and sun themselves; when they were rattlesnakes or puff adders, we killed them; when they were black snakes, or racers, or belonged to the fabled "hoop" breed, we fled, without shame; when they were "house snakes," or "garters," we carried them home and put them in Aunt Patsy's work basket for a surprise; for she was prejudiced against snakes, and always when she took the basket in her lap and they began to climb out of it, it disordered her mind. She never could seem to get used to them; her opportunities went for nothing. And she was always cold toward bats, too, and could not bear them; and yet I think a bat is as friendly a bird as there is. My mother was Aunt Patsy's sister and had the same wild superstitions. A bat is beautifully soft and silky; I do not know any creature that is pleasanter to the touch or is more grateful for caressings, if offered in the right spirit. I know all about these coleoptera, because our great cave, three miles below Hannibal, was multitudinously stocked with them, and often I brought them home to amuse my mother with. It was easy to manage if it was a school day, because then I had ostensibly been to school and hadn't any bats. She was not a suspicious person, but full of trust and confidence; and when I said, "There's something in my coat pocket for you," she would put her hand in. But she always took it out again, herself; I didn't have to tell her. It was remarkable, the way she couldn't learn to like private bats. The more experience she had, the more she could not change her views.

I think she was never in the cave in her life;

but everybody else went there. Many excursion parties came from considerable distances up and down the river to visit the cave. It was miles in extent and was a tangled wilderness of narrow and lofty clefts and passages. It was an easy place to get lost in; anybody could do it—including the bats. I got lost in it myself, along with a lady, and our last candle burned down to almost nothing before we glimpsed the search party's lights winding about in the distance.

"Injun Joe," the half-breed, got lost in there once, and would have starved to death if the bats had run short. But there was no chance of that; there were myriads of them. He told me all his story. In the book called *Tom Sawyer* I starved him entirely to death in the cave, but that was in the interest of art; it never happened. "General" Gaines, who was our first town drunkard before Jimmy Finn got the place, was lost in there for the space of a week, and finally pushed his handkerchief out of a hole in a hilltop near Saverton, several miles down the river from the cave's mouth, and somebody saw it and dug him out. There is nothing the matter with his statistics except the handkerchief. I knew him for years and he hadn't any. But it could have been his nose. That would attract attention. . . .

Beyond the road where the snakes sunned themselves was a dense young thicket, and through it a dim-lighted path led a quarter of a mile; then out of the dimness one emerged abruptly upon a level great prairie which was covered with wild strawberry plants, vividly starred with prairie pinks, and walled in on all sides by forests. The strawberries were fragrant and fine, and in the season we were generally there in the crisp freshness of the early morning, while the dew beads still sparkled upon the grass and the woods were ringing with the first songs of the birds.

Down the forest slopes to the left were the swings. They were made of bark stripped from hickory saplings. When they became dry they were dangerous. They usually broke when a child was forty feet in the air, and this was why so many bones had to be mended every year. I had no ill luck myself, but none of my cousins escaped. There were eight of them, and at one time and another they broke fourteen arms among them. But it cost next to nothing, for

the doctor worked by the year—twenty-five dollars for the whole family. I remember two of the Florida doctors, Chowning and Meredith. They not only tended an entire family for twenty-five dollars a year, but furnished the medicines themselves. Good measure, too. Only the largest persons could hold a whole dose. Castor oil was the principal beverage. The dose was half a dipperful, with half a dipperful of New Orleans molasses added to help it down and make it taste good, which it never did. The next standby was calomel; the next, rhubarb; and the next, jalap. Then they bled the patient, and put mustard plasters on him. It was a dreadful system, and yet the death rate was not heavy. The calomel was nearly sure to salivate the patient and cost him some of his teeth. There were no dentists. When teeth became touched with decay or were otherwise ailing, the doctor knew of but one thing to do—he fetched his tongs and dragged them out. If the jaw remained, it was not his fault. Doctors were not called in cases of ordinary illness; the family grandmother attended to those. Every old woman was a doctor, and gathered her own medicines in the woods, and knew how to compound doses that would stir the vitals of a cast-iron dog. And then there was the “Indian doctor”; a grave savage, remnant of his tribe, deeply read in the mysteries of nature and the secret properties of herbs; and most backwoodsmen had high faith in his powers and could tell of wonderful cures achieved by him. . . .

We had the “faith doctor,” too, in those early days—a woman. Her specialty was toothache. She was a farmer’s old wife and lived five miles from Hannibal. She would lay her hand on the patient’s jaw and say, “Believe!” and the cure was prompt. Mrs. Utterback. I remember her very well. Twice I rode out there behind my mother, horseback, and saw the cure performed. My mother was the patient.

Doctor Meredith removed to Hannibal, by and by, and was our family physician there, and saved my life several times. Still, he was a good man and meant well. Let it go.

I was always told that I was a sickly and precarious and tiresome and uncertain child, and lived mainly on allopathic medicines during the first seven years of my life. I asked my mother about this, in her old age—she was in her eighty-eighth year—and said:

“I suppose that during all that time you were uneasy about me?”

“Yes, the whole time.”

“Afraid I wouldn’t live?”

After a reflective pause—ostensibly to think out the facts—“No—afraid you would.”

The country schoolhouse was three miles from my uncle’s farm. It stood in a clearing in the woods and would hold about twenty-five boys and girls. We attended the school with more or less regularity once or twice a week, in summer, walking to it in the cool of the morning by the forest paths, and back in the gloaming at the end of the day. All the pupils brought their dinners in baskets—corn dodger, buttermilk, and other good things—and sat in the shade of the trees at noon and ate them. It is the part of my education which I look back upon with the most satisfaction. My first visit to the school was when I was seven. A strapping girl of fifteen, in the customary sunbonnet and calico dress, asked me if I “used tobacco”—meaning did I chew it. I said no. It roused her scorn. She reported me to all the crowd, and said:

“Here is a boy seven years old who can’t chew tobacco.”

By the looks and comments which this produced I realized that I was a degraded object, and was cruelly ashamed of myself. I determined to reform. But I only made myself sick; I was not able to learn to chew tobacco. I learned to smoke fairly well, but that did not conciliate anybody and I remained a poor thing, and characterless. I longed to be respected, but I never was able to rise. Children have but little charity for one another’s defects.

As I have said, I spent some part of every year at the farm until I was twelve or thirteen years old. The life which I led there with my cousins was full of charm, and so is the memory of it yet. I can call back the solemn twilight and mystery of the deep woods, the earthy smells, the faint odors of the wild flowers, the sheen of rain-washed foliage, the rattling clatter of drops when the wind shook the trees, the far-off hammering of woodpeckers and the muffled drumming of wood pheasants in the remoteness of the forest, the snapshot glimpses of disturbed wild creatures scurrying through the grass—I can call it all back and make it as real as it ever was, and as blessed. I can call

back the prairie, and its loneliness and peace, and a vast hawk hanging motionless in the sky, with his wings spread wide and the blue of the vault showing through the fringe of their end feathers. I can see the woods in their autumn dress, the oaks purple, the hickories washed with gold, the maples and the sumachs luminous with crimson fires, and I can hear the rustle made by the fallen leaves as we plowed through them. I can see the blue clusters of wild grapes hanging among the foliage of the saplings, and I remember the taste of them and the smell. I know how the wild blackberries looked, and how they tasted, and the same with the pawpaws, the hazelnuts, and the persimmons; and I can feel the thumping rain, upon my head, of hickory nuts and walnuts when we were out in the frosty dawn to scramble for them with the pigs, and the gusts of wind loosed them and sent them down. I know the stain of blackberries, and how pretty it is, and I know the stain of walnut hulls, and how little it minds soap and water, also what grudging experience it had of either of them. I know the taste of maple sap, and when to gather it, and how to arrange the troughs and the delivery tubes, and how to boil down the juice, and how to hook the sugar after it is made, also how much better hooked sugar tastes than any that is honestly come by, let bigots say what they will. I know how a prize watermelon looks when it is sunning its fat rotundity among pumpkin vines and "simblins"; I know how to tell when it is ripe without "plugging" it; I know how inviting it looks when it is cooling itself in a tub of water under the bed, waiting; I know how it looks when it lies on the table in the sheltered great floor space between house and kitchen, and the children gathered for the sacrifice and their mouths watering; I know the crackling sound it makes when the carving knife enters its end, and I can see the split fly along in front of the blade as the knife cleaves its way to the other end; I can see its halves fall apart and display the rich red meat and the black seeds, and the heart standing up, a luxury fit for the elect; I know how a boy looks behind a yard-long slice of that melon, and I know how he feels; for I have been there. I know the taste of the watermelon which has been honestly come by, and I know the taste of the watermelon which has

been acquired by art. Both taste good, but the experienced know which tastes best. I know the look of green apples and peaches and pears on the trees, and I know how entertaining they are when they are inside of a person. I know how ripe ones look when they are piled in pyramids under the trees, and how pretty they are and how vivid their colors. I know how a frozen apple looks, in a barrel down cellar in the wintertime, and how hard it is to bite, and how the frost makes the teeth ache, and yet how good it is, notwithstanding. I know the disposition of elderly people to select the speckled apples for the children, and I once knew ways to beat the game. I know the look of an apple that is roasting and sizzling on a hearth on a winter's evening, and I know the comfort that comes of eating it hot, along with some sugar and drenched in cream. I know the delicate art and mystery of so cracking hickory nuts and walnuts on a flatiron with a hammer that the kernels will be delivered whole, and I know how the nuts, taken in conjunction with winter apples, cider, and doughnuts, make old people's old tales and old jokes sound fresh and crisp and enchanting, and juggle an evening away before you know what went with the time. I know the look of Uncle Dan'l's kitchen as it was on the privileged nights, when I was a child, and I can see the white and black children grouped on the hearth, with the firelight playing on their faces and the shadows flickering upon the walls, clear back toward the cavernous gloom of the rear, and I can hear Uncle Dan'l telling the immortal tales which Uncle Remus Harris was to gather into his book and charm the world with, by and by; and I can feel again the creepy joy which quivered through me when the time for the ghost story was reached—and the sense of regret, too, which came over me, for it was always the last story of the evening and there was nothing between it and the unwelcome bed.

I can remember the bare wooden stairway in my uncle's house, and the turn to the left above the landing, and the rafters and the slanting roof over my bed, and the squares of moonlight on the floor, and the white cold world of snow outside, seen through the curtainless window. I can remember the howling of the wind and the quaking of the house on stormy nights, and how snug and cozy one felt,

under the blankets, listening, and how the powdery snow used to sift in, around the sashes, and lie in little ridges on the floor and make the place look chilly in the morning and curb the wild desire to get up—in case there was any. I can remember how very dark that room was, in the dark of the moon, and how packed it was with ghostly stillness when one woke up by accident away in the night, and forgotten sins came flocking out of the secret chambers of the memory and wanted a hearing; and how ill chosen the time seemed for this kind of business; and how dismal was the hoo-hooing of the owl and the wailing of the wolf, sent mourning by on the night wind.

I remember the raging of the rain on that roof, summer nights, and how pleasant it was to lie and listen to it, and enjoy the white splendor of the lightning and the majestic booming and crashing of the thunder. It was a very satisfactory room, and there was a lightning rod which was reachable from the window, an adorable and skittish thing to climb up and down, summer nights, when there were duties on hand of a sort to make privacy desirable.

I remember the 'coon and 'possum hunts, nights, with the Negroes, and the long marches through the black gloom of the woods, and the excitement which fired everybody when the distant bay of an experienced dog announced that the game was treed; then the wild scramblings and stumblings through briars and bushes and over roots to get to the spot; then the lighting of a fire and the felling of the tree, the joyful frenzy of the dogs and the Negroes, and the weird picture it all made in the red glare—I remember it all well, and the delight that everyone got out of it, except the 'coon.

I remember the pigeon seasons, when the birds would come in millions and cover the trees and by their weight break down the branches. They were clubbed to death with sticks; guns were not necessary and were not used. I remember the squirrel hunts, and prairie-chicken hunts, and wild-turkey hunts, and all that; and how we turned out, mornings, while it was still dark, to go on these expeditions, and how chilly and dismal it was, and how often I regretted that I was well enough to go. A toot on a tin horn brought twice as many dogs as were needed, and in their hap-

piness they raced and scampered about, and knocked small people down, and made no end of unnecessary noise. At the word, they vanished away toward the woods, and we drifted silently after them in the melancholy gloom. But presently the gray dawn stole over the world, the birds piped up, then the sun rose and poured light and comfort all around, everything was fresh and dewy and fragrant, and life was a boon again. After three hours of tramping we arrived back wholesomely tired, overlaid with game, very hungry, and just in time for breakfast.

VIRGINIA STEPHEN WOOLF

*The daughter of Sir Leslie Stephen, a distinguished scholar, Virginia Stephen Woolf (1882–1941) was educated at home and associated with many of her father's friends—Hardy, Stevenson, Ruskin, Boyce, Meredith. Quite at ease in a world of books and authors, she attracted attention in 1915 with *The Voyage Out*, a novel written when she was twenty-four. Other volumes followed: *Jacob's Room*, 1922; *Mrs. Dalloway*, 1925, *To the Lighthouse*, 1927; *The Waves*, 1931. Mrs. Woolf was not instinctively a fiction writer, however, and her critical studies are the true measure of her talent: *The Common Reader*, 1925; *The Common Reader, Second Series*, 1932; *A Room of One's Own*, 1929; and *The Moment and Other Essays*, 1948. "Miss Ormerod" represents an interesting fusion of techniques, for it is expository, critical biography handled as episodic narrative. Like all of Mrs. Woolf's criticism, it is notable for its keenness of perception, its logic, and its balanced judgment.*

MISS ORMEROD¹

The trees stood massively in all their summer foliage spotted and grouped upon a meadow which sloped gently down from the big white house. There were unmistakable signs of the year 1835 both in the trees and in the sky, for modern trees are not nearly so voluminous as these ones, and the sky of those

¹ From *The Common Reader* by Virginia Woolf, copyright, 1925, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

days had a kind of pale diffusion in its texture which was different from the more concentrated tone of the skies we know.

Mr. George Ormerod stepped from the drawing-room window of Sedbury House, Gloucestershire, wearing a tall furry hat and white trousers strapped under his instep; he was closely, though deferentially, followed by a lady wearing a yellow-spotted dress over a crinoline, and behind her, singly and arm in arm, came nine children in nankeen jackets and long white drawers. They were going to see the water let out of a pond.

The youngest child, Eleanor, a little girl with a pale face, rather elongated features, and black hair, was left by herself in the drawing-room, a large sallow apartment with pillars, two chandeliers, for some reason enclosed in holland bags, and several octagonal tables, some of inlaid wood and others of greenish malachite. At one of these little Eleanor Ormerod was seated in a high chair.

"Now, Eleanor," said her mother, as the party assembled for the expedition to the pond, "here are some pretty beetles. Don't touch the glass. Don't get down from your chair, and when we come back little George will tell you all about it."

So saying, Mrs. Ormerod placed a tumbler of water containing about half a dozen great water grubs in the middle of the malachite table, at a safe distance from the child, and followed her husband down the slope of old-fashioned turf towards a cluster of extremely old-fashioned sheep; opening, directly she stepped on to the terrace, a tiny parasol of bottle green silk with a bottle green fringe, though the sky was like nothing so much as a flock bed covered with a counterpane of white dimity.

The plump pale grubs gyrated slowly round and round in the tumbler. So simple an entertainment must surely soon have ceased to satisfy. Surely Eleanor would shake the tumbler, upset the grubs, and scramble down from her chair. Why, even a grown person can hardly watch those grubs crawling down the glass wall, then floating to the surface, without a sense of boredom not untined with disgust. But the child sat perfectly still. Was it her custom, then, to be entertained by the gyrations of grubs? Her eyes were reflective, even

critical. But they shone with increasing excitement. She beat one hand upon the edge of the table. What was the reason? One of the grubs had ceased to float: he lay at the bottom; the rest, descending, proceeded to tear him to pieces.

"And how has little Eleanor enjoyed herself?" asked Mr. Ormerod, in rather a deep voice, stepping into the room and with a slight air of heat and of fatigue upon his face.

"Papa," said Eleanor, almost interrupting her father in her eagerness to impart her observation, "I saw one of the grubs fall down and the rest came and ate him!"

"Nonsense, Eleanor," said Mr. Ormerod. "You are not telling the truth." He looked severely at the tumbler in which the beetles were still gyrating as before.

"Papa, it was true!"

"Eleanor, little girls are not allowed to contradict their fathers," said Mrs. Ormerod, coming in through the window, and closing her green parasol with a snap.

"Let this be a lesson," Mr. Ormerod began, signing to the other children to approach, when the door opened, and the servant announced,

"Captain Fenton."

Captain Fenton "was at times thought to be tedious in his recurrence to the charge of the Scots Greys in which he had served at the battle of Waterloo."

But what is this crowd gathered round the door of the George Hotel in Chepstow? A faint cheer rises from the bottom of the hill. Up comes the mail coach, horses steaming, panels mud-splashed. "Make way! Make way!" cries the ostler and the vehicle dashes into the courtyard, pulls up sharp before the door. Down jumps the coachman, the horses are led off, and a fine team of spanking greys is harnessed with incredible speed in their stead. Upon all this—coachman, horses, coach, and passengers—the crowd looked with gaping admiration every Wednesday all through the year. But today, the twelfth of March, 1852, as the coachman settled his rug, and stretched his hands for the reins, he observed that instead of being fixed upon him, the eyes of the people of Chepstow darted this way and that. Heads were jerked. Arms flung out. Here a

hat swooped in a semi-circle. Off drove the coach almost unnoticed. As it turned the corner all the outside passengers craned their necks, and one gentleman rose to his feet and shouted, "There! there! there!" before he was bowled into eternity. It was an insect—a red-winged insect. Out the people of Chepstow poured into the high road; down the hill they ran; always the insect flew in front of them; at length by Chepstow Bridge a young man, throwing his bandanna over the blade of an oar, captured it alive and presented it to a highly respectable elderly gentleman who now came puffing upon the scene—Samuel Budge, doctor, of Chepstow. By Samuel Budge it was presented to Miss Ormerod; by her sent to a professor at Oxford. And he, declaring it "a fine specimen of the rose underwinged locust," added the gratifying information that it "was the first of the kind to be captured so far west."

And so, at the age of twenty-four Miss Eleanor Ormerod was thought the proper person to receive the gift of a locust.

When Eleanor Ormerod appeared at archery meetings and croquet tournaments young men pulled their whiskers and young ladies looked grave. It was so difficult to make friends with a girl who could talk of nothing but black beetles and earwigs—"Yes, that's what she likes, isn't it queer?—Why, the other day Ellen, Mama's maid, heard from Jane, who's under-kitchen-maid at Sedbury House, that Eleanor tried to boil a beetle in the kitchen saucepan and he wouldn't die, and swam round and round, and she got into a terrible state and sent the groom all the way to Gloucester to fetch chloroform—all for an insect, my dear!—and she gives the cottagers shillings to collect beetles for her—and she spends hours in her bedroom cutting them up—and she climbs trees like a boy to find wasps' nests—oh, you can't think what they don't say about her in the village—for she does look so odd, dressed anyhow, with that great big nose and those bright little eyes, so like a caterpillar herself, I always think—but of course she's wonderfully clever and very good, too, both of them. Georgiana has a lending library for the cottagers, and Eleanor never misses a service—but there she is—that short pale girl in the large bonnet. Do go and talk to her, for I'm sure I'm too stupid, but you'll find

plenty to say—" But neither Fred nor Arthur, Henry nor William found anything to say—

"... probably the lecturer would have been equally well pleased had none of her own sex put in an appearance."

This comment upon a lecture delivered in the year 1889 throws some light, perhaps, upon archery meetings in the 'fifties.

It being nine o'clock on a February night some time about 1862, all the Ormerods were in the library; Mr. Ormerod making architectural designs at a table; Mrs. Ormerod lying on a sofa making pencil drawings upon grey paper; Eleanor making a model of a snake to serve as a paper weight; Georgiana making a copy of the font in Tidenham Church; some of the others examining books with beautiful illustrations; while at intervals someone rose, unlocked the wire book case, took down a volume for instruction or entertainment, and perused it beneath the chandelier.

Mr. Ormerod required complete silence for his studies. His word was law, even to the dogs, who, in the absence of their master, instinctively obeyed the eldest male person in the room. Some whispered colloquy there might be between Mrs. Ormerod and her daughters—

"The draught under the pew was really worse than ever this morning, Mama—"

"And we could only unfasten the latch of the chancel because Eleanor happened to have her ruler with her—"

"—hm-m-m. Dr. Armstrong— Hm-m-m—"

"—Anyhow things aren't as bad with us as they are at Kinghampton. They say Mrs. Briscoe's Newfoundland dog follows her right up to the chancel rails when she takes the sacrament—"

"And the turkey is still sitting on its eggs in the pulpit."

"—The period of incubation for a turkey is between three and four weeks"—said Eleanor, thoughtfully looking up from her cast of the snake and forgetting, in the interest of her subject, to speak in a whisper.

"Am I to be allowed no peace in my own house?" Mr. Ormerod exclaimed angrily, rapping with his ruler on the table, upon which Mrs. Ormerod half shut one eye and squeezed a little blob of Chinese white on to her high

light, and they remained silent until the servants came in, when everyone, with the exception of Mrs. Ormerod, fell on their knees. For she, poor lady, suffered from a chronic complaint and left the family forever a year or two later, when the green sofa was moved into the corner, and the drawings given to her nieces in memory of her. But Mr. Ormerod went on making architectural drawings at nine P.M. every night (save on Sundays when he read a sermon) until he too lay upon the green sofa, which had not been used since Mrs. Ormerod lay there, but still looked much the same. "We deeply felt the happiness of ministering to his welfare," Miss Ormerod wrote, "for he would not hear of our leaving him for even twenty-four hours and he objected to visits from my brothers excepting occasionally for a short time. They, not being used to the gentle ways necessary for an aged invalid, worried him . . . the Thursday following, the 9th October, 1873, he passed gently away at the mature age of eighty-seven years." Oh, graves in country churchyards—respectable burials—mature old gentlemen—D.C.L., LL.D., F.R.S., F.S.A.—lots of letters come after your names, but lots of women are buried with you!

There remained the Hessian Fly and the Bot—mysterious insects! Not, one would have thought, among God's most triumphant creations, and yet—if you see them under a microscope!—the Bot, obese, globular, obscene; the Hessian, booted, spurred, whiskered, cadaverous. Next slip under the glass an innocent grain; behold it pock-marked and livid; or take this strip of hide, and note those pululating lumps—well, what does the landscape look like then?

The only palatable object for the eye to rest on in acres of England is a lump of Paris Green. But English people won't use microscopes; you can't make them use Paris Green either—or if they do, they let it drip. Dr. Ritzema Bos is a great stand-by. For they won't take a woman's word. And indeed, though for the sake of the Ox Warble one must stretch a point, there are matters, questions of stock infestation, things one has to go into—things a lady doesn't even like to see, much less discuss, in print—"these, I say, I intend to leave entirely to the Veterinary surgeons. My brother—

oh, he's dead now—a very good man—for whom I collected wasps' nests—lived at Brighton and wrote about wasps—he, I say, wouldn't let me learn anatomy, never liked me to do more than take sections of teeth."

Ah, but Eleanor, the Bot and the Hessian have more power over you than Mr. Edward Ormerod himself. Under the microscope you clearly perceive that these insects have organs, orifices, excrement; they do, most emphatically, copulate. Escorted on the one side by the Bot or Warble, on the other by the Hessian Fly, Miss Ormerod advanced statelily, if slowly, into the open. Never did her features show more sublime than when lit up by the candour of her avowal. "This is excrement; these, though Ritzema Bos is positive to the contrary, are the generative organs of the male. I've proved it." Upon her head the hood of Edinburgh most fitly descended; pioneer of purity even more than of Paris Green.

"If you're sure I'm not in your way," said Miss Lipscomb, unstrapping her paint box and planting her tripod firmly in the path, "—I'll try to get a picture of these lovely hydrangeas against the sky—What flowers you have in Penzance!"

The market gardener crossed his hands on his hoe, slowly twined a piece of bass round his finger, looked at the sky, said something about the sun, also about the prevalence of lady artists, and then, with a nod of his head, observed sententiously that it was to a lady that he owed everything he had.

"Ah?" said Miss Lipscomb, flattered, but already much occupied with her composition.

"A lady with a queer-sounding name," said Mr. Pascoe, "but that's the lady I've called my little girl after—I don't think there's such another in Christendom."

Of course it was Miss Ormerod, equally of course Miss Lipscomb was the sister of Miss Ormerod's family doctor; and so she did no sketching that morning, but left with a handsome bunch of grapes instead—for every flower had drooped, ruin had stared him in the face—he had written, not believing one bit what they told him—to the lady with the queer name, back there came a book, *In-ju-ri-ous In-sects*, with the page turned down, perhaps by her very hand, also a letter which he kept at home

under the clock, but he knew every word by heart, since it was due to what she said there that he wasn't a ruined man—and the tears ran down his face and Miss Lipscomb, clearing a space on the lodging-house table, wrote the whole story to her brother.

"The prejudice against Paris Green certainly seems to be dying down," said Miss Ormerod when she read it.—"But now," she sighed rather heavily, being no longer young and much afflicted with the gout, "now it's the sparrows."

One might have thought that *they* would have left her alone—innocent dirt-grey birds, taking more than their share of the breakfast crumbs, otherwise inoffensive. But once you look through a microscope—once you see the Hessian and the Bot as they really are—there's no peace for an elderly lady pacing her terrace on a fine May morning. For example, why, when there are crumbs enough for all, do only the sparrows get them? Why not swallows or martins? Why—oh, here come the servants for prayers—

"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us. . . . For thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen—"

"*The Times*, ma'am—"

"Thank you, Dixon. . . . The Queen's birthday! We must drink her Majesty's health in the old white port, Dixon. Home Rule—tut—tut—tut. All that madman Gladstone. My father would have thought the world was coming to an end, and I'm not at all sure that it isn't. I must talk to Dr. Lipscomb—"

Yet all the time in the tail of her eye she saw myriads of sparrows, and retiring to the study proclaimed in a pamphlet of which 36,000 copies were gratuitously distributed that the sparrow is a pest.

"When he eats an insect," she said to her sister Georgiana, "which isn't often, it's one of the few insects that one wants to keep—one of the very few," she added with a touch of acidity natural to one whose investigations have all tended to the discredit of the insect race.

"But there'll be some very unpleasant consequences to face," she concluded—"very unpleasant indeed."

Happily the port was now brought in, the

servants assembled; and Miss Ormerod, rising to her feet, gave the toast "Her Blessed Majesty." She was extremely loyal, and moreover she liked nothing better than a glass of her father's old white port. She kept his pigtail, too, in a box.

Such being her disposition it went hard with her to analyse the sparrow's crop, for the sparrow, she felt, symbolises something of the homely virtue of English domestic life, and to proclaim it stuffed with deceit was disloyal to much that she, and her fathers before her, held dear. Sure enough the clergy—the Rev. J. E. Walker—denounced her for her brutality; "God Save the Sparrow!" exclaimed the Animal's Friend; and Miss Carrington, of the Humanitarian League, replied in a leaflet described by Miss Ormerod as "spirited, discourteous, and inaccurate."

"Well," said Miss Ormerod to her sister, "it did me no harm before to be threatened to be shot at, also hanged in effigy, and other little attentions."

"Still it was very disagreeable, Eleanor—more disagreeable, I believe, to me than to you," said Georgiana. Soon Georgiana died. She had however finished the beautiful series of insect diagrams at which she worked every morning in the dining-room and they were presented to Edinburgh University. But Eleanor was never the same woman after that.

Dear forest fly—flour moths—wcevils—grouse and cheese flies—beetles—foreign correspondents—eel worms—ladybirds—wheat midges—resignation from the Royal Agricultural Society—gall mites—boot beetles—announcement of honorary degree to be conferred—feelings of appreciation and anxiety—paper on wasps—last annual report—warnings of serious illness—proposed pension—gradual loss of strength—finally Death.

That is life, so they say.

"It does no good to keep people waiting for an answer," sighed Miss Ormerod, "though I don't feel as able as I did since that unlucky accident at Waterloo. And no one realises what the strain of the work is—often I'm the only lady in the room, and the gentlemen so learned, though I've always found them most helpful, most generous in every way. But I'm growing old, Miss Hartwell, that's what it is."

That's what led me to be thinking of this difficult matter of flour infestation in the middle of the road so that I didn't see the horse until he had poked his nose into my ear. . . . Then there's this nonsense about a pension. What could possess Mr. Barron to think of such a thing? I should feel inexpressibly lowered if I accepted a pension. Why, I don't altogether like writing LL.D. after my name, though Georgie would have liked it. All I ask is to be let go on in my own quiet way. Now where is Messrs. Langridge's sample? We must take that first. 'Gentlemen, I have examined your sample and find . . .'

"If anyone deserves a thorough rest it's you, Miss Ormerod," said Dr. Lipscomb, who had grown a little white over the ears. "I should say the farmers of England ought to set up a statue to you, bring offerings of corn and wine—make you a kind of Goddess, eh—what was her name?"

"Not a very shapely figure for a Goddess," said Miss Ormerod with a little laugh. "I should enjoy the wine though. You're not going to cut me off my one glass of port surely?"

"You must remember," said Dr. Lipscomb, shaking his head, "how much your life means to others."

"Well, I don't know about that," said Miss Ormerod, pondering a little. "To be sure, I've chosen my epitaph. 'She introduced Paris Green into England,' and there might be a word or two about the Hessian Fly—that, I do believe, was a good piece of work."

"No need to think about epitaphs yet," said Dr. Lipscomb.

"Our lives are in the hands of the Lord," said Miss Ormerod simply.

Dr. Lipscomb bent his head and looked out of the window. Miss Ormerod remained silent.

"English entomologists care little or nothing for objects of practical importance," she exclaimed suddenly. "Take this question of flour infestation—I can't say how many grey hairs that has grown me."

"Figuratively speaking, Miss Ormerod," said Dr. Lipscomb, for her hair was still raven black.

"Well, I do believe all good work is done in concert," Miss Ormerod continued. "It is often a great comfort to me to think that."

"It's beginning to rain," said Dr. Lipscomb.

"How will your enemies like that, Miss Ormerod?"

"Hot or cold, wet or dry, insects always flourish!" cried Miss Ormerod energetically sitting up in bed.

"Old Miss Ormerod is dead," said Mr. Drummond, opening *The Times* on Saturday, July 20th, 1901.

"Old Miss Ormerod?" asked Mrs. Drummond.

PHILIP GUEDALLA

"A branch of history devoted to the reconstruction of personal careers" is one definition of biography by Philip Guedalla (1889–1944). The interrelationship of biography and history is revealed in all his writings: *Supers and Supermen*, 1920; *The Second Empire*, 1922; *Palmerston*, 1926; *The Duke (Wellington)*, 1931; *The Hundredth Year*, 1940. "*Catherine Gladstone*" is from a series of portraits of Victorian ladies, both real and imaginary, and exhibits Guedalla's customary sparkle and irony as well as his great ability to depict character against the background of dramatic scenes. In biographical attitude he is reminiscent of Lytton Strachey (see II, 317); John Gunther's "inside" series of books bears resemblance to Guedalla's technique.

CATHERINE GLADSTONE¹

ANN. [Looking at him with fond pride and caressing his arm] Never mind her, dear. Go on talking.

Man and Superman

The air of 1839 was heavy with impending nuptials. In the bright dawn of a new reign matrimony swept over England like a genial epidemic, and the land was loud with banns. For the Queen's hand was asked and given; and, inspired by this event, a highly representative selection of her subjects moved with an almost simultaneous impulse to the altar.

¹ From *Bonnet and Shawl* by Philip Guedalla. Copyright, 1928, by Philip Guedalla. Courtesy G. P. Putnam's Sons and of Hodder & Stoughton, Ltd.

Disraeli and his Mary Anne, Victoria and her Albert, even Lord Palmerston and his delicious Emily prepared for felicity that season. Wedding bells were universal, and discreet Victorian *amorini* clustered in unseen jubilation above the happy couples. But the cloud of felicity hung nowhere lower or more richly charged than over Hawarden, where rumour positively announced a double wedding. At the Castle two maidens drooped and two young gentlemen paced the grounds together. The day broke at last, and one bridegroom—the more aquiline of the two—“rose in good time and read the Psalms.” The organ pealed; the Dean pronounced the blessing; hands thumped outside; the village children scattered flowers, and cottagers performed obeisances in all directions. For the tale of weddings was complete. The Queen betrothed, Lord Palmerston proposing marriage, Disraeli kneeling with Mrs. Wyndham Lewis at St. George’s, Hanover Square, were a mere prelude. Now Mr. Gladstone had received his bride; and the Victorian age was ready to begin.

I

The joyful air had a less joyful overture. For courtship, in Mr. Gladstone’s hands, became an almost thoughtful mode. The lovers met abroad. They had met before, but not as lovers—once at a dinner-party, where another guest was recalled (after a slightly suspicious interval) to have observed, “Mark that young man! He will one day be Prime Minister of England”; once in the echoing austerity of a Handel Commemoration; and one vacation when he was staying with her brother. He was a young Member of Parliament—Oxford (as some one said) on the surface, but Liverpool below. A priestly appearance was appropriately distinguished by peculiar views upon the Church; and he had positively written a book about them, which lingered in the press whilst he refreshed his classical allusions with a Sicilian holiday. She was the sister of a college friend. They met in Sicily; they met again in the same hotel at Naples, saw sights together, dined a good deal *en famille*, and scaled Vesuvius; and when he left, he entered “this Circean City” in his journal. The allusion, it may be presumed, was rather to the classics than to any enchantress whom he had met

there. For Circe was the last title which it would have occurred to Mr. Gladstone to bestow upon Miss Glynne.

They were all in Rome for Christmas; and his reflections took a less pagan turn as he heard mass with Manning in St. Peter’s, or recorded endless Italian sermons in his insatiable diary. But one day he walked with her in Santa Maria Maggiore; and as they looked about them at so much Roman splendour she was led to compare the meager equipment of English churches with the ungrudging comfort of English homes. “Do you think,” she asked the dark young man beside her, “we can be justified in indulging ourselves in all those luxuries?” She came, as he did, from a wealthy home. He was a Tory too; and the answer was, perhaps, a trifle awkward. But the wide-eyed question charmed him, and he recorded it in his all-seeing diary among notes of sermons with the ecstatic comment: “I loved her for this question—how sweet a thing it is to reflect that her heart and will are entirely in the hands of God. May He in this, as in all things, be with her.” For that winter day in Santa Maria Maggiore she had lit a candle that was to burn between them for sixty years.

His next move was less introspective. For the aspiration breathed in the privacy of his journal worked strongly on him; and Mr. Gladstone (even the skittish Muse of intimate biography attempts no more familiar address) offered marriage. He offered it with every scenic advantage that a romantic mood, combined with a classical education, could suggest. For he proposed by moonlight in the Colosseum. “The theme,” as Disraeli wickedly remarked of some one else, “the poet, the speaker”—and (may one add?) the setting—“what a felicitous combination!” But Miss Glynne, sadly negligent of a historic opportunity, was unresponsive. One more classical allusion had fallen flat; and the Colosseum, still conscious of its unenviable place in Christian tradition, made one martyr more. The martyred wooer left for England. But by a laudable precaution he took with him the brother of his fair executioner; and the sister’s letters breathed a suspicious interest in “Già” and “Già’s” book on Church and State and her meetings with “Già’s” great friend, Manning. She even employed this helpful medium to answer “Già’s” letters to herself

—“I appreciate very much the generous feelings which are expressed in his letter to me. . . . I cannot take Michael Angelo’s beautiful sonnet to myself, but the sentiments contained in it are so lofty, it was impossible not to read it without the greatest delight. Please read this yourself to Già, as I particularly want the message to be given exactly.” There was a watchful postscript: “Tell me how you get through my message to Già and any rebound. Nothing could express more honourable feelings and taste than the letter he wrote me.” Meanwhile the lover was confiding to his journal a dejected sense of his undue precipitation, stupidity, and general unworthiness, or attending committee meetings with undiminished zeal. That year the National Schools Enquiry claimed him, to say nothing of the committees of the Additional Curates Fund, the Church Commercial School, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and Church Building in the Metropolis, and the more secular affairs of the Carlton Club library and the Oxford and Cambridge Club. He even found time for a perusal of *Nicholas Nickleby*, which he found “very human; it is most happy in touches of natural pathos. No church in the book, and the motives are not those of religion.”

But Mr. Gladstone, though suffering from no lack of church, was human, too; and his meetings with Miss Glynne were vigorously resumed in London. They met at every hour and in every part of town—at dinner-time in Berkeley Square, on horseback, even at breakfast with the poet Rogers. His journal still desponded. Even his father became the recipient of his despairs. But one afternoon they all drove down to Fulham for Lady Shelley’s garden-party. There, Thames proving more auspicious than Tiber, his desire was granted. For as they walked apart, she yielded and “my Catherine gave me herself.” The mood of her surrender left nothing to be desired. She breathed a lofty piety; and in return the happy lover offered, as a *gage d’amour*, four lines of Dante. They even called on the Archbishop, whose official embrace was gracefully recorded by a proud *fiancé*. Then they plunged into a happy whirl of family visits, further complicated by a second engagement in the family. For her sister, after becoming hesitations, had yielded to the entreaties of Lord Lyttleton.

She was “much overcome, and hid her face in Catherine’s bosom; then they fled away for a little,” while Gladstone did his best to compose the agitated peer. So Hawarden was to have its double wedding. The couples drove about together, read aloud, or struggled with the endless complexities of sorting out the sisters’ property. There was so much to plan—their future lives, the fireworks, entertainments for the wedding guests, and eternity for one another, to say nothing of a pair of honeymoons and something for the village children.

The summer weeks flowed by, until the morning came when they were married in the mating world of 1839. The occasion, it must be confessed, was not lacking in emphasis. For the wedding carriages were followed to church by a notable procession recorded in the *Chester Chronicle*:

BAND.

THE HAWARDEN CASTLE LODGE OF ODD FELLOWS.

BAND.

HAWARDEN TEMPERANCE SOCIETIES.

BAND.

BENEFIT SOCIETIES.

BAND.

TRADESPEOPLE IN LARGE NUMBERS.

The bridegrooms, deafened but happy, drove in the sixth carriage; and it is scarcely to be wondered at that Lyttleton, always a little apt to be upset, broke down again. Even Gladstone was unstrung. His unerring diary attributed it to the music: indeed, it was a wedding march that might have shaken stronger nerves. So the happy couples were floated to felicity on floods of tears. For a slightly emotional piety seemed to prevail. Besides, in 1839 the age of sensibility was not so distant.

Even the honeymoon retained something of the dual character of that stupendous wedding. The smiling pairs were separated for a fortnight or so; and in an ecstasy of good intentions Gladstone, alone with Catherine, conversed on the fallibility of private judgments, on amusements, on the sanctity of time, on Sunday observance and the relation of charity to private expenditure. He prized his treasure highly; but in the very act he seemed to test her precious metal in the fires of improving conversation. At intervals he read the classics. But early the next month they were all back

at Hawarden once again for "a beautiful meeting between the sisters" and the less spiritual delights of a servants' ball; and then the wedding tour started in earnest. This time two bridal carriages left for the coast, two pairs embarked for Greenock, and as they drove through Scotland, the obedient Highlands unfolded all their romance. Sometimes, indeed, they went halfway to meet it in full Highland costume, dressed somewhat unaccountably in Lenox tartan, each bride upon a Highland pony and each bridegroom striding attentively beside a pony's head. There was a happy interlude behind the Scotch Baronial battlements of Mr. Gladstone's northern home, where every one played a great deal of chess and the family circle was completed by the arrival of an unmarried brother-in-law.

Then more excursions past Braemar and Ballater, still unconscious of the impending glories of Balmoral. But Lyttleton went south at last; and the Gladstones were alone for solitary chess and billiards—"C. and I in deadly conflict—too great an expenditure, perhaps, of thought and interest"—an endless leisure for reading Scott and Trench and Keble, to say nothing of the Bishop of London on Education and annotating Rothe's *Anfänge der Christlichen Kirche*.² A round of visits carried them to Christmas; and as the new year opened, they were moving into Carlton House Terrace. It was near the House of Commons, still nearer to the Carlton Club, and quite near enough to the Sunday school at Bedfordbury, where Mr. Gladstone taught. Rules were drawn up to guide the household, and the first bookcase was put up with due solemnity; the servants' library was chosen with immense deliberation; district-visiting began, and in the ordered virtue of her home Catherine prepared for sixty years with Mr. Gladstone.

2

The sequel was not quite expected. It was easy to foresee a lifetime of devotion, with two figures steadily receding down the long avenue of public life, and two heads growing gray together. For she was bound to fulfill the lyrical prophecy of their best man at the wedding and to

soothe in many a toil-worn hour
The noble heart that thou hast won.

Be thou a balmy breeze to him,
A fountain singing at his side;
A star, whose light is never dim,
A pillar, to uphold and guide.

(Such predictions are the natural penalty of inviting the Professor of Poetry to officiate as groomsman.) And the appointed rôle was nobly performed. Two generations of delighted Liberals watched the slim figure follow him down the cheering lanes of public meetings, steady him as he climbed on to innumerable platforms, tug off his coat, and sit demurely folding it as the big voice in front (with a suspicion of Liverpool about it) settled inimitably into the first, deep "Mr. Chairman and fellow-electors." The House of Commons knew what hand had filled the "short, thick-set pomatum-pot, oval in shape, four inches in height," from which those eloquent lips drew intermittent (and slightly mysterious) refreshments, when the cheers gave a convenient pause; and an eye raised to the Ladies' Gallery might catch a glimpse of an eager face that looked down at him, had watched unwaveringly, indeed, since distant evenings before the Corn Laws were repealed, when "I found myself nearly upon Lady John Russell's lap, with Lady Palmerston and other wives," and was still watching as he crouched, half a century away, beside the faithful Morley for a spring at the apostate Chamberlain. A Member once inquired why a small section of the brass grille in front shone so brightly, and was informed by the attendant that Mrs. Gladstone's hand had polished it. She pinned the tea-rose in his coat, contrived the endless complications of a migratory politician's life (a niece testified to "the maneuvers behind his back, the extraordinary dodges to smooth his path or oil his wheels or cocker up his health"), and was occasionally suspected of offering a hand to be shaken under his cape by eager (but exhausting) Liberals.³ The Professor of Poetry had invited her to be her husband's fountain and (for the matter of that) his star. But far more often she performed the humbler, though more use-

³ term applied to the radical Whig party elements in the early part of the nineteenth century, and later applied to the Whig party as a whole.

² *Origins of the Christian Church*.

ful, functions of his screen. There was so much to screen him from—his own unrelenting energy, hosts of supporters, anxious colleagues, and the dreadful irregularities of a politician's diet. One day in the Midlothian election they paid a call just after lunch; tea was produced but, as he had a speech to make at three o'clock, respectfully declined; a cautious hand replaced it on the hob; the meeting opened, and the electors were informed of Lord Beaconsfield's iniquities at becoming length; the afternoon wore on, until the orator returned and the same hospitable hand offered the dubious refreshment of the same tea. Queen Eleanor, one feels, would have consumed the deadly brew and fallen at her husband's feet. But Mrs. Gladstone was more skillful. She let him take the cup, then sidled past and got it somehow underneath her mantle; a sudden admiration of the view drew her towards a window; and the Lowland landscape drank the Lowland tea. Small wonder that he adored her for a lifetime passed (as an artful hand has diagnosed it) in "feeding a god on beef-tea."

Not that her *role* was secondary. When she married, a cheerful friend offered congratulations on having some one at last to write her letters for her, and she made endless use of him—"Could you order some tooth-brushes and brushes *cheap* for the Orphanage?" "Have you remembered to peep in on the Miss D.'s? Only open the boudoir door and you will find them." "Did you manage the flowers (or grapes) for Mrs. Bagshawe? She lives quite near Portland Place." "If you have *time*, please bring down a little present for my three-year-old godchild; there are beautiful Bible prints at the Sanctuary, Westminster, and also we want a common easel from the same place, 5 s. to 8 s. 6 d., to hold the big maps for the boys." Schoolroom easels, Bible prints, tooth-brushes, flowers, and the socially desolate Miss D.'s were all to be fitted somehow into the hunted life of a Prime Minister along with Ireland, Egypt, and the Liberal Party, to say nothing of an uneasy Sovereign, Homer, and his own perpetual anxiety on points of Church discipline.

So Catherine was more—much more—than a lieutenant, a mere blank numbered oval in the group of supporters clustering behind him. A less distinctive wife, one feels, must have developed features of her own in the solitude of

life with a public man, who habitually worked fourteen hours a day when in office. But even without this discipline Catherine was quite unmistakable. The two sisters of the famous double wedding had been known as "the Pussies"; and her engaging quality seems to survive in the affectionate persistence of the nickname. For, mated with the sterner figure of "Uncle William," she remained "Auntie Pussy" to two devoted generations; and young people do not nickname great-aunts for nothing. Besides, she was a Glynne. The Glynnes were good; but under all their goodness there resided a redeeming streak of oddity. It expressed itself in a cheerful inconsequence, in an abiding taste for nicknames; and portmanteau words and the etymological eccentricities of an elaborate family dialect. Catherine was an arch-Glynne, presiding imperturbably over vast Biblical migrations of innumerable Lyttleton and Gladstone children and their countless attendants, that ended in triumph on the devastated floors of Hawarden or Hagley, where a sardonic brother once recorded "those great confluences of families which occur among the Glynnes," with the agreeable turmoil of "seventeen children there under the age of twelve, and consequently all inkstands, books, furniture, and ornaments in intimate intermixture, and in every form of fracture and confusion." That was her *milieu*; and she revelled in it. Whilst Uncle William went on his majestic way, she ran breathlessly behind in a splendid whirl of nephews, missed appointments and wild domestic improvisations. A devoted niece admired "the astonishing intricacy of her arrangements, the dovetailing and never-ceasing attempts to fit in things which could and wouldn't fit." She told him once to his marble face what a bore he would have been, if he had married somebody as tidy as himself. The contrast was complete—the People's William, intent upon his stately progress, and his Catherine careering alongside with her gay assumption that "you were always ready to fall in with her and dovetail, and swap butlers, and supply meals, beds, cooks, or carriages at a moment's notice," and her endless trail of little notes, written on scraps with broken pens and generously smudged, each "i" without its dot, each "t" uncrossed, and every period lacking its punctuation.

The very contrast made her more adorable than ever. With Mr. Gladstone sitting by, how could any one resist the sweet inconsequence that once feelingly complained to a startled lunch-party at Windsor of the intolerable tedium of captivity for a notorious burglar—"But, oh, how dull he will be—conceive the utter dullness of a prison"? Hers were the bright, uncomprehending eyes that looked up at some one asking if, when she said that a will had been "declared vull," she meant "null and void"; and hers the soothing explanation, "No, dear, I always say *vull*." That, surely, was the school at which Mr. Gladstone learned to sing plantation melodies or waltz swaying round the hearthrug to the disreputable catch, sung in duet:

A ragamuffin husband and a rantipoling wife,
We'll fiddle it and scrape it through the ups and
downs of life.

The song and dance are highly unlike him, but they were very like Catherine indeed. For, to their great advantage, she remained more Glynne than Gladstone.

Not that levity was, in any sense, her principal component. For the Glynnes were good; and goodness, for Catherine, meant something more than formal piety or regular attendance at public worship. That element, though, was never absent, as a startled modern may infer from the delicious entry in her diary—"Engaged a cook, after a long conversation on religious matters, chiefly between her and William." But her piety found its expression far beyond family prayers and the servants' hall. Sometimes, indeed, her benefactions had a fine inconsequence, with ailing school-teachers packed suddenly to Hawarden, wings hurriedly carved off at table and despatched post-haste to the village—"and let it go hot to Miss R. at once." But her good works could be no less systematic. The House of Charity in Soho and the Newport Market Refuge were her abiding passion, with Mrs. Gladstone for their indomitable almoner, committee-man, and maid of all work. She was perpetually dashing off from Downing Street into the East End or to her Convalescent Home at Woodford. Startled electors saw the Premier's wife alight from third-class carriages at inexplicable stations; and her days were a delirious round of work-

houses and hospitals, punctuated by official parties and her endless vigil in the Ladies' Gallery. They missed her once from Hawarden after morning prayers, she was off after a typhoid case, had put her patient in the train, took her to Chester, left her installed in hospital, and was home in time for tea and an enormous charade of grandchildren. Small wonder that when some one at the height of the cholera epidemic saw a lady busily engaged in bundling babies in blankets out of the London Hospital and asked who she might be, the reply was "Mrs. Gladstone." Some of the rescued infants even found their way to the august official attics of Downing Street. But she was still busy in the stricken wards, walking them quite as fearlessly as any Lady with a Lamp.

Hawarden itself was full of her—her Orphanage, that had its birth in the Lancashire cotton famine, and the smaller home first opened for a knot of London cholera orphans. She even partnered her husband in the heroic embarrassments of his rescue work. A startled friend once asked him, "What will Mrs. Gladstone say if you take this woman home?" And the deep voice replied, "Why, it is to Mrs. Gladstone I am taking her." For when they reigned there, Downing Street saw strange encounters; and her urchins matched his Magdalenes. Each of the partners led the other on. She even led him into the composition of lyric verse upon minor items of intelligence from her Convalescent Home. He was a secret rhymer of considerable ardour and pursued with gusto the poetical problems presented by the style of Messrs. Parkins & Gotto and the no less unusually named bride of his last Home Secretary—

And by sea or by land, I will swear you may far go
Before you can hit on a double for Margot.

But few Liberals believed their monumental leader capable of greeting with verse his wife's announcement of the happy news from Woodford that "the cook and the Captain are going to be married." He received the intelligence with one of his deepest silences; and she complained in wifely irony, "Oh, of course, you are too full of Homer and your old gods and goddesses to care—stupid of me!" But an abstracted hand had reached for a sheet of paper;

the pen—the slightly portentous pen of *The State in its Relation with the Church and Bulgarian Horrors* and *The Question of the East*—moved rapidly across the page; and she was presented with a highly indecorous epithalamium, from its spirited opening,

The Cook and the Captain determined one day,
When worthy Miss Simmons was out of the way,
On splicing together a life and a life,
The one as a husband the other as wife—

to its riotous conclusion,

Miss Simmons came home and she shouted, "O dear!

What riot is this? What the d—! is here?
If the Cook and the Captain will not be quiescent,
What can I expect from each Convalescent?"

Fol de rol, fol de rol, fol de rol la.

He wrote it just to please her; and one may guess from the lighthearted scrap how much she helped to keep him human.

For, after all, he was the greatest (and, perhaps, the best) of her good works. There was his life to be arranged, his innumerable comings and goings to be contrived, the silence to be kept round his work, and all the blows to deaden which adversaries aim at politicians, though they mostly fall upon their wives. It was easy enough to stand smiling at his side and watch the cheering crowds—and then he could always think of such wonderful things to say to them, although she had to stop him once until the reporter could get near enough to hear. But the silent hours were not so easy, when he was sleeping badly, or the incorrigible Disraeli seemed to flourish like the green bay-tree, or his own friends began to fail him. That was when she stretched a shielding arm above him to take the blows; and he began to fear them more for her than for himself. For the unvarying alternation of success and failure had hardened him. His life had been like a deep excavation where defeat and recovery seemed to lie in geological layers, one above the other, over an almost geological period of time.

But one day the alternation ended, since recovery is more than doubtful for a resigning Premier of eighty-three; and as he faced the prospect, he became a coward for her. For when his last Cabinet had rounded with infinite solicitude upon the leader whom they

were prepared to worship, but not to follow, he dared not take home the news. Morley must tell her; Morley was always serviceable; he should sham tired himself and pass the ball to Morley. So Morley dined at Downing Street, and after dinner, while the others played backgammon, she led the anguished Morley to a sofa, "behind an ornamental glass screen." Mr. G. had told her that he was fagged and that Morley would report how matters stood. And there on the sofa, while the two old gentlemen rattled their dice beyond the screen, he told her. She was quite unprepared, as the blow fell.

Not quite the last, though. She was alone for that in the vast Abbey, where she left him; and the watching crowds saw the hope living in her eyes, as "she went in like a widow, she came out like a bride." And in a year and a few weeks she joined him, dutiful as ever, with a murmur of "I must not be late for church." Indeed, she was not.

WILLIAM BOLITHO

In his introduction to *Twelve Against the Gods*, 1929, William Bolitho (1890–1930) wrote, "We are born as wasteful and unremorseful as tigers; we are obliged to be thrifty, or starve, or freeze. We are born to wander, and cursed to stay and dig." Bolitho rebelled against such a pattern of existence and lived a strenuous life in his native South Africa, as a stoker, on the battlefields of France, and as European traveler. A prolific biographer, his trenchant, satirical, and erratic prose is at its best in "Christopher Columbus," one of a dozen portraits of "society's pests and benefactors." His style may often be irritating (one critic has said that Bolitho was "touched off as easily as a rocket" and another that he "writes like a man from Mars"), but it is always exhilarating.

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS¹

These explorations of Alexander and Casanova² left one enticing corner in the dark. That

¹ From *Twelve Against the Gods* by William Bolitho. Copyright, 1929, by Simon and Schuster, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Simon and Schuster, Inc.

² Chapters One and Two of *Twelve Against the*

is, the nature—if not the personality—of their supreme adversary in the game, the unseen dealer of the hand they and Society lost. At times, certainly, even under the thick white-wash Plutarch laid over the world's greatest exploit, I fancy we made out a wavering shadow, the traits of a presence that is neither Greek nor Persian, nor human at all; luring, spoiling, finally strangling with generosity the young demi-god. So, the track of his campaigning that he scribbled in impatience over the map of Asia, Europe, Africa, seems (unknown to him) to be in a planchette writing, the script of destiny. This Destiny, Chance, Fate, Providence, lover and assassin of adventurers, each of whose names is an unproved theory and surmise, whatever its true identity, seems nearer because not so solemn, in the life of the Venetian rake. That midnight catastrophe in the Palace of Cardinal Acquaviva at Rome, that letter dropped by the canal-side by the old Senator, the rusty lock he found in the attics of the Piombi leave the curtain quaking, and a slight pricking of the scalp, even if we have not Casanova's own naive mysticism.

Then can our profane search hope for a nearer sight of the mystery, of whom all adventure is the religion? This Fate, which all languages have made feminine, perhaps because it is usually impolite to women—can we hope to find out something about it that is more than allegory, more even than the venerable and inspired empiricisms of Casanova's two ancient mottoes? She finds the way. She leads the willing, deserts the laggard. That is already deeper than the gallows comfort of *Kismet*. But not enough.

In short: to give as full a value as possible to the cryptogrammatic that recurs in all these equations: to try a theology of adventure. The only direction is in the attentive study of Fate's own choice; to observe the life of one of her undoubted favorites as a front-row stall watches the left hand of the juggler to surprise the trick. Without hope of spying out more than the subtlest of hints—but if to the elements Alexander and Casanova taught us, we can add

Gods deal with Alexander the Great and Casanova. Other chapters concern Mahomet, Lola Montez, Cagliostro, Charles XII of Sweden, Napoleon I, Catiline, Napoleon III, Isadora Duncan, and Woodrow Wilson.

a trifle more that is simply probable about her likes and dislikes, and the tactics by which our invisible Third satisfies them in her most unguarded moments, it will advance the interest of our enquiry. For then we shall be able, contentedly, to watch the struggle from the point of view of the adventurer himself, who always sees in front of him not a calculus, but a Personality, or at any rate a calculus more psychological than mathematical.

No one could be better for this slightly sacrilegious enterprise than the admirable Christopher Columbus, Colon, Coullon, Colombo—whatever his real name was—the luckiest and most hallowed adventurer on the whole roster. So lucky that the adventurous nineteenth century proposed to make him a saint. Modern research has robbed him of that honor; it has substituted a thorough-paced adventurer for the plaster dummy we were used to.

He was born somewhere about the date Constantinople fell into the hands of the Turks, that is 1453, the date at which the Middle Ages really end. Like so many other men of fate and history, he was entirely a man of his time. By which is invariably meant, a man with all the prejudices of the time that preceded him. The Middle Ages summed themselves up in this man, as ages do, just as they were out of date. Without any unnecessary trespass on a subject which has been staked and barbed-wired by innumerable schools, authors, sects, principalities and powers of thought and propaganda, this mediaevalism which Christopher had was noticeable in two principal respects: in his habit of underestimation, and in his indomitable snobbery. First, like the age that expired in giving him birth, his standard of measurement was the "stature of a man," so that he believed everything in heaven and earth, (and especially the Heavens and the Earth) to be smaller, slower, simpler, nearer, than they are. This error of scale is the peculiarity, sometimes the attractively infantile charm, of the Middle Ages, the secret both of its art and its dreary Crusading, both unrivalled in their own style. The stars are only a few cubits away, Asia is round the corner, the world is not old and will die young; Aristotle knew everything.

The Renaissance is in one respect the scrap-

ping of this mediaeval yardstick: the sudden revelation of size; the emigration from Lilliput to Brobdingnag. Christopher, responsible more than any other one man for the change, all his life stuck to the old standard. The concrete results in his career, good and bad, we shall come to in their time. Psychologically, this embedded wrongness worked as a very potent and practical variety of "pragmatic fiction," giving him the calm confidence, the faith of a child, as the books have it, which is necessary to great enterprises, and almost impossible for an imaginative man to get from the cold water of mere truth.

Above all then he was an imaginative man; and a snob—which is an imaginative and poetical form of ambition. Not one of Thackeray's poor snobs, who were after all merely professional men living beyond their means. A mediaeval snob, to whom a pedigree was not only necessary, but inflated with poetry and mystical virtue. For a weaver's son in 1453 would not only find the whole social system hostile to his ambition, but probably would never muster the courage himself to rival his betters, those descendants of the rough-necks of William the Conqueror, or of the lousy soldiery of Charlemagne. There was an inhibitory taboo about these gentlemen with the pretty names, which a Columbus of Genoa could only exercise, as Christopher did, by pretending to be one of them, and believing it himself.

For this, mainly, he has been called a "pathological liar" by those who like medical names for our little weaknesses. If it is pathological to tell lies in the only way they are convincing, that is, after swallowing them oneself, Columbus had the disease, and not only in this matter of his birth and family. So well did he and his innocent accomplice, his son-biographer, humbug the world, that to this day there is a lively controversy; one school firmly holding that he was a Galician Marrano, or converted Jew; another that he was an Italian but from a Spanish family; the third and most respectable (which I propose to follow) that he was the Christopher, son of Domenico Colombo and his wife Suzanna Fontanarossa, baptized in the little church of St. Stephen at Genoa. All these hypotheses must make him turn in his grave, for his own story, held to throughout his life, was

that he was the scion of Count Colombo, of the Castle of Cuccaro in Montferrat, descended by legend from the Roman general Colonius, who conquered Mithridates, King of Pontus, and brought him prisoner to Rome. To this fable (which after years of practice he certainly managed to believe) he added the fantastic details that two other noble seigneurs, one a Gascon admiral, named William de Casenove Coullon, and another, George Bissiprat Palæologus, nicknamed Columbus Pyrata, also an admiral, a Greek, and a direct descendant of the Emperor of Constantinople, were his first cousins.

Domenico Colombo was a weaver in a small way, who started a wineshop, added to it a line in cheese and finally went bankrupt—a serious crime in the commercial republic of Genoa—and was imprisoned for some time. Christopher had some advantageous story that he had received a good education, with a specialty of Latin. He must have learned rapidly, for at the age of eleven he was apprenticed to his father, after the custom. As Domenico's affairs, if not his fortune, grew, Christopher and his brother Bartholomew helped him by acting as commercial travellers, or more properly cloth-hawkers, *carminatores*, taking round the products of their evening's work to the farmhouses of the environs. The type has not yet died out. Through the whole of north Italy and as far as Marseilles and Avignon in Provence these young Italians, half pedlars, half counter-hands, are sometimes to be met with, pushing their bicycles desperately over the dusty hill roads, with a mountain of cloth-rolls on their backs. Sweating, serious youths, frantic savers, the men who put the verdigris on the copper coinage.

When Christopher was about eighteen, he seems to have been admitted, or forced, to a part in his father's speculations. There is a bill extant in which he and his father admit a debt of ten dollars for wine sold to them conjointly by Pietro Bellesio of Porto Maurizio. In the same year poor Domenico was jailed for debt; Christopher had to stand security for what he owed to Girolamo del Porto, wholesale cheesemonger, before his father was released.

Three years later, he makes his first voyage. Not as seaman, still less as admiral of King René's fleet, "on a punitive expedition against

the Sallee rovers of Algiers," as he claimed (the last such expedition took place when Christopher was nine years old). But quite naturally in the capacity in which he had been brought up: as travelling salesman, with a cargo of soft goods to the Levant. His employers were the great firm of Di Negro and Spinola, one of the biggest houses of Genoa, and the holders of the wheat monopoly. In 1476, in the same employment, he set sail for England, a great consumer of Genoese stuffs. The convoy was attacked off Cape St. Vincent by twelve war-ships under the leadership of Casenove-Coullon, precisely the same whom Christopher later adopted. Three Genoese ships were burnt, the rest, on board one of which was Christopher, were saved by Portuguese and brought to Lisbon.

Di Negro and Spinola had a branch there. Christopher and the rest of the 120 survivors were looked after, and in the autumn of the same year embarked on a second convoy, which, more fortunate, arrived at its destination. On this trip Christopher wove a daring story about a visit to the Ultima Thule, beyond Iceland, and for centuries the commentators tried to reconcile this with the probable economic conditions of the Greenland market for Genoese soft goods. Today the kindhearted suggest that he might have touched at Galway, where there was a small business done in his line.

The next year he is back in Lisbon, first at work in the Di Negro store, afterwards in the Centurione concern, licensed to share in the new trade down the African coast, and in the newly discovered islands of Madeira and the Canaries. There is a document dated 25th of April, 1479, relative to a lawsuit about Madeira sugar, in which Christopher, now twenty-six years old, is cited as a witness. He had apparently been recalled to Genoa in the affair. The notary asks him the curious question "Who do you think ought to win this case?" Christopher answers discreetly "Those who are in their right." He declares that he possesses one hundred florins, and that he must leave next day for Lisbon.

There is a great deal of distortion in the popular idea (mostly due to Columbus himself, and the biographers he inspired) of the contemporary situation of cosmography of which the discovery of America was the result. In

place of a world of noodles and cowards bogged in the theory that the world was flat and the Atlantic infested with demons, which Columbus put right at one dazzling stroke, with the genius of Galileo doubled with Copernicus, and something also of the parlor-conjuror, according to the legend of the egg, the truth is more interesting. No one in the world of pilots, scientists, merchant-adventurers, in which Columbus had elected himself a member by his marine stories, believed that the world was flat. In 1481 the Pope himself, Sylvius Piccolomini, Pius II, announced as a truism: *Mundi formam omnes fere consentiunt rotundam esse*. "Virtually everyone is agreed that the world is round." As for the supernatural terrors of travel, there was no greater believer in them than Columbus. His bedside books all his life were the *Voyages* of Sir John de Mandeville, and the *Picture of the World* by Pierre d'Ailly, in which fantastic taste in reading he was far behind the times. The mariners of Lisbon and Genoa, and their employers, the great trading houses, which had depots or agents as far as Pekin, had a very fair idea of the Old World, as their maps and portulans show; it was Columbus, not they, who saw sirens, looked for the fiery wall of the Earthly Paradise and annotated with his own hand Mandeville's yarns of dog-faced men, vegetable lambs, and cities tiled with gold. The geographical dogma of Columbus from which to the end of his life and experience he never departed is summed up by himself in his journals: the world consists of Europe, Africa and Asia (therefore about half its real size). It is composed of six parts of dry land and one part water exactly.

The disagreement between his view and that current at the time lay therefore in this: both naturally ignored the existence of the Americas, but whereas Columbus believed that Asia was quite a short westward journey from Portugal, the rest were certain that it was terribly far. Between the two continents in this direction all were agreed there must lie certain islands—peopled with saints and immortals according to Christopher's books—like Madeira, or the Azores in the more current opinion.

In a far more serious degree the Columbian legend misrepresents, underestimates, the contemporary seaman. So far from standing the

egg of exploration on its end, except as to success, Columbus was but one of a whole population of explorers. The coast towns of Portugal, Liguria, and Spain were full of hardy seamen lit up with the ambition to explore. Every port was full of stories of what was almost daily being done to enlarge the map, and of plans for new raids on the unknown. It is difficult to estimate, for a curious reason, the true amount of what was known, but it was certainly enough to place Christopher's favorite reading in the class of children's books to a large élite. The Portuguese in particular had been trading far down the Guinea coast; they had discovered Madeira, the Canaries, and organized a profitable trade with them. Four years before the expedition of Columbus, Bartholomew Diaz rounded the Cape of Good Hope and turned back in sight of the passage to India. But besides all the notable discoveries that had been published there were undoubtedly others, the secret of which was the strictly guarded property of the great trading houses and banks, which then as now were not in the habit of blabbing all they knew, that they had gained in the course of the exercise of their business and which was of use to them. It is from scraps of information dropped by the returned captains and agents of such concerns, eagerly shared by the savants of the day, that those wonderful maps were drawn, which amidst a banal and bookish distortion often show details amazing and mysterious in their apparent anachronism. Thus while Columbus was still hawking his father's cloth over the Genoese foothills, Pietro Toscanelli, the learned Florentine, had already inserted the island of Cuba, under the name of Antilia, on his best maps.

The impulsion behind this exploration-fever, which Columbus contracted, was partly the rising power of the Mohammedan Turks, which barred off the Eastward land route which the Italian trading Republics had used for generations; and the European shortage of gold. Economic historians have settled in their own mysterious way that there was no more than twenty million dollars' worth of gold in the whole of Europe at this time, coinage and ornament, and this was rapidly diminishing, by natural usage and by the drain of such eastern trade as remained. The only sources of supply were washings in Saxony and Spain, so miserable

that they were abandoned forever after the discovery of America. An irresistible trinity of reasons pushed states and financiers to try the minutest possibilities of finding new supplies of the metal: to pay for a decisive war against the Turk and the Mohammedans, to pay for the Eastern luxury trade (portable goods of European manufacture with a market in the highly civilized East in any case lacking) and for the currencies. The prize of discovery was in short the salvation as well as the mastery of Europe; and in less comprehended form it infected seamen, captains, and, like Columbus, those whose connection with ships was more or less indirect.

Those who—under the influence of Christopher's own lies and bluff, to be sure—have made him out the solitary captain of his age, the great navigator standing in lonely advance of the science, imagination, and daring of his times have missed his real glory. It is that of all adventurers: to have been the tremendous outsider. Until his last voyage it is very doubtful if he could even use a quadrant. He knew no more of navigation than any able-bodied seaman. He was incapable by himself of fixing the latitude and longitude of his discoveries. At the time of his first expedition he had no experience of commanding men, and he never learnt it. By his own policy he had cut himself off from any national advantage; if ever a man played a solo hand against the social universe it was Columbus.

So his was the triumph of the Unqualified, the stigma of the adventurer that ordered Society hates the worst, the man who pushed his way in and did what others with the right were soberly, competently, conscientiously planning to do; the patron example of the crank and the amateur. In her dealings with him Fate snubbed all the worths and competencies.

We have seen his social policy. Its first fruits were to win him a rich or at any rate a society bride. On the strength of his "family connections" he was introduced in Lisbon to Filepa Moniz Perestrello, whose father was governor of Porto Santo, the companion island of Madeira. Perestrello owed this position to the fact that his two sisters were the mistresses of Cardinal de Noronha, Archbishop of Lisbon, all-powerful at court; the nobility Christopher deceived was therefore highly genuine. His father-in-law had a good library of travel books.

Christopher used it; on the margin of Pius II's *Historia rerum ubique gestarum*, the compendium from which the declaration on the roundness of the world is taken, is written in his hand: "India produces many things, aromatic spices, quantities of precious stones, and mountains of gold." The corner boys of Florence knew as much; in their "Song of the merchants who return home rich" the chorus went:

From the far region of Calcutta
With toil and strict attention to business
We have brought here many sorts of spices.

*Dagli estremi confin di Callicutta
Con diligenza e cura
Abbiam più spezierie di qua condutte.*

In his copy of the *Imago Mundi*³ is the deeper and less true remark written by his own hand: "Between Spain and the beginning of India there is a small sea, navigable in a few days." From this doctrine he never departed.

With his new relations, his situation improved and he left the soft goods business. Naturally he visited Porto Santo, and probably made long stays there and at Madeira. There is no evidence for his story that he went as far as the Guinea coast; his ideas of its position on the map were erroneous; his statements on the matter were not convincing. But in the Islands, he was in the clearing-house of sea-stories. The favorites were about Antilia and Brazil. Antilia was an archipelago due west where seven bishops emigrated in the Moorish invasion of Spain and founded seven cities. Brazil was the land where the rare woods grew that from time to time washed up on the beach of Ireland and Madeira. Charles V of France had his library in the Louvre wainscoted with this jetsam.

Many attempts had already been made to reach Antilia by the Portuguese before their efforts were concentrated on the doubling of Africa. There is a story that one actually reached it; the sole survivor of the expedition, which foundered off Porto Santo, was the one-eyed pilot, Alonzo Sanchez, who died without revealing the find in the house of Christopher's father-in-law. There is a still more mysterious story lost behind the fact that on the map of

the Genoese cosmographer Bedaire, made in 1434, Antilia is marked, and ticketed: *Isola novo scoperta*. Newly-discovered island. Two years later on in another Italian map by Andrea Bianco, it occurs again with the new detail: *Questo he mar di Spagna*. Here is Spanish sea.⁴

It is in this period and this ambiance that we should look for the crystallizing process in Christopher's will. It never arrived at the rigid simplicity of Alexander's, nor even of Casanova's. His course forks between India and Antilia, his motor is sometimes gold, sometimes honors. Sometimes—remarkably, at the end—he steers for neither, but the Earthly Paradise; in the same mood he wants all the profits to go to a new crusade. But this latent ambiguity is concealed by the pretentious habit of silence he assumes, like all successful bluffers, in the intervals of his patter.

Through his wife's family, he easily arrived at a private interview with the King of Portugal, João II. We must see him in his dealings with the great as an artist in persuasion. He was tall and blond, with prematurely grey hair, freckled and ruddy, slow and ceremonious in his gestures, a profuse talker, but by some special trick of intonation or delivery, quite avoiding any impression of loquacity. The world will never learn to beware of these stately gentlemen with the fixed calm look straight in your eyes, who never joke, and never waver, profuse in cautious hints and allusions, but practised in rightly placed silences—which is why the confidence trick is still running. Strangely enough, his charm seems to have failed completely with the lower classes—sailors particularly disliked him, and—as the only explanation for many incidents of his voyages—despised him. But with kings he was always irresistible. João listened to him with the greatest attention and respect; only the terms of the projected expedition westwards stood between them.

These terms of Columbus are an integral part of the story, the cornerstone of the plot. They were the unvarying crux of his effort, in which all minor indecisions were lost. To João,

⁴ "Compare and put in relation with the 'secret pioneering' spoken of before, the fact that Madeira figured on an Italian map dated 1351 under the translated name of Wood Isle, that is, fifty years before the recognized discovery." (Bolitho's note.)

³ fifteenth-century book on cosmography by Cardinal Pierre d'Ailly (1350-1420).

to the Spanish grandees, to Queen Isabella herself, he addressed one unabated demand: The title of Grand Admiral of the Oceanic Sea (the Atlantic), a life Vice-royalty on all lands discovered, ten per cent of the whole commerce of such lands, the right to nominate governors; all this hereditary and in perpetuity. Christopher's projected voyage was not without precedent, but nothing in the whole history of exploration remotely resembles his price. Set alongside the poverty and unoriginality of his plan, which only the most skilful use of reticences could conceal, the entire lack of qualifications to be entrusted with its performance, his social circumstances in a time when the leadership even of a single ship (and he asked for a fleet), was the monopoly, in fact, and sometimes, as in Venice, by law, of members of the great houses; this demand for a reward which in the case of a success meant the setting up of a power rival to that of the State itself is an audacity that lights up the man like an arc-lamp. If it was a bluff, the first step in some bargain to be beaten out, it would have been sublime; but the King and Fate would have laughed and kicked the presumptuous higgler back to his counter and his yardstick. As it was, Columbus neither here nor at any other moment, even when it was all that stood in the way of his enterprise, even when he was in despair, in spite of the arguments and entreaties of all the noble friends who believed in him, ever abated one comma of it. Yes, greed, too, has its heroism.

The King, then, refused; but politely, cautiously. Notice that Columbus simply by his unwavering exorbitance had raised his mediocre proposition to one that had the dignity of being out of reach of the principal sea-power of the age. And Fate's interest in him ceases to have the air of a fantastic joke. She is being pursued by a great man.

In 1484 his wife died, and he took his little son Diego to Spain. The seven years that follow are the most affecting part of the legend. Columbus in his rough robe of serge, holding the darling child by the hand, while stupid kings, ignorant nobles, jealous courtiers, rebuff him, and mock them; many an Academy artist has been tempted by the subject, and many a provincial art gallery has inherited the work. The modern historian must retouch a little. In the

first place, we do not know why Columbus left Lisbon. It could not have been the polite refusal of the King, for as the future shows, Columbus is not a man to take a first rebuff.

5 From certain indications there is suspicion that the real reason was an unpaid debt—one of those he asks his heirs to settle so discreetly in his will. Possibly something worse, as the letter of João he received in Spain hints. The King 10 offers him a safe-conduct in these queer terms: "And as you may have a fear of our law courts, because of certain things hanging over you, by this present letter we guarantee you that in your coming, your stay and your return you 15 will not be arrested, imprisoned, accused, subpoenaed, nor prosecuted in any affair, whether civil or criminal or whatsoever nature it may be." Furthermore, contrary to his auto-martyrology, it is certain that he was neither starved 20 nor snubbed in the long period between his arrival in Spain and the start of the expedition. On the contrary, at every turn he finds influential friends, subsidies, hospitality, dukes, great ecclesiastics, financiers like Luis de Santangel, 25 court favorites of the highest quality—an unrivalled record of personal salesmanship. Darling Diego, too, must move out of the picture, for in the first month of arrival, the boy is taken off his hands by the learned, kindly and 30 fashionable Franciscan monastery at Palos.

Like all the exploits of art, Columbus's feat of selling himself in Spain has a graduated construction, a building up of strokes of luck, and the bridging of them by effort and a good technique. I have touched on the latter, its kernel 35 of self-hypnotization, its deft use of taciturnity—the genius of salesmanship. He had three inner fortresses which bastioned each other: he would never reduce his demands, explain his plan, or reveal the circumstances of his birth. 40 The first step in his campaign was to capture the sympathy of the enthusiastic monks of Palos, by his piety, his talk, and his pretensions, in that order. At crises of his life, Columbus 45 put on the robe and girdle of the Third (lay) Order of St. Francis. He arrived in Spain in this rig-out. The Prior had been the confessor of Isabella and still kept her reverence. Through him Columbus walked straight into the sanctuary of the Court, meeting first the Duke of 50 Medina Sidonia, the wealthiest landed proprietor in the kingdom, and an exalted patriot.

As such he refused to contribute to any other enterprise as long as the war against the Moors of Granada, then in its last stages, was not completed. But he put the convincing stranger on his pay roll, and sent him on to his friend and cousin, the Duke of Medina Celi. This grandee at once and steadfastly approved of the plan, or rather of Columbus, and would have immediately fitted out a fleet for him. The demands of the adventurer were all that stood in the way. They were insuperable, for no mere subject, even the Duke of Medina Celi, could give him what he required, the title of Admiral, the Vice-royalty and the rest. The meeting is in 1485. Until 1487 Columbus lived at the duke's expense, in the duke's palace. From January, 1487, in addition, his friends obtained for him a grant from the civil list of the queen.

Meanwhile he manœuvred through all these powerful friends for an interview with the queen. In the interstices of his intriguing, he learnt the *Imago Mundi*, and Sir John Mandeville, by heart; and also seduced a girl of good family—but poor—Beatriz Enriquez de Arana, from whom he had Ferdinand, his future biographer, or canonizer.

Christopher's relations with women bear no comparison with those of the libertine Casanova. Only three women are known to have occurred in his life; the first brought him a small fortune, which he spent, and in none of his numerous documents is there any further mention of her. The second, poor Beatriz, remained in poverty, even when he was rich; the third was that horrifying creature, Isabella, Queen of Spain. Naturally this third affair was strictly platonic, and since chastity is the best policy for company promoters, it brought him most profit. The woman who destroyed Granada, appointed Torquemada to tighten up the Inquisition, and disputed with him for the spoils of heretics, confiscated and banished 1,700,000 families of Jews, made the auto-da-fé a national institution, and in the act of death drew her feet under the coverlet and refused to have them anointed because of her modesty, needs no praise from me of her religion, statesmanship, and virtue. Rasputin or Barnum could never have met such an obstacle as this woman (with perhaps Torquemada standing behind her chair), and her miserly sharp of a husband,

Ferdinand; from the first moment Columbus conquered them both. But again his terms stood in the way.

This is the time, the years that followed, in which the hero stood on his price, that he afterwards spoke of "full of cold and hunger, rejected by all the world, with only a poor monk to befriend me." Sometimes he stayed with the Duke, sometimes he was at court, asking for new interviews and standing by the Admiralship, the Vice-royalty, and the ten percent. At one time Cardinal Mendoza, "the third King of Spain," intercedes for him, and counsels acceptance of his price, at another it is the great lady and courtesan, Beatriz de Babadilla, or the Duke, or Luis Santangel, the *marrano* financier, whom even Torquemada could not touch; or finally the powerful order of St. Francis, for which both Columbus (and the queen) had a special devotion. At intervals of life at court and palace he returns to Palos to stay at their monastery, and to turn over their library, seeking for citations from the ancients to use in his next interviews.

It was on one of these retreats that he discovered Martin Alonzo Pinzon. There was at Palos a family of ship-owners and navigators of that name, headed by three brothers, of whom Martin was the eldest, as well as the richest and most powerful. Now Martin also had a project of exploration; to document himself he had even made a visit to Rome to consult the most celebrated cosmographers. He had returned with a precious map, with Antilia marked on it. His idea was to reach that island, revictual, and go further on, as far as the Zipangu (Japan) of Marco Polo, where as old "Milione" says: "They have gold in the greatest abundance, its sources being inexhaustible, but the king does not allow of it being exported. To this circumstance we must attribute the extraordinary richness of the sovereign's palace, according to what we are told by those who have access to it. The entire roof is covered with a plating of gold. . . ." Martin seems to have already determined to make the voyage (on his own account: profit or loss), before he met Columbus. The monks arranged a meeting of the influential and mysterious stranger and the hard-bitten local magnate. They arrived at some agreement; the terms and reasons for which we know little beyond

the vague accusations made later by Columbus, and the evidence of two witnesses in the lawsuit over the disposition of his property after his death. The first is Arias Pinzon, son of Martin, who deposed that "he knows that the said accord was for the halving of all the advantages the queen might give. The said Martin Alonzo showed Columbus the said document (the Italian map) which was a great encouragement to the Admiral. They came to an agreement and Martin Alonzo gave him money for his next trip to court." The seaman Alonzo Gallego of Huelva confirms this and says: "I declare I heard Columbus say to Pinzon, Mr. Pinzon, let us make this voyage together, if we succeed and by God's will find land, I promise you by the Royal crown to share with you like a brother." If anyone asks if this was the truth, what advantage Christopher could have brought to Pinzon, it is the same mystery as that of all his negotiations; a mystery of salesmanship, one of the many irrationalities which are the commonplaces of experience, and only surprise us when they figure in histories.

In January, 1492, Granada, the last citadel of the Moors in Spain, fell; the dream of Christendom came true; Isabella hastened to wipe out a civilization in advance of her own. It was the moment for the last effort; Columbus simultaneously feigned a visit to the King of France, called in the influence of all his dupes, and so landed the contract. He was granted 1,000,000 maravedis, which Thatcher translates as a little more than 6,000 dollars—the whole expedition cost 1,167,542 maravedis, say 7,200 dollars, the fundamental debt of the Americas to Europe. Let us avoid a too easy humor about the sum; all this seven years' ado was not about this nothing, but the extortionate terms of the new Admiral, which would have meant (but for the sly insertion of a lawyer's cheat in his contract, which entirely escaped him), that until the years of revolution, the whole of Spanish America would have paid the ten per cent levy to his heirs, and have had to put up with a dynasty of Columbian quasi-emperors.

With this magnificent, though double-bottomed document, Christopher returned to Palos. Now that he had the money and a requisition for ships, his first step was natu-

rally to drop Martin Alonzo. The business code is as immutable as the Moral Law itself. But a stupid difficulty arose, one of those insignificant omissions for which the most illustrious organizers have to pay: the seamen of Palos refused to serve Columbus. In all his high diplomacy he had left out these humble fellows, who with unanimity considered him a faker, a landlubber and a bluffer, and conscientiously refused to embark on any ship he captained, even as far as the next port. He was well known in the little town—perhaps he had not been so guarded in his talk and claims as before the Royal Commissions of experts; there was not a single volunteer.

His first impulse in this humiliating impasse was idiosyncratic: he proposed to make up the crews with convicts. But luckily for him this left untouched the grave problem of navigators, and Columbus was as ignorant as an amateur of the science. So he was forced to make terms with the grinning Pinzons, who agreed to bury the past. They immediately fitted out their two best ships, the Santa Maria, and the Niña, and found another, the Pinta. Columbus is rather hard to understand on the subject of these vessels; at the beginning of his journal he praises them highly, but later, especially after he had run one of them ashore, he states that they were old, dilapidated and unfit for the sea. The former view is probably correct, for the three brothers took part in the expedition and were perhaps not likely to risk their own skins for meanness or spite. The largest—the size of a large brig—was the Santa Maria; the Admiral chose this for himself and obtained the friend of the Pinzons, the celebrated Juan de la Cosa, as navigator and captain. Martin went on the Pinta with his brother Francisco, and the smallest, the Niña, was commanded by the youngest of the brothers, Vicente. With them in all 90 sailors, officials of the queen to keep the score, and an interpreter, a learned Jew named Luis de Torrez, who knew Hebrew, Latin, Greek, Arabic, Coptic and Armenian. He was to act as intermediary when they arrived at the country of the Great Khan, that is, the Emperor of China.

The preliminaries therefore are shaped by the ambiguity of the Admiral's aim: where is he steering? To Antilia, the Indies, or the realm of the Grand Khan? Or to Zipangu, as

Pinzon urged? If it is to Antilia, what is the use of the interpreter? If to the Indies or the Empire of the Great Khan, how will his privileges of Viceroy advantage him? For no one in that age could imagine that the heritor of Genghis and Kubla could be forced or persuaded (by ninety seamen!) to allow any annexations.

It is probable that the Admiral himself does not know; but although there is this contradiction in his will—it is a trident, if not a spear, Westward Ho, and come what may. Perhaps there is a bias to foresee another Madeira—or the seven years' insistence on the Vice-royalty must be a mental tetanus.

In any case they sailed, (3rd August, 1492) at eight in the morning, and instead of setting a course due westward turned south-westward to the Canaries. Wherever his object it was somewhere on the 28th degree, and with a fine air he assures his men that it is exactly seven hundred leagues due west.

The narrative of the voyage, summarized by Las Casas (unfortunately the original has disappeared) is the prettiest document in the literature of discovery. For this Columbus, if you have not yet suspected it, was a poet. Even if his journal had been completely lost, the concourse of all the characteristics is irresistible—his snobbery, his deceptive power, especially over himself, his exorbitancy—very different to that of the hard business man, his essential outsiderism. America was discovered by a poet; Fate would not allow such a prize to go to anyone less, or better. Read how he describes a shooting star on the night of the 11th of September—"At the beginning of this night, we saw falling from heaven, four or five leagues off our ships, a marvellous branch of fire." 18th September—"This day the sea was as calm and quiet as under the bridges of Seville." 20th September—"The air was sweet and very pleasant; only lacked the song of nightingales; and the sea was as smooth as a river." 8th October—"The air this day was so perfumed that it was a delight to breathe." On the night of the 8th of October he writes, "All night we heard birds flying over." Let him who still doubts, discover the whole journal for himself.

Three features of the march of events need to be commented. For the Admiral's yarn that

every day he falsified the log book "so that the men might not know how far they had come and be discouraged," which has been uncritically admired by generations of historians as a ruse equal to any of Ulysses', it is perhaps enough to say that it is incredible and could only occur to the imagination of a land-lubber. Christopher did not and could not take the reckoning; if he had he could not have deceived his officers, and the mystification is contradicted by another passage in which he says he gave instructions to the pilots "not to sail at night after seven hundred leagues had been reached." The next matter is the legendary account of the crew's mutiny and his promise to find land if they would give him three days more. The only passage in his journal which can relate to this is as follows: "10 October. This day the seamen complained of the length of the voyage and did not want to go further. But the Admiral (he writes in the third person) comforted them as best he could in giving them a good hope of the profits they would get." It is the last of a series of references to the bad state of *morale* which the Admiral notes. But this grumbling was only aboard the Santa Maria; aboard the other two ships the utmost peace reigned from beginning to end. We have also the evidence of the sailors. Francisco Vallejo, one of them and no lover of the Admiral, in his evidence in the case cited states that the Admiral complained once to Martin Pinzon, who drew his vessel alongside; the ship-owner replied hardily: "All is quiet on my ship and on the Niña. If you have trouble please hang half a dozen of your men, or if you like I and my brothers will come aboard and do it for you."

The third matter is still more curious. On the same day—6th, and not the 10th, according to the same witness—Columbus asked counsel of Martin Alonzo on the course. Can it be that he himself was discouraged? They had come the 700 leagues and no land sighted. Martin replied that they must have missed Antilia, and urged that they should turn south-west to proceed towards Zipangu. "But that was much further." The admiral hesitated; then agreed, still disputing the distance, which he said could not possibly be much further than a few leagues (as by his theory Antilia was off the Coast of China). The course was changed accordingly.

At two in the morning of the 12th October, 1492, a seaman on the look-out, one Rodrigo, perceived in the moonlight a white tongue of sand. He fired the bombard that had been prepared, yelling Land! Land! They immediately furled sails, until daylight. America was discovered.

It was certainly one of the Bahamas, which, the poetry of Columbus makes it for ever impossible to decide, though Watling Island is for some official reason the favorite. Hear the Admiral's description: "I feared at first because I had under my eyes an immense mountainous rock which completely surrounds that Island. It forms however a hollow and a port capable of holding all the fleets of Europe, but the entrance is very narrow. It is certain that there are many depths in this break-water, but the sea has no more motion there than the water at the bottom of a well." In another passage he states that "There are gardens there, the most beautiful I have ever seen in my life, and sweet water in profusion." Let the inhabitants of the Bahamas, not one of which is surrounded by a reef, let alone an immense mountain, decide which had the honor of exalting the poetic imagination of the Admiral to such heights.

From this unidentifiable *San Salvador*, as he named it, the fleet went on to other islands, finding everywhere charming natives, parrots, cotton loin-cloths and hammocks, but no gold, and no spices. The Admiral relates long and complicated conversations he had with them, one a very touching theological discussion—on sin and redemption—all done by signs. At last they came to Cuba (28th October). Here he is profoundly perplexed: he decides at first that it is certainly Zipangu—"the gold-tiled palace must be the other side." He writes afterwards however: "I believe that all these countries are nothing but lands at war with the Grand Khan of China. It is certain that this place the natives call Cuba, where I am, is opposite Quinsay and Zayto (Hang-kow and Amoy), one hundred leagues from each and both of these two cities. This I know because the sea comes here in a different manner from what it has done until now. . . ."

In this opinion he sent the learned Jew—let those whom the genealogy of colonization amuses remember that a Jew was there but no Englishman or German—Luiz de Torres, with

the Queen's letter to the Emperor of China, to try to deliver it. After a vain search in the jungle of the island for the monarch, he returned and was scolded. But on second thoughts the Admiral began to imagine that this Cuba must be India and not Japan or China; so he was much less circumspect in looking for gold; India notoriously being governed by less terrible monarchs than the Grand Khan. Every native met with was asked by signs for a gold mine; everyone was understood to reply that there was a big one, but further on. One was successful in communicating, by nods and waves, that a whole island in solid gold was near by, but could not make himself understood as to the exact direction. The peaceful Caribs performed all the ritual explorers expect; they took them for gods, and cried with delight when the invariable beads and mirrors were produced. The Admiral was delighted with them. He consigned that since "they were very docile and easy to persuade," a glorious field of missionary effort was open.

Meanwhile Pinzon took the *Pinta* and cruised on his own account. On reflection the Admiral liked this independence little, and by the third day of absence became a prey to the gloomiest thoughts, seeing himself betrayed, and fearing that Pinzon had simply returned to Spain to rob him of the glory of the discovery. But shortly afterwards the *Pinta* sailed back into sight of the *Santa Maria*. The ship-owner apologized for his absence and announced that he had found Antilia. They followed him and landed on the island of Haiti. Here, owing to carelessness, the *Santa Maria*, the Admiral's ship, ran aground and could not be refloated. After many efforts, they decided to dismantle it and build with the wood-work a fort they named *Natividad*, alongside a native village. The natives here also were extremely friendly and soft, their women were pleasing, so no difficulty was found in getting forty volunteers to stay, while the Admiral and the rest returned to Spain to fit out a new expedition.

On the way home they ran into a great storm off the Canaries; the *Pinça* and Martin Pinzon were driven out of sight of the Admiral's ship. His suspicions returned; the last pages of his Journal are an eloquent jeremiad on treachery. But the *Niña* weathered the storm, put in to Lisbon, and finally arrived at Palos, the 15th

March, 1493, after seven months of navigation. Pinzon had not yet arrived. This may have been to the Admiral the crowning joy of his life; he organized a procession from the dock of Palos right across Spain to Barcelona, where the Sovereigns held court. At the head the tall grey Christopher, mum and impassive, with his Franciscan robe, surrounded by bearded and armoured sailors. His followers carried great bamboos, and alligator skins. Next came a platoon of Indians carrying screaming parrots in cages, and smiling, and making the sign of the cross. This circus entered into every Church they met on the way, and stopped to pray at every wayside cross.

And so he arrived at Court; Isabella and Ferdinand allowed him to sit down at their right hand, and great lords asked him for his word for their sons. In the midst of it he showed his careful attention to detail by reminding the Queen of the life pension of 600 dollars a year she had offered to the first man to sight land; Rodrigo's the Mariner's claim was brushed aside in the Admiral's favor, and he bestowed it all upon Beatriz, the mother of his Fernando. It was all she ever had out of him.

Pinzon arrived two or three days after Columbus, in a Galician port. Unfortunately for his memory he promptly died. The Columbian legend was thus enriched with a villain, with no fear of being confused by any protest or defense from him.

When the Treasury officials had made out the balance sheet of the expedition, however, there was some disappointment. On the credit side were the forty green parrots, a child's handful of thin gold noserings, some rolls of coarse fabric, worse even than they spun in Isabella's Spain, six credulous savages, a mixed taxidermic collection imperfectly prepared, and the bamboos. It was not even certain where the Admiral had been; he mentioned Zipangu, Antilia, China, but finally seems to have settled on India—the Royal scribes wrote down, in the neighborhood of the Indies (*en la parte de las Indias*). However, the Queen was satisfied. Her woman's sensibility settled on the uses of the large population (possibly a million in reality) of Haiti, to be Christianized, and also as cheap

labor. Christopher's own idea of exporting them as slaves, she then and afterwards rejected. A grant of arms was made for the Admiral. The space left for the insertion of his ancestral quarterings was filled in by him with gold and blue. It must have bothered him a little. And a new expedition was set on foot. The Queen insisted this time on a skilled cosmographer being shipped, she had written to him before: "And so as to understand your book better, we have need to have the degrees where are situated the islands and the mainland you have discovered, as well as the degrees of the way you passed, please send them to us, and also a map."

This time the Admiral was at the head of a considerable fleet carrying 1500 men, among whom were artisans and agriculturalists and a certain number of sharp-toothed gentlemen adventurers. The funds were advanced partly by the Duke of Medina Sidonia, partly from among the booty of the expelled and expropriated Jews.

He sailed on the 25th September, 1493, pursued the same route, was driven out of his course, lost his way, touched at the Antilles, spent some time there in looking for gold; then arrived at Natividad on the 22nd of November. There was no reply to their salvos. When they landed they discovered that the Fort had been burnt to the ground; the bodies of the garrison were scattered in the scrub, horribly mangled. There was no survivor to explain the catastrophe, but guessing was not hard. The newcomers in fact began to repeat what must have been the story, with, however, no tragic ending for themselves. Large numbers of them as soon as they were ashore threw off "the respect and discipline they owed to the Admiral" and set out to live as freebooters in the island. "They were wont to complain of the hardness of the native's heads, that notched their swords," as a monkish chronicler has set it down. Nor were those "men from heaven" who remained under orders much more lovable. The natives were not accustomed to anything more sanguinary and dangerous than the alligators with which their rivers abounded. Half a century later the aboriginals of this and the majority of the neighbouring islands, some of which were even more densely populated, were extinct.

Columbus spent three years, sometimes in

⁸ "Rodrigo is said to have gone to Morocco in disgust, and turned Mohammedan." (Bolitho's note.)

further exploration, and the personal conduction of gold-hunting parties, the rest of the time in government. This was the time of his highest level; his titles were disputed only by his own men; he hoped to compensate for the persistent failure to find gold by organizing the slave trade. In 1495 he sent five hundred Carib women to Seville to be sold, "naked as they were born." *Como andaban en su tierra, como nacieron*. By Royal order this was stopped, but in the islands under his own rule the whole race was gradually brought into captivity. The Admiral was at the height of his trajectory. A law promulgated by him required all the European settlers to sign a statement that Cuba was no island but the continent of India, and anyone going back on his word was to have his tongue torn out. The adventurer was tired of the question; in this simple way he announced that the adventure was over, that India was discovered and all that remained was sober organization.

This organization was not one of the lights of his genius. Terrible quarrels broke out in the bosom of the little community; the despairing natives fled whenever they could into the bush and tried to thin the numbers of their discoverers by arrows, and wild beast traps cunningly hidden. The number of bush-rangers daily increased. One strange and romantic revenge the Earthly Paradise took on its wreckers, the vanguard of Europe, and through them on all future generations of Europeans. The Caribs of Haiti were weak delicate creatures; their lack of robustness was remarked in the Admiral's journal of his first visit, and was often grumbled about by his slave-dealers later. They suffered indeed from a disease which, endemic among them for countless generations, had only debilitating effects of them, but which when contracted by their masters, from their women, and known afterwards by the poetical name of Syphilis,⁶ had far graver effects. A hundred years after the last Carib beauty was dead, Europe was poisoned from end to end.

Having escaped this almost Biblical nemesis by his well known continence, Columbus sailed for home at the end of 1495. He landed at Cadiz, having his reasons for avoiding Palos.

⁶ "From the name in a poetical play by an Italian, Fracastro." (Bolitho's note.)

His hands were empty; Spain was full of pale men, rotten with disease, who had returned before him to curse his Indies. The King replied to the intimation of his arrival coldly. Nevertheless the Admiral again organized a procession; and at the head of fifteen naked Indians, shivering with cold, but wearing by his command their full headdress of feathers, he set out through Spain to pay his respects to court. He had donned his Franciscan rig-out. It was January. Until he disbanded it, still far from his goal, this procession of dispirited natives and a consciously solemn man tramped along through Andalusia.

It is time to stop and be indignant. Not content with her disgraceful choice of a swollen-headed, lying, incompetent and utterly unsuitable soft-goods salesman for the greatest favor she ever showed to her favorite Europeans, this Fate we are staring after allows herself to be caught outside her cloud playing such an odious joke upon him. There is a school-boy bad taste, a giggling irresponsibility about the way he has been made a fool of, which so far from being funny, fills us with deep panic, since we too are mortals and ask of our gods at least to be grown-up. In the last trudge of Columbus the whole of human dignity is involved; we have a right to grumble like Lear:

Like flies to wanton boys are we to the gods,
They slay us for their sport. . . .

hang tails on our heroes; cork the noses of our saints, put orange peel on the polished floor of the shrines we have built to them.

But when you are calmer, is it not interesting to gather up the data that have been accumulating about this Destiny of adventurers, and see how she has given herself away? We know now from this poor devil's experience, that she loves a poet, that with a free choice in front she chooses the unqualified, kills off contemptuously the man with all the claims, Martin Pinzon, and hands all to the outsider Christopher Columbus, the man who cannot read a chart. How she first allows the mild, good Caribs to be exterminated, just because they are mild and happy, and revenges them with unfeeling generosity not only on the wicked Spaniards, but on the good, kind Germans and English and French, who would never have been so cruel. Or at any rate were not there

with the first wave to let us see. Then because of some huff—our experience with Alexander and Casanova leads us to think that it must probably have been that attempt of the illegal Christopher to find the Indies and end the adventure by law—she takes an omniscient advantage of the weaknesses of the Admiral, his habit of repetition, his uncultivated idea of pomp, due to his bad education, his very technique of imposture, to send him with his wretched feathered Indians to run the gauntlet of rustic jeers, and civic rowdiness for hundreds of leagues into the heart of Spain—such an end to the greatest human achievement. All through, a coherent injustice.

What if this injustice were the very life of adventure? The man who puts his stake on the roulette board does not want justice, or his stake back unaltered. Justice for Christopher is a small shop in Genoa, or it may be a foot of wall in a Portuguese jail for fraudulent bankruptcy, or a hole in the ooze at the bottom of the sea, somewhere a few leagues out from the Canaries. Justice for Alexander is another dagger such as killed his father; for Casanova a horse-whipping, or a lifelong judgment of alimony. In this light, adventure is an excited appeal for injustice; the adventurer's prayer is "Give us more than our due." The Martin Pinzons may pray for their Right; an adventurer is more humble—to his god; for to the great mass of his fellowmen, the social pyramid of the qualified, the owners, the entitled, he has the insolence to be an outsider. He is not on the world's staff, he does not even belong to the gang. He is alone, this impious worshipper of an unjust god; who in wisdom has ruled that professors of literature can never be great poets; that the top boy at school rarely gets life's prizes; that the richest woman is never the most beautiful; that the eugenically born does not monopolize the fun and health of the world. The incalculable, malicious power who does not acknowledge any debt; easy to draw a laugh from, never a tear; the spirit of the rain, that falls where it likes, and the wind that blows without prognostication.

Columbus is not ended yet; lives are rarely cut to their plots. In his third trip a rebellion broke out in Haiti. This time the home authorities were tired and sent a commissioner, Francisco de Bobadilla, after him. Bobadilla, jurist-

consult, noble, competent, quiet, the man of right and wrong. He arrived at Haiti with full powers. The first thing he saw was a row of hanged men swaying over the harbour. The first thing he did was to arrest the Admiral, hear in half an hour enough of his talk and his deeds to have hanged him as a rebel to the Crown, and he had him put in chains and embarked for Spain. As soon as the ship was out of sight, the captain ordered the venerable old wretch to be given the liberty of the deck. Christopher refused. He had incorporated the chains in his pride. Henceforth he can never forget them, they were the homeopathy of his humiliation.

The Queen was very kind; she apologized to him. But did not order or ask for an apology from Bobadilla, nor, though she disguised it with her kindness, take any steps to reinstate the one or punish the other. This is enough to refute all the Columbian version; if Columbus had not been unimpeachably guilty he would have been revenged. And in addition, he was forever forbidden to set foot in Haiti again.

Even after this, the Admiral insisted on another verse. His fourth trip left Cadiz the 11th May, 1502. This time he had promised Isabella the Golden Chersonese, which is the book-mirage of Cochin-China. In his *Book of Prophecies*, which he wrote for her while waiting for ships, and of which a few fragments remain, he mentions that the end of the world is coming in 1650, and that he must find gold soon, so that there can be time for her to conquer the Holy Land with it; in time to get everything ready for the Lord. Vasco de Gama's discovery of the route to India round the Cape of which everyone was talking, he considers a cock and bull story. He has discovered India. But for treachery and Satan he would have already come upon the gold. He has taken a new title: the Ambassador of the Most High. Jesus Christ appeared to him as a vision and promised him gold when seven years were up. Afterwards he will go to the North Pole, which is inhabited by Christians, who will be of service later in the great Crusade. And so on. Madness? Not a bit of it; a little more talkative.

In this journey every hardship and disappointment was accumulated. He touches on the South American continent, discovered and mapped years before by the gold-seeker Amer-

igo Vespucci and others, and notes it down as "many insignificant islands." He brings his crew to the extremities of hunger and thirst, falls ill in Cuba; is in danger of being massacred by Indians, whom he plots to catch and sell; suffers one of the most terrific storms in literature, confiscates the charts of his navigator so that no one but he can know the situation of the Earthly Paradise, the real one, Sir John de Mandeville's, which is on a mountain between the Ganges, the Euphrates, the Tigris and the Nile and all walled about with fire, to which he came very near.

At last he has had enough. At his journey's end there is nothing more waiting than he brought with him. Isabella died a few days after his home-coming, tucking her chaste feet under the coverlet, without waiting to hear the last chapter. He troubled the court no more; two years later he died in complete obscurity. No contemporary chronicler mentions it. He asked for his chains to be buried with him, which was done.

So ends without music the true, only, historical and authentic discoverer of America, the fortunate Christopher Columbus.

Sixty years after his death the last of his descendants died. The family fortune was claimed by the noble Colombos, Counts of Cuccaro, and by appealing to Christopher's own stories, they almost secured it.

LINCOLN STEFFENS

Lincoln Steffens (1866–1936) was born in San Francisco, was graduated from the University of California in 1889, then studied in Berlin, Heidelberg, Leipzig, Paris, and London. Returning to America in 1892, he became a successful reporter on the New York Evening Post. His intelligent curiosity gained the confidence of important men in New York civic and financial circles and started him on his career as a journalist. As managing editor of McClure's Magazine, Steffens began his famous muck-raking investigation of unsavory facts in politics and business. A series of articles interpreting his extensive study of boss rule and reform movements in Midwestern cities during the Theodore Roosevelt period is collected in The Shame of the Cities, 1904. Other volumes deal-

ing with social and political practices are The Struggle for Self-Government, 1908; Upbuilders, 1909; The Least of These, 1910. The Autobiography (two volumes), 1931, reveals Steffens's conscientious work as a journalist, his sincere efforts to understand the social and political forces of his time, and his genuine liking for people. "A Painter and a Page" gives a significant glimpse into Steffens's earliest awareness of political corruption.

A PAINTER AND A PAGE¹

My father brought home to dinner one Sunday a painter, W. M. Marple, an artist from "the City," as we called San Francisco. I was excited. I had read about the famous painters; art was one way of being great; and I had been taken to the Crocker Art Gallery in Sacramento. All very interesting, but there was some mystery about pictures. Those that I liked best were scenes in mining-camps or on ranches and, generally, from the life about me. I could not discover anything very great in them. It seemed to me that they weren't even true; they didn't see things as I saw them. It was evident that in art, as in everything else, there was something to learn. And this visiting artist was my chance to learn it.

"I can't tell you anything about art," he said when I put to him at table my eager questions. "Nobody can. But I can show you."

He proposed after dinner to go out and make some sketches. He meant that he was going to paint a picture! And I could watch him at it! Where? What was there to paint in Sacramento? I guessed that he would paint the Capitol; that was the greatest thing in town. But no, I had a triumph, but it was not on my guess of the Capitol.

My father, mother, and others always wondered why I spent so much time over on the American River bottom: a washed-out place, where no one else ever went. Why not ride in the streets or the good country roads? I could not explain very well. The river bottom was all gravel and sand, cut up by the seasonal floods and left raw and bare of all but dead, mud-died brush and trees. I remembered how it

¹ From *The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens*. Copyright, 1931, by Harcourt, Brace & Company, Inc.

disappointed me the first time I saw it, the day I rode over there on my new pony. Since then I had filled it up with Indians, Turks, beavers, and wild beasts and made it a beautiful scene of romance and adventure. But I could not tell everybody that! I was ashamed of my taste in natural scenery.

And yet that was Mr. Marple's choice. He asked my father to take him there. He said he had passed by it on a train one afternoon and had seen something he wanted to paint. To my father's astonishment and mine, we had to lead the great painter to my playground. I was the guide, of course, a troubled, but a very proud leader; I could not think myself what Mr. Marple would like to see and paint there. A hole, where I swam because the water was warm, did not suit him. He pushed on deeper into the brush and, forgetting us in a most fascinating way, he moved about, here, there, till, satisfied at last, he unpacked his stuff, set up his easel, put a small square of boarded canvas on it, and went to work without a word.

How I watched! His first movements I could imitate, and I did, to the bridge-tender the next day. That painter looked at the scene in which I could see nothing to paint; nothing; just brush, miles and miles of mud-stained brush and leafless, drowned scrub willows. He studied this with one eye, held up the handle of his brush, and measured something which he dabbed off on his canvas. Then he looked some more, long, hard, while he pinched paints in little piles on his already mixed-up board of many colors. What was he doing? I asked. "Getting the colors right," he said, and with that, he began suddenly to paint. Fast. I lost track of what he was doing, though I did not take my eyes off that easel and the scene. I could not make out what was going on. Whatever it was, he was quick about it, so quick that in a very few minutes he had the whole canvas covered, and then, as he stepped back and I looked, suddenly it became a picture, a picture of the scene; only—

"What is it?" I asked him.

"Oh, the name of it when the sketch is painted," he said, "will be, say, 'A sunset.'"

Yes, that was right. The sun was burning a golden hole in the top line of the brush and the brush under and around the hole was gold, too,

old gold; the whole was a golden picture. But—he was looking at it himself, squinting, with his head on one side, then on the other, he touched it here, there, and finally, backing far away, he said, "Not so bad, eh? Not bad."

It was beautiful, I thought, but it wasn't good; it wasn't true. It was bad of the brush; it wasn't brush at all. And I said as much. He laughed, and he answered me with a saying I never forgot.

"You see the brush and the baked mud. All right. They are there. Many things are there, and everybody sees what he likes in this and in every other scene. I see the colors and the light, the beautiful chord of the colors and the light."

Now I did not see the brush either; it was not the baked mud that made me come and play over there; and I told him so. I admitted that I had seen that the first time I rode out there, but after that—after that—

"Well," he encouraged me, "what did you see after that?"

I was caught. I owned up to the Indians, Saracens, elephants, and—he did not laugh. My father did; not the painter. Mr. Marple said that if I were an artist, I should paint Indians or wild animals—"You should paint a princess in the brush if you see her there." I could understand that.

"But your golden light is really there," I said, "and my Indians aren't."

"Your Indians are where my gold is," he answered, "where all beauty is, in our heads. We all paint what we see, as we should. The artist's gift is to see the beauty in everything, and his job is to make others see it. I show you the gold, you show me the romance in the brush. We are both artists, each in his line."

My father bought that picture, and my mother arranged to have me take drawing lessons. I was going to be a great painter for a while and fill the American River bottom with—what I saw there. But my drawing teacher did not teach me the way Mr. Marple did; I could not learn to copy other drawings; all I ever did that was called good was a group of horses' heads. My mother held me to it; she made me take drawing lessons as she made me take music lessons long after I had lost all desire and interest in them. That was her guiding principle of education: that her children

were to have a chance at everything; no talent was to be overlooked in us. None.

The proper fruit of Mr. Marple's visit was of another, a similar sort. I was to have a lesson, not in drawing, but in seeing. Mr. Marple's son, Charlie, came to live with us. Maybe that was the purpose of the painter's visit. Anyway, after him came Mrs. Marple, and from her I learned that her son, a boy a little older than I was, had a promise of an appointment to be a page at the next session of the Legislature. She was looking for a place for him to live, a house where he would be cared for. "Would I like a playmate?"

Would I? I was delighted. I could show him all the places I knew, and he could show me the Legislature. But what was a page? There were pages in my books; they were little boys at court or in the service of knights and ladies. But a page in a Legislature, what was that? A messenger, they said, a boy that carried bills and letters and notes from one member to another on the floor of the House or Senate. I became interested in the Capitol, the Legislature, the government. I read up on, I asked everybody questions about these things, I visited the Capitol, and as always with me, I formed some sort of picture of the machinery of government. Yes, and I had made in my mind also a portrait of Charlie Marple, made it up out of what I had read of stories and pictures of pages at court.

When Charlie came he was no more like my picture than his father's sketch was like my river bottom, and as for the Legislature . . . Charlie was a homely fellow—and weak, physically—not graceful and pretty, and he wasn't so eager for politics as he was to use my pony. He had been told about that; he had been looking forward to riding it; and when we went together out to the stable, his expectations were satisfied. He put his hand cautiously on the pony's rump, and the face he turned to me was alight with pleasure.

"But," he said, "I can't ride; never was on a horse in my life."

"It's easy," I reassured him, and I boosted him up on the pony's back there in the stall. When he found that easy, I untied the horse and led him out around the yard until Charlie learned to sit him without hanging on too hard to his mane. A happy boy he was at the end of

his first lesson, and I was proud. I got on and showed how I could ride, up and down, around the block, at any gait. "Easy, see?"

We had to go to the Capitol and to the hotel lobbies to inquire about his appointment, which was only promised; and I worried: I knew what promises were. I went with him and it was his turn to show me things. He seemed to know as much about politics as I did about my riding, but he was more interested in riding than he was in that Legislature. He made me tell him over and over where he would ride: down the river, up the river, out in the country, to the trestle bridge, to the beaver traps. There was a long delay of his appointment, and I wondered why. The legislators were in town; Sacramento was filled with them; and the Legislature did not meet. Why?

Charlie explained indifferently that they were "organizing." There were committees to "fix up" and a lot of fat jobs to be distributed; not only pages to appoint, but clerks, sergeants-at-arms—everything; hundreds of them, and yet not enough to go around. There were, for instance, three times as many boys promised pageships as there were pages; and a pageship was a petty job. The page got only \$10 a day. Some places paid much more than this in salaries, besides what you could make out of them.

"It all depends on who gets the speakership," said Charlie. "Let's go riding."

"But aren't you afraid you'll get left?" I asked anxiously.

He wasn't. His "member" was the San Francisco leader of the Republican railroad crowd which was sure to capture the speakership and thus the whole organization of the House. They could fill any job, but of course they had to give something good to the Democratic railroad gang and "chicken-feed" to the opposition Republicans. That was "good politics."

So we went riding, both of us on the one horse. I rode in front, Charlie holding on to my waist behind. He was glad of the delay. Until the sessions began, we could play all day every day together, and his salary was cumulative—\$10 a day! The amount of it impressed me. A boy getting \$10 a day was a wonder to a boy like me, who never had more than a dime at a time. Charlie hardly thought of it. His thoughts were on the pony, on learning to ride, seeing

the rivers and the country, or playing Indians and crusaders, and trapping beavers.

I wish I could recall all that I went through that winter. It was a revelation; it was a revolution to me. Charlie was appointed a page, we all went to the opening session, where, with a formal front, the Speaker was elected (just as if it had not been "fixed"), speeches made (just as if spontaneously), and the committees and the whole organization read off (just as if it had not been "settled" days and nights before). Then I saw why Charlie wasn't interested in his salary: he got none of it, it all went home, and he had no more money in his pocket than I had in mine. But also I saw that the Legislature wasn't what my father, my teachers, and the grown-ups thought; it wasn't even what my histories and the other books said. There was some mystery about it as there was about art, as there was about everything. Nothing was what it was supposed to be. And Charlie took it as it was; my father took it as it seemed to be; I couldn't take it at all. What troubled me most, however, was that they none of them had any strong feeling about the conflict of the two pictures. I had. I remember how I suffered; I wanted, I needed, to adjust the difference between what was and what seemed to be. There was something wrong somewhere, and I could not get it right. And nobody would help me.

Charlie was forever for getting away from the Capitol. So were the legislators. They kept adjourning, over every holiday, over Sundays, over Saturdays and Sundays, over Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays. We could ride, therefore, and we did. We made long trips out to the ranches, up and down and across the rivers. Charlie never wearied; he never got enough of our exploration and of our romance. He entered into the spirit of my games of "playing" knight or cowboy. He learned to ride; he could go off alone, but I liked riding, too, and he preferred that we stay together. It was more fun to talk and think together about dangers ahead; it was safer to meet them shoulder to shoulder. I enjoyed our many, many days of free play.

But I enjoyed also the sessions of the House when Charlie had to be on the floor. He found me a seat just back of the rail where I could sit and watch him and the other pages running about among the legislators in their seats. Charlie used to stand beside me, he and the

other small pages, between calls, and we learned the procedure. We became expert on the rules. The practices of debate, quite aside from the legislation under consideration, fascinated me. I wished it were real. It was beautiful enough to be true. But no, speeches were made on important subjects with hardly any one present but the Speaker, the clerks, and us boys. Where were the absent members? I did not ask that question often; not out loud. The pages laughed; everybody laughed, Charlie explained.

"The members are out where the fate of the measure debated here is being settled," and he took me to committee rooms and hotel apartments where, with the drinks and cigars, members were playing poker with the lobbyists and leaders. "The members against the bill are allowed to win the price agreed on to buy their vote."

Bribery! I might as well have been shot. Somewhere in my head or my heart I was wounded deeply.

Once, when the Speaker was not in the chair and many members were in their seats, when there was a dead debate in an atmosphere of great tension, I was taken down a corridor to the closed door of a committee room. There stood reporters and a small crowd of others watching outside. We waited awhile till, at last, the Speaker came out, said something, and hurried with the crowd back to the Assembly. Charlie held me back to point out to me "the big bosses" who had come "up the river" to "force that bill through"; they had "put on the screws." I was struck by the observation that one of the bosses was blind. We went back to the House, and quickly, after a very ordinary debate of hours, the bill was passed on the third reading and sent to the Senate, where, in due course, it was approved. It was a "rotten deal," the boys said, and I remember my father shook his head over it. "The rascals!" he muttered.

And that, so far as I could make out from him and from all witnesses—that was the explanation. The Legislature, government—everything was "all right," only there were some "bad men" who spoiled things—now and then. "Politicians" they were called, those bad men. How I hated them, in the abstract. In the concrete—I saw Charlie Prodder often in the lob-

by of the Legislature, and I remember that some one said he was "one of them," a "politician." But I knew Charlie Prodger, and I knew he was not a "bad man."

And the sergeant-at-arms, who was called "bad"—one of the San Francisco gang—he was one of the kindest, easiest-going men I ever met. He looked out for me; he took care of all the boys. Many a time he let Charlie Marple off to have a free day with me. And there were others: every "crook" I met seemed to me to belong in a class with the bridge-tender, Mr. and Mrs. Stortz, and all the other grown men and women who "understood a fellow"—did not stick at rules; did not laugh at everything a boy said and frowned at every little thing he did.

When the Legislature closed and Charlie Marple went home, I was left to ride around the country alone, thinking, thinking. I asked questions, of course; I could not think out alone all that I had been learning that winter; I could not easily drop the problem of government and the goodness and badness of men. But I did not draw from my friends any answers that cleared my darkness. The bridge-tender said that all Legislatures were like that. And Jim Neely said so too. Ah Hook was not interested.²

"What for you askem me fool question," he said. "Chinaman he findee out long time allee government allee samee—big clook."

But there was an answer of a sort about that time, an answer to one of my questions: Why didn't somebody challenge the rascals—if they were so bad? The boss of Sacramento, Frank Rhodes, the gambler, was having one of his conventions of the local ringleaders in a room under his gambling-house. It was at night. There were no outsiders present, none wanted, and the insiders were fighting, shooting men. During the meeting Grove L. Johnson, a well-known attorney in the town, walked in with his two sons, Albert and Hiram, both little more than boys, and both carrying revolvers. They went up to the front, and with one of his boys on one side of him, the other on the other, Mr. Johnson told those crooks all about themselves and what they were doing. He was bitter, fearless, free-spoken; he insulted, he defied those

politicians; he called upon the town to clean them out and predicted that their power would be broken some day. There was no answer. When he had finished, he and his sons walked out.

Something in me responded to that proceeding. It was one way to solve my problem. There was no other response, so far as I could see or hear. People said unpleasant things about Grove L. Johnson, and the Rhodes ring went right on governing the town. Later, much later, the boss disappeared, and still later Grove L. Johnson himself was one of the bosses of the Legislature. Albert Johnson died. But Hiram Johnson became a reform Governor of California and a United States Senator.

What struck and stunned me at the time was that this courageous attack by the Johnsons—especially by the boys—had no effect upon the people I knew. I was trying to see the Legislature and government as Mr. Marple saw the sunset through the brush in the river bottom; not the mud but—the gold, the Indians—some beauty in them. The painter said there always was something beautiful to see. Well, Mr. Johnson and his two boys—their defiance was beautiful; wasn't it? I thought so, and yet nobody else did. Why? I gave it up, or, better, I laid the question aside. I had other things to think of, wonderful things, things more in my line.

JOHN DOS PASSOS

As a youth, Chicago-born John Dos Passos (1896–) lived in Mexico, Belgium, England, Washington, D. C., and Virginia. After graduation from Harvard he served in World War I in the French Ambulance Service and later as a private in the United States Medical Corps. In *Three Soldiers*, 1921, he drew upon his war experience for a sympathetic portrayal of the problems confronting the artist in army life. In subsequent novels he has turned from concern with individual emotions to a broader social pattern. *Manhattan Transfer*, 1925, attempts to show a cross section of New York City through a multitude of characters and scenes. Dos Passos's major work, *U. S. A.*, a trilogy, is expanded still further in scope, including a social view of the entire United States and parts of Europe. The three volumes in

² Neely and Ah Hook were a farm hand and a Chinese farmer, respectively, friends of young Stefens.

U. S. A. (*The 42nd Parallel*, 1930; *Nineteen-Nineteen*, 1932; *The Big Money*, 1936) are distinctive for the experimental techniques employed. Commercial exploitation, corruption, and decay are flashed before the reader by the *Newsreel*, the *Camera Eye*, and the brief biographical sketch. "*The Happy Warrior*" is illustrative of Dos Passos's terse, stylized pictures of prominent figures. His portrayal of Theodore Roosevelt is somewhat sympathetic, lacking the completely mocking, ironic tone with which he treats many well-known Americans.

THE HAPPY WARRIOR¹

The Roosevelts had lived for seven righteous generations on Manhattan Island; they owned a big brick house on 20th Street, an estate up at Dobbs Ferry, lots in the city, a pew in the Dutch Reformed Church, interests, stocks and bonds, they felt Manhattan was theirs, they felt America was theirs. Their son,

Theodore,

was a sickly youngster, suffered from asthma, was very nearsighted; his hands and feet were so small it was hard for him to learn to box; his arms were very short;

his father was something of a humanitarian, gave Christmas dinners to newsboys, deplored conditions, slums, the East Side, Hell's Kitchen.²

Young Theodore had ponies, was encouraged to walk in the woods, to go camping, was instructed in boxing and fencing (an American gentleman should know how to defend himself), taught Bible Class, did mission work (an American gentleman should do his best to uplift those not so fortunately situated);

righteousness was his by birth.

he had a passion for nature study, for reading about birds and wild animals, for going hunting; he got to be a good shot in spite of his glasses, a good walker in spite of his tiny feet and short legs, a fair horseman, an aggressive scrapper in spite of his short reach, a crack politician in spite of being the son of one of the owning Dutch families of New York.

¹ From U. S. A. Copyright, 1932; reprinted by permission of the author and Houghton Mifflin Company, publisher.

² a west-side Manhattan (New York City) district, around lower Tenth Avenue, formerly well known for its gunmen and thieves.

In 1878 he went up to Cambridge to study at Harvard, a wealthy talkative erratic young man with sidewhiskers and definite ideas about everything under the sun.

at Harvard he drove around in a dogcart, collected stuffed birds, mounted specimens he'd shot on his trips in the Adirondacks; in spite of not drinking and being somewhat of a christer, having odd ideas about reform and remedying abuses, he made Porcellian and the Dickey and the clubs that were his right as the son of one of the owning Dutch families of New York.

He told his friends he was going to devote his life to social service: *I wish to preach not the doctrine of ignoble ease, but the doctrine of the strenuous life, the life of toil and effort, of labor and strife.*

From the time he was eleven years old he wrote copiously, filled diaries, notebooks, loose leaves with a big impulsive scrawl about everything he did and thought and said; naturally he studied law.

He married young and went to Switzerland to climb the Matterhorn; his first wife's early death broke him all up. He went out to the badlands of western Dakota to become a rancher on the Little Missouri River;

when he came back to Manhattan he was Teddy, the straight shooter from the west, the elkhunter, the man in the Stetson hat, who'd roped steers, fought a grizzly hand to hand, acted as Deputy Sheriff,

(a Roosevelt has a duty to his country; the duty of a Roosevelt is to uplift those not so fortunately situated, those who have come more recently to our shores)

in the west, Deputy Sheriff Roosevelt felt the white man's burden, helped to arrest malefactors, bad men; service was bully.

All this time he'd been writing, filling the magazines with stories of his hunts and adventures, filling political meetings with his opinions, his denunciations, his pat phrases: *Strenuous Life, Realizable Ideals, Just Government, when men fear work or fear righteous war, when women fear motherhood, they tremble on the brink of doom, and well it is that they should vanish from the earth, where they are fit subjects for the scorn of all men and women who are themselves strong and brave and high-minded.*

T.R. married a wealthy woman and righteously raised a family at Sagamore Hill.

He served a term in the New York Legislature, was appointed by Grover Cleveland to the unremunerative job of Commissioner for Civil Service Reform,

was Reform Police Commissioner of New York, pursued malefactors, stoutly maintained that white was white and black was black,

wrote the Naval History of the War of 1812, was appointed Assistant Secretary of the Navy,

and when the *Maine* blew up resigned to lead the Rough Riders,

Lieutenant-Colonel.

This was the Rubicon, the Fight, the Old Glory, the Just Cause. The American public was not kept in ignorance of the Colonel's bravery when the bullets sang, how he charged without his men up San Juan Hill and had to go back to fetch them, how he shot a running Spaniard in the tail.

It was too bad that the regulars had gotten up San Juan Hill first from the other side, that there was no need to get up San Juan Hill at all. Santiago was surrendered. It was a successful campaign. T.R. charged up San Juan Hill into the governorship of the Empire State;

but after the fighting, volunteers warcorrespondents magazinewriters began to want to go home;

it wasn't bully huddling under pup tents in the tropical rain or scorching in the morning sun of the sacred Cuban hills with malaria mowing them down and dysentery and always yellowjack to be afraid of.

T.R. got up a round robin to the President and asked for the amateur warriors to be sent home and leave the dirtywork to the regulars who were digging trenches and shovelling crap and fighting malaria and dysentery and yellowjack

to make Cuba cosy for the Sugar Trust and the National City Bank.

When he landed at home, one of his first interviews was with Lemuel Quigg, emissary of Boss Platt who had the votes of upstate New York sewed into the lining of his vest;

he saw Boss Platt, too, but he forgot about that afterwards. Things were bully. He wrote a life of Oliver Cromwell whom people said he

resembled. As Governor he doublecrossed the Platt machine (a righteous man may have a short memory); Boss Platt thought he'd shelved him by nominating him for the Vice-Presidency in 1900;

Czolgosz made him president.³

T.R. drove like a fiend in a buckboard over the muddy roads through the driving rain from Mt. Marcy in the Adirondacks to catch the train to Buffalo where McKinley was dying.

As President

he moved Sagamore Hill, the healthy happy normal American home, to the White House, took foreign diplomats and fat army officers out walking in Rock Creek Park where he led them a terrible dance through brambles, hopping across the creek on steppingstones, wading the fords, scrambling up the shaly banks,

and shook the Big Stick at malefactors of great wealth.

Things were bully.

He engineered the Panama revolution under the shadow of which took place the famous hocuspocus of juggling the old and new canal companies by which forty million dollars vanished into the pockets of the international bankers,

but Old Glory floated over the Canal Zone and the canal was cut through.

He busted a few trusts,

had Booker Washington to lunch at the White House,

and urged the conservation of wild life.

He got the Nobel Peace Prize for patching up the Peace of Portsmouth that ended the Russo-Japanese war,

and sent the Atlantic Fleet around the world for everybody to see that America was a first-class power. He left the presidency to Taft after his second term leaving to that elephantine lawyer the congenial task of pouring judicial oil on the hurt feelings of the moneymasters

and went to Africa to hunt big game.

Big game hunting was bully.

Every time a lion or an elephant went crashing down into the jungle underbrush, under the impact of a wellplaced mushroom bullet the papers lit up with headlines;

³ Leon Czolgosz assassinated President McKinley.

when he talked with the Kaiser on horseback
the world was not ignorant of what he said,
or when he lectured the Nationalists at Cairo
telling them that this was a white man's world.

He went to Brazil where he travelled
through the Matto Grosso⁴ in a dugout over
waters infested with the tiny man-eating fish,
the piranha,

shot tapirs,

jaguars,

specimens of the whitelipped peccary.

He ran the rapids of the River of Doubt
down to the Amazon frontiers where he ar-
rived sick, an infected abscess in his leg,
stretched out under an awning in a dugout
with a tame trumpeterbird beside him.

Back in the States he fought his last fight
when he came out for the Republican nomina-
tion in 1912 a progressive, champion of the
Square Deal, crusader for the Plain People, the
Bull Moose bolted out from under the Taft
steamroller and formed the Progressive Party
for righteousness' sake at the Chicago Colos-
seum⁵ while the delegates who were going to
restore democratic government rocked with
tears in their eyes as they sang

On ward Christian so old gers
March ing as to war

Perhaps the River of Doubt had been too
much for a man of his age; perhaps things
weren't so bully any more; T.R. lost his voice
during the triangular campaign. In Duluth a
maniac shot him in the chest, his life was saved
only by the thick bundle of manuscript of the
speech he was going to deliver. T.R. delivered
the speech with the bullet still in him, heard
the scared applause, felt the plain people pray-
ing for his recovery but the spell was broken
somehow.

The Democrats swept in, the world war
drowned out the righteous voice of the Happy
Warrior in the roar of exploding lyddite.

Wilson wouldn't let T.R. lead a division, this
was no amateur's war (perhaps the regulars

⁴ literally "Great Woods"; an inland state of
Brazil.

⁵ When the Republican convention of 1912 nom-
inated William Howard Taft for president, Roose-
velt formed the Progressive party, which held its
own convention. Woodrow Wilson (see II, 395)
was elected.

remembered the round robin at Santiago). All
he could do was write magazine articles against
the Huns, send his sons, Quentin was killed.

5 It wasn't the bully amateur's world any
more. Nobody knew that on armistice day,
Theodore Roosevelt, happy amateur warrior
with the grinning teeth, the shaking forefinger,
naturalist, explorer, magazinewriter, Sunday-
10 school teacher, copywriter, moralist, politi-
cian, righteous orator with a short memory,
fond of denouncing hars (the Ananias Club)
and having pillowfights with his children, was
taken to the Roosevelt hospital gravely ill with
15 inflammatory rheumatism.

Things weren't bully any more;

T.R. had grit;

he bore the pain, the obscurity, the sense of
being forgotten as he had borne the grilling
20 portages when he was exploring the River of
Doubt, the heat, the fetid jungle mud, the in-
fected abscess in his leg,

and died quietly in his sleep

at Sagamore Hill

25 on January 6, 1919,

and left on the shoulders of his sons

the white man's burden.

JAMES GROVER THURBER

30 "*The Day the Dam Broke*" is an entertain-
ing fragment of autobiography which exempli-
fies the use of incident, anecdote, dialogue,
and suspense—narrative aids to interest preva-
35 lent in contemporary non-fiction writing. The
episode, however exaggerated for artistic pur-
poses, is an oblique commentary on mass hys-
teria and on mankind's absurd struggle to pre-
serve dignity and discount its occasional idiocy.
40 For biographical details and further comment
on James Grover Thurber (1894—) see
II, 529.

THE DAY THE DAM BROKE¹

45 My memories of what my family and I went
through during the 1913 flood in Ohio I would
gladly forget. And yet neither the hardships we
endured nor the turmoil and confusion we ex-

¹ From *My Life and Hard Times* by James
Thurber, Harper & Brothers, 1933; originally pub-
lished in *The New Yorker*. Reprinted by permis-
sion.

perienced can alter my feeling toward my native state and city. I am having a fine time now and wish Columbus were here, but if anyone ever wished a city was in hell it was during that frightful and perilous afternoon in 1913 when the dam broke, or, to be more exact, when everybody in town *thought* that the dam broke. We were both ennobled and demoralized by the experience. Grandfather especially rose to magnificent heights which can never lose their splendor for me, even though his reactions to the flood were based upon a profound misconception; namely, that Nathan Bedford Forrest's cavalry was the menace we were called upon to face. The only possible means of escape for us was to flee the house, a step which grandfather sternly forbade, brandishing his old army sabre in his hand. "Let the sons — — — come!" he roared. Meanwhile hundreds of people were streaming by our house in wild panic, screaming "Go east! Go east!" We had to stun grandfather with the ironing board. Impeded as we were by the inert form of the old gentleman—he was taller than six feet and weighed almost a hundred and seventy pounds—we were passed, in the first half-mile, by practically everybody else in the city. Had grandfather not come to, at the corner of Parsons Avenue and Town Street, we would unquestionably have been overtaken and engulfed by the roaring waters—that is, if there had *been* any roaring waters. Later, when the panic had died down and people had gone rather sheepishly back to their homes and their offices, minimizing the distances they had run and offering various reasons for running, city engineers pointed out that even if the dam had broken, the water level would not have risen more than two additional inches in the West Side. The West Side was, at the time of the dam scare, under thirty feet of water—as, indeed, were all Ohio river towns during the great spring floods of twenty years ago. The East Side (where we lived and where all the running occurred) had never been in any danger at all. Only a rise of some ninety-five feet could have caused the flood waters to flow over High Street—the thoroughfare that divided the east side of town from the west—and engulf the East Side.

The fact that we were all as safe as kittens under a cookstove did not, however, assuage in the least the fine despair and the grotesque

desperation which seized upon the residents of the East Side when the cry spread like a grass fire that the dam had given way. Some of the most dignified, staid, cynical, and clear-thinking men in town abandoned their wives, stenographers, homes, and offices and ran east. There are few alarms in the world more terrifying than "The dam has broken!" There are few persons capable of stopping to reason when that clarion cry strikes upon their ears, even persons who live in towns no nearer than five hundred miles to a dam.

The Columbus, Ohio, broken-dam rumor began, as I recall it, about noon of March 12, 1913. High Street, the main canyon of trade, was loud with the placid hum of business and the buzzing of placid businessmen arguing, computing, wheedling, offering, refusing, compromising. Darius Conningway, one of the foremost corporation lawyers in the Middle-West, was telling the Public Utilities Commission in the language of Julius Caesar that they might as well try to move the Northern star as to move him. Other men were making their little boasts and their little gestures. Suddenly somebody began to run. It may be that he had simply remembered, all of a moment, an engagement to meet his wife, for which he was now frightfully late. Whatever it was, he ran east on Broad Street (probably toward the Maramor Restaurant, a favorite place for a man to meet his wife). Somebody else began to run, perhaps a newsboy in high spirits. Another man, a portly gentleman of affairs, broke into a trot. Inside of ten minutes, everybody on High Street, from the Union Depot to the Courthouse, was running. A loud mumble gradually crystallized into the dread word "dam." "The dam has broke!" The fear was put into words by a little old lady in an electric, or by a traffic cop, or by a small boy: nobody knows who, nor does it now really matter. Two thousand people were abruptly in full flight. "Go east!" was the cry that arose—east away from the river, east to safety. "Go east! Go east! Go east!"

Black streams of people flowed eastward down all the streets leading in that direction; these streams, whose headwaters were in the dry-goods stores, office buildings, harness shops, movie theatres, were fed by trickles of housewives, children, cripples, servants, dogs, and cats, slipping out of the houses past which

the main streams flowed, shouting and screaming. People ran out leaving fires burning and food cooking and doors wide open. I remember, however, that my mother turned out all the fires and that she took with her a dozen eggs and two loaves of bread. It was her plan to make Memorial Hall, just two blocks away, and take refuge somewhere in the top of it, in one of the dusty rooms where war veterans met and where old battleflags and stage scenery were stored. But the seething throngs, shouting "Go east!," drew her along and the rest of us with her. When grandfather regained full consciousness, at Parsons Avenue, he turned upon the retreating mob like a vengeful prophet and exhorted the men to form ranks and stand off the Rebel dogs, but at length he, too, got the idea that the dam had broken and, roaring "Go east!" in his powerful voice, he caught up in one arm a small child and in the other a slight clerkish man of perhaps forty-two and we slowly began to gain on those ahead of us.

A scattering of firemen, policemen, and army officers in dress uniforms—there had been a review at Fort Hayes, in the northern part of town—added color to the surging billows of people. "Go east!" cried a little child in a piping voice, as she ran past a porch on which drowsed a lieutenant-colonel of infantry. Used to quick decisions, trained to immediate obedience, the officer bounded off the porch and, running at full tilt, soon passed the child, bawling "Go east!" The two of them emptied rapidly the houses of the little street they were on. "What is it? What is it?" demanded a fat, waddling man who intercepted the colonel. The officer dropped behind and asked the little child what it was. "The dam has broke!" gasped the girl. "The dam has broke!" roared the colonel. "Go east! Go east! Go east!" He was soon leading, with the exhausted child in his arms, a fleeing company of three hundred persons who had gathered around him from living-rooms, shops, garages, backyards, and basements.

Nobody has ever been able to compute with any exactness how many people took part in the great rout of 1913, for the panic, which extended from the Winslow Bottling Works in the South End to Clintonville, six miles north, ended as abruptly as it began and the bobtail and ragtag and velvet-gowned groups of refugees melted away and slunk home, leaving the

streets peaceful and deserted. The shouting, weeping, tangled evacuation of the city lasted not more than two hours in all. Some few people got as far east as Reynoldsburg, twelve miles away; fifty or more reached the Country Club, eight miles away; most of the others gave up, exhausted, or climbed trees in Franklin Park, four miles out. Order was restored and fear dispelled finally by means of militiamen riding about in motor lorries bawling through megaphones "The dam has *not* broken!" At first this tended only to add to the confusion and increase the panic, for many stampededers thought the soldiers were bellowing "The dam has now broken!," thus setting an official seal of authentication on the calamity.

All the time, the sun shone quietly and there was nowhere any sign of oncoming waters. A visitor in an airplane, looking down on the straggling, agitated masses of people below, would have been hard put to it to divine a reason for the phenomenon. It must have inspired, in such an observer, a peculiar kind of terror, like the sight of the *Marie Celeste*, abandoned at sea, its galley fires peacefully burning, its tranquil decks bright in the sunlight.

An aunt of mine, Aunt Edith Taylor, was in a movie theatre on High Street when, over and above the sound of the piano in the pit (a W. S. Hart picture was being shown), there rose the steadily increasing tramp of running feet. Persistent shouts rose above the tromping. An elderly man, sitting near my aunt, mumbled something, got out of his seat, and went up the aisle at a dogtrot. This started everybody. In an instant the audience was jamming the aisles. "Fire!" shouted a woman who always expected to be burned up in a theatre; but now the shouts outside were louder and coherent. "The dam has broke!" cried somebody. "Go east!" screamed a small woman in front of my aunt. And east they went, pushing and shoving and clawing, knocking women and children down, emerging finally into the street, torn and sprawling. Inside the theatre, Bill Hart was calmly calling some desperado's bluff and the brave girl at the piano played "Row! Row! Row!" loudly and then "In My Harem." Outside, men were streaming across the Statehouse yard, others were climbing trees, a woman managed to get up onto the "These Are My Jewels" statue, whose bronze figures of Sher-

man, Stanton, Grant, and Sheridan watched with cold unconcern the going to pieces of the capital city.

"I ran south to State Street, east on State to Third, south on Third to Town, and out east on Town," my Aunt Edith has written me. "A tall spare woman with grim eyes and a determined chin ran past me down the middle of the street. I was still uncertain as to what was the matter, in spite of all the shouting. I drew up alongside the woman with some effort, for although she was in her late fifties, she had a beautiful, easy running form and seemed to be in excellent condition. 'What is it?' I puffed. She gave me a quick glance and then looked ahead again, stepping up her pace a trifle. 'Don't ask me, ask God!' she said.

"When I reached Grant Avenue, I was so spent that Dr. H. R. Mallory—you remember Dr. Mallory, the man with the white beard who looks like Robert Browning?—well, Dr. Mallory, whom I had drawn away from at the corner of Fifth and Town, passed me. 'It's got us!' he shouted, and I felt sure that whatever it was *did* have us, for you know what conviction Dr. Mallory's statements always carried. I didn't know at the time what he meant, but I found out later. There was a boy behind him on roller-skates, and Dr. Mallory mistook the swishing of the skates for the sound of rushing water. He eventually reached the Columbus School for Girls, at the corner of Parsons Avenue and Town Street, where he collapsed, expecting the cold frothing waters of the Scioto to sweep him into oblivion. The boy on the skates swirled past him and Dr. Mallory realized for the first time what he had been running from. Looking back up the street, he could see no signs of water, but nevertheless, after resting a few minutes, he jogged on east again. He caught up with me at Ohio Avenue, where we rested together. I should say that about seven hundred people passed us. A funny thing was that all of them were on foot. Nobody seemed to have had the courage to stop and start his car; but as I remember it, all cars had to be cranked in those days, which is probably the reason."

The next day, the city went about its business as if nothing had happened, but there was no joking. It was two years or more before you dared treat the breaking of the dam lightly,

and even now, twenty years after, there are a few persons, like Dr. Mallory, who will shut up like a clam if you mention the Afternoon of the Great Run.

CARL VAN DOREN

One of America's most prolific and important twentieth-century literary historians and critics is Carl Van Doren (1885–). After a teaching career at the University of Illinois and at Columbia, he entered magazine editorial work and, since 1919, has been influential in literary circles. His association with the Dictionary of American Biography and his own writing have served to make him a highly respected biographer: Swift, 1930; Three Worlds, 1936; Benjamin Franklin, 1938. Other well-known works include The American Novel, 1940, and The Great Rehearsal, 1948. Van Doren enjoys writing biography, and in "Elinor Wylie" provides a first-rate example of highly personalized biography within autobiography. The selection is effective characterization, for Van Doren knew his subject well. As Samuel McChord Crothers has pointed out, "Biography . . . is the art of reproducing not merely the incidents of a great man's life, but the impression he made on those who knew him best."

ELINOR WYLIE¹

1

Let me tell the story of Elinor Wylie, that pure yet troubled genius, as truly as I can. It is several stories. She was a legend before she was a fact, and the legend came to New York ahead of her. Sometimes she seemed to be living up to it, with little mystifications about herself. At other times she would feel transient compunctions and tell her closer friends things they would not have thought of asking for. It was hard, knowing her, to disentangle fact from legend, and either from the roles, romantic or realistic, which she alternately played. I am not too sure that I have disentangled the four stories, though she often confided in me and though I have since her death tried, so far as

¹ From *Three Worlds* by Carl Van Doren. Copyright 1936 by Carl Van Doren. Reprinted by permission of The Viking Press, Inc., New York.

research at this distance can go, to make one clear story out of them.

Because the legend said she came from Philadelphia, she let most people believe she had been born there, or in suburban Rosemont. When the Hall-Mills murder case made Somerville, New Jersey, conspicuous, she told me as an amusing secret that that was where she had actually been born. She let it be thought too that she had been born in 1887. But one evening at a party she drew me into a corner and asked me what day in September was my birthday. I told her the 10th. She knew the year was 1885.

"Then I'm really three days older than you. I was born on the 7th. Nobody knows but Bill. You won't tell, will you? Do you think I'm an awful liar?"

I did not consider it a lie for any woman to misrepresent her age, but I said only that I did not think this was a lie, and of course I would not tell. I had a policy for her confidences. Whatever she told me as a secret I kept to myself till I had heard the same thing from three other persons to whom she had told it.

A single confidence did not bind her. She told me that she had been married at eighteen, when she should have said twenty to agree with what I already knew about her age. And because I had written a life of Peacock, Shelley's friend, and because she not only loved Shelley but identified herself with him, she identified me with Peacock, and at times dramatically assumed that I was seven years older than she, as Peacock was older than Shelley. She knew better, but it was a pleasant fiction. When I gave her my *Nightmare Abbey*, in which Peacock had laughed at Shelley, she took it almost as a gift from the satirist to his subject.

Shelley so obsessed her in her final years that she liked to think he had been her earliest and only hero; but in 1924 she told me that her first hero was Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice*. She admired him for his pride, for his refusal to be hoodwinked by his love for Elizabeth into overlooking the disadvantages of marrying into her family, and for the delicacy with which his love in the end showed how strong it was. Gerald Poyntard in *Jennifer Lorn* is partly Darcy. Though Elinor Wylie respected the passions, she respected minds and manners too.

She had grown up among minds and manners. The eldest of the five children of Henry Martyn Hoyt and Anne McMichael of Philadelphia, she was a great-granddaughter of Morton McMichael, who had been mayor of the city, and a granddaughter of another Henry Martyn Hoyt who had been governor of Pennsylvania, and a daughter of the Solicitor-General of the United States. Taken at two from Somerville to her Philadelphia suburb, she lived there till she was twelve, and then in Washington till she was twenty-five. She went to Miss Baldwin's School in Bryn Mawr and to Mrs. Flint's School in Washington, and she studied drawing in a class at the Corcoran Museum of Art. Before her marriage she spent the summers with her family at Northeast Harbor, Mount Desert, Maine. When she was eighteen (but she told me sixteen) she and her sister Constance went with their grandfather, Morton McMichael, for the season in Paris and London. He introduced them to his friends Sir Henry Irving and Ellen Terry, and to Bram Stoker, who dedicated *The Jewel of Seven Stars* to the two girls. Elinor Wylie never mentioned Ellen Terry or Irving or Stoker to me, but she said that her grandfather, that year and other years, had been a good part of her education. The rest of it, she said, came mostly from her father. She had as a girl been both taught and petted by older men.

She missed this after her marriage to Philip Hichborn, son of Admiral Philip Hichborn, in Washington in 1905. William Rose Benét, then at Yale with her younger brother Henry, says he saw her in Washington while she was a bride, and thought her happy. Later she believed she had not been. "I didn't know what love and marriage meant," she told me. "The other girls talked about such things, but I would never listen. My marriage was a prison. I felt stifled. There was no room for my mind at all. I had to get away. While my father was alive I had him to turn to. But after he died I was desperate, and I ran away with Horace. He was twenty years older than I, and father as well as husband to me." (Wylie was only fifteen years older.)

She told me this, sitting beside me while I drove her and Benét from Cornwall to Waterbury. "I left my baby when I ran away," she went on. "That was the one thing I have ever

done that I think was bad. Other things, no. I would do all of them over again. But that was utterly bad. I was a bad woman. And now I would rather have a child that I could think of as really my own than anything else I shall ever have. I tried to have children after I married Horace, but not one of them lived. I have had a miscarriage since I married Bill. The doctors say that anything like that again would be the same as putting a gun to my head." I think all this seemed the truth to her, but I know now that before her last miscarriage she was sometimes hysterical with fear and resentment.

The Hoyts, the McMichaels, the Hichborns, and the Wylies were so well known in Philadelphia and Washington that the elopement of Elinor Hoyt Hichborn and Horace Wylie in December, 1910, raised an enormous scandal. Newspapers did their worst. As Horace Wylie's wife would not divorce him, the lovers had to leave the country, to live quietly as Mr. and Mrs. Waring in England near the New Forest. The papers invented stories of a wild residence in Corsica, which neither of them ever saw, though they went now and then to France. After two years Philip Hichborn killed himself. "Of course," Elinor Wylie said, "if Philip had killed himself over me he could not have waited two years to do it." But the scandal had another episode of melodrama to increase it. Scandal followed her all her life, ready to lift its head from old files of news at every step she took: when she and Horace Wylie came back to Boston in July, 1915, and after his divorce were married the next year, and when they lived two summers in Mount Desert and a winter in Augusta, Georgia, and when in 1919 they returned to Washington where he obtained a minor post in a Government bureau.

No newspaper, so far as I know, ever noticed a literary coincidence of the year 1912, when Philip Hichborn's stories were collected and published as *Hoof Beats* in Boston, and Elinor Wylie's (really Hichborn's) *Incidental Numbers* was privately printed in London. Some one more inquisitive than I will have to ask those who know what the coincidence means, which of the books was issued first and which of them led to the other, if either did, and what motives were involved in this sad rivalry the year Philip Hichborn died.

The poems of *Incidental Numbers* had little

of Elinor Wylie's magic. She was not precocious, and in a sense she was still at school, with Horace Wylie and rural England for her teachers. The fashionable world is full of women who write bad poems with good intentions, and Elinor Wylie at twenty-seven had only begun to outgrow her world, though she had run away from it. Eight years later she had outgrown it. Even if Washington had forgiven her, I think she could not have gone back to it, as she sometimes thought she could have. In any case, she was not forgiven, and she had few friends outside her family. Then in 1919-20 she renewed her acquaintance with Benét,² and met Sinclair Lewis, who was in Washington writing *Main Street*.

Through them she learned of a world which would not hold her past against her, and in 1921 she left Washington for New York. It meant a separation, and two years later a divorce from Horace Wylie. A love which was almost a classic had passed like any other. The story of it was not a few pages long, as here, but a dozen years. (Pinch a story too tight, and the life goes out of it.) Much as Elinor Wylie told me about herself, she never told me about the end of this chapter, only about her respect and affection for Horace Wylie, whose name she kept for herself as poet. Servants and strangers might call her Mrs. Benét, but I never heard the words Elinor Benét, and now I see them for the first time and realize that they were her name.

She made her way at once into the literary society of Manhattan. What in Washington had seemed shocking, in New York seemed dramatic. Almost nobody knew exactly what her story was, but everybody knew she had a story and thought of her as some kind of heroine. Her poems began to be noticed and applauded. The first one I saw was "The Eagle and the Mole" in the *New Republic*, and I read it over and over, excited as I had been at Edna Millay's "Renascence" in the *Lyric Year* in 1912. I think now, as Benét thought then, that Elinor Wylie should have had the *Nation's* poetry prize for 1921; but her crisp notes were lost in the clamor. Benét told me about her poems, self-consciously, and I guessed she was more to

² William Rose Benét (1886-), poet and novelist, brother of Stephen Vincent Benét (see I, 190 and II, 514).

him than a new poet. I knew nothing else about her, except the vaguest legend, till I first met her late in 1922.

2

Mary Colum and Jean Wright planned a meeting at the MacDowell Club where many poets were to read their work to a large audience, and I was to be chairman and introduce the poets. Elinor Wylie was one of them. She looked like the white queen of a white country. White-faced in white satin, she had no color but in her lustrous eyes and her bronze hair. She seemed restless and remote. Introducing her, I said her poems were like bronze bells. This delighted her. She read with a shy fire, but her voice was actually higher in pitch than her verses. Clear and fresh, it was not sweet, and in heightened moments it might be shrill. Shelley's voice was sometimes shrill.

I did not happen to see her again for another year, at a dinner just after she and Benét came back to town from a short honeymoon. That evening she was neither queen nor poet, but a laughing woman. On the way home in a taxi she and Mary Colum made fun, with such lively and inventive malice, of a dull Englishman who had been at the dinner that I felt insensitive for having noticed only that he was another dull Englishman.

The summer following, Elinor Wylie and Benét came from the Canbys' House at Yelping Hill to Wickwire. That day the Puritan marrow of her bones was in her mind. It was raw and windy after a hot week, but she refused to wear a coat and walked about with bare arms, deliberately cold. At heart she was New England, she declared, like the first Hoyts in Massachusetts. At the lake she insisted on swimming all the way to the float, though it was too far for her, and she reached it breathless. In swimming clothes she had an angularity which did not appear when she wore her usual dress and looked stately. She was immensely pleased when I told her that my daughter Anne had asked me if that was the lady who had written "My Love Came Up From Barnegat."

The *Century* published as much of her work as she would let me have, including *The Venetian Glass Nephew*, which was to furnish her some money she needed for the house she had bought in New Canaan, Connecticut.

"Can *The Venetian Glass Nephew* help me at all as yet?" she wrote from New Canaan, October 3, 1924. "I find I have unexpectedly to pay the *interest*, as well as the *paying off*, on the mortgage. There is a difference, though it takes an expert to understand.

"What a pity that these sordid things exist in a world where we are going into the 18th century next week-end! Both Bill & I are longing to see the lovely house [Wickwire] again—and it was so nice seeing you & Irita last Monday.

"P. S. Of course I hope you can manage this advance, but if you can't, don't picture me as suicidal in consequence. It is my reprehensible nature to welcome excitement & change, & the idea of being melodramatically foreclosed & forced to find another—and of course a better—place to live is in itself attractive to my mind. But one must do one's duty, hence this letter."

Without telling the treasurer of the *Century* all the facts in the case, I managed the advance for the whole novel when only a third of it was written. At Wickwire that week-end she gave me the first part, and I left the others to read it in the library. She was in more suspense than I realized, for her sharp ears overheard me laughing aloud as I read, and she called out in such glee that I had to go back to tell her how brilliant I thought it was.

She wrote the rest of the book in New Canaan, working after the three Benét children had left for school and before they came home. Elinor Wylie was not one of those spawning writers who pour out loose first drafts and then trim and tighten them. She began a sentence on her typewriter only when it was finished in her mind and needed no corrections. In the entire manuscript there was hardly a change, even of a syllable, to the page. And she made only one copy, which she sent to me, and which I sent to the *Century's* printers in New Hampshire. She liked the risk. There was the further risk that the serial began in the magazine before the book was done. It had to be done, and of course it was. I never trusted another writer so far as that.

3

She had often talked about a novel dealing with the Salem witches, one of whom was an ancestor of hers. "But it isn't about the witches," she said, "so much as about the witch-

hunters. They were the evil ones. They found what they were looking for because they created it out of themselves. You know who the real Man in Black was. Why, it was Cotton Mather." She had suffered from witch-hunters herself, I imagined she was thinking. But that must be put off for something still closer to her. She could hardly bear to put it into words, and she pledged me to total secrecy. There had never been such an idea for a novel. Suppose Shelley had not been drowned in the Gulf of Spezia, but had been picked up by an American boat, and had decided to go incognito to America, not back to his wife, whom Elinor Wylie hated. To write the book would be almost to have Shelley for a visitor and to show him America, which Elinor Wylie loved.

I sent her books, for *The Orphan Angel*, about the America of the early nineteenth century. There were no pains to which she would not go to be accurate. After all, she was setting the stage and preparing her house for Shelley.

"Thank you," she wrote from Peterboro on August 12th, "ten thousand times for the noble collection of Americana, which has saved my life & Shelley's. . . .

"I was really much impeded for lack of proper material, & these books are a happy release. I am working myself deaf dumb blind & lumbagoishly lame, but am otherwise well & contented."

"My darling lovely novel can't be finished, after all," she wrote in September, "because Mrs. MacDowell is closing the colony on the 22nd, & the children are returning the 28th. I know, I know, how infinitely sweeter & more valuable real people are than the products of one's fancy, but in this case I am prejudiced. My hero is not entirely the product of my own fancy. Some god became imaginative indeed at his creation, & went aside from the beaten track of button-molding in making him. Which is true, if metaphorically mixed.

"You will perceive perhaps that I am depressed. I believe that it is a mistake to work throughout one's vacation. I don't see the necessity. West Cornwall was a bright oasis, as I told Irita.

"Every day I am reminded of you by the invaluable books. I could have done nothing without them. When—do you happen to know, since you know so much—did they first have

steamboats on the Ohio? In 1822 do you think? . . ."

"Your review," she wrote without a date but with a New Canaan postmark of the 5th of October, "appeared just after my weeping eyes were looking their last on Peterboro, & though it served to staunch my tears it was impossible to write to you in mid-air, as it were. Three days with Grace Conkling, another three with the dear old Commodore in New York, & a week in New Canaan without servants have not advanced my correspondence, & it is with a stiff & enervated hand that I now seize a very bad pen & indite you these few lines. . . .

"I am heartily disgusted with the—really you must forgive me, it is the only possible term—gutless Virginio now that I have him between dull commonplace blue cloth covers, & if I did not believe that Shiloh & David³ were more alive & kicking I should be sad indeed. Thus it is to write a book under bad conditions & when one is tired—the lack of vitality is all too apparent in the tale. But what is one to do—sell matches? I have three little stepchildren, kind lady, & a mortgage on my house, & extreme astigmatism, & I feel as if I had a shawl over my head & chilblains. I suppose in addressing you I should rather say 'kind sir' but I was thinking of some sort of district visitor.

"You see I am writing out of a purple thundercloud of gloom, which your review has lit with lovely flashes. The trouble is—a book half done & a steep impassable prospect of finishing it this winter. All my plans were changed for us at the eleventh hour by the rich & powerful people who mold our lives.

"I'm sorry that I'm beginning to imitate Shelley in this melancholy fashion. Poor darling Shelley, I have not his other virtues to make my dejection forgivable! Nevertheless, please forgive me. And accept my thanks for the lovely gift of the review."

She wrote again the 6th:

"I've just heard that you are in town after all. I'm so sorry that I didn't know it Saturday, for I sent you a fairly long letter to Cornwall, & we all know what the Connecticut mails are. Perhaps it may reach you in time for Christmas.

"It thanked you for your brilliant and benevolent review of my immortal works, & it

³ characters in Elinor Wylie's *Orphan Angel*, 1926.

contained certain stanzas written in dejection by an unfinished novel.

"I hear—from another of your devoted admirers—that you are looking tired. There is nothing so restful—or so distressingly dull—as a regular bread & butter job. Your present way of life, while far more remunerative than mine for example, probably resembles it in discovering that it is harder, while pleasanter & more exciting, to do your own work than the other man's. Yet that—my own work—is precisely what I am fervently pining for at present. To do no work at all—except the other woman's, the dear classic dishwashing, dinner-cooking woman—is incomparably the hardest.

"Did we not make a mistake in our youth—which was so very nearly contemporaneous—in becoming what Miss Sinclair & the Peterboro servants call *creators*? What a noble shoemaker—to choose a trade at random, or because shoemakers are always liberals—would not you have made, & I know how excellent at contriving artificial flowers or the peep-show scenes inside Easter eggs! You will say that these also savor of creation, but our present trouble—if indeed your impeccable admirableness will accept the word—springs from our stubborn attempt to utilize our wretched minds, to make unpleasant grayish convolutions work for us instead of trained & agile fingertips & the beautiful rhythmic strength of habit. 'How lovely is benign stupidity!' as no one really ever wrote.

"Two years ago the *New Republic* would have had a poem from me on this subject, now you must put up with a dull letter. It is hard on you, dear Carl, & I hope it is hard on the *New Republic*."

The Benét children went to California to live with their aunt, Kathleen Norris, and Elinor Wylie finished *The Orphan Angel*, sitting up all night to write the last words in a flat in Bank Street and the next day sailing for Europe. Her novel, selected by the Book-of-the-Month Club, brought her more money than she could have expected to earn by her precise and delicate art. She spent what she was afraid was a guilty share of it for Shelley letters. This was paper his hand had touched. This was ink that had come from his sacred pen. She loved Shelley. He would have loved her if he had known her. They loved each other. She fiercely defended

him once when I said I sometimes found his self-pity tiresome. She wrote her sonnets, "A Red Carpet for Shelley." She wrote essays about him and a short story, "A Birthday Cake for Lionel"—who is in effect Shiloh ten years older. Returning to England in 1925, ten years after she had left it, she thought of herself as almost Shelley, perhaps a friend of Shelley, returning to England ten or so years after Shelley's death in Italy. From this came *Mr. Hodge and Mr. Hazard*, her fourth novel. It had its origin, she told me, in two words spoken by a stupid man from Oxford, who, hearing she was writing sonnets to Shelley, muttered "Poor Shelley." She heard him. Her revenge was to pillory him as Mr. Hodge, who in the novel hears that Mr. Hazard is writing a sonnet to Milton, and says "Poor Milton."

4

During her last three years Elinor Wylie lived—with summers in England—in a flat in Ninth Street, her drawing-room dominated by its memorable silver mirror and her study at the back as austere as her style. Nobody worked harder than she. Four novels and four books of verse in seven years are proof enough. But her evenings were free, and she had countless friends. There were of course many Elinor Wylies. I can claim to know only one of them.

My Elinor Wylie had as sure and strong an intelligence as I have ever known. It was impossible to bring up an idea that she had not had or did not instantly understand. It was impossible to bring out a fact that did not fit into something she already knew. No formal scholar, she had a scholar's instinct for exactness. She could not be comfortable imagining steamboats on the Ohio in 1822 unless she knew they had been there, or imagining a volume of Plato into Mr. Hazard's pocket in 1833 unless she could find out that such pocket volumes then existed. She asked me the minutest questions. Had I ever come across any account of a frontier blue-stocking who might be a model for one of the women who courted Shiloh on his travels? I had, in *A New Home—Who'll Follow?* She was sorry that the book was about Michigan and a time later than 1822, but she used it, transforming what she used.

This young lady (Caroline Matilda Stansbury Kirkland had written of Eloise Fidler) was not as handsome as she fain would have been, if I may judge by the cataracts of ash-coloured ringlets which shaded her cheeks, and the exceeding straitness of the stays which restrained her somewhat exuberant proportions . . . Her dress was in the height of fashion, and all her accoutrements *point device*. A gold pencil-case of the most delicate proportions was suspended by a kindred chain around a neck which might be called whity-brown; and a note-book of corresponding lady-likeness was peeping from the pocket of her highly-useful apron of blue silk—ever ready to secure a passing thought or an elegant quotation. Her album—she was just the person to have an album—was resplendent in gold and satin, and the verses which meandered over its emblazoned pages were of the most unexceptional quality, overlaid with flowers and gems—love and despair. . . .

Miss Fidler wrote her own poetry, so that she had ample employment for her time while with us in the woods. It was unfortunate that she could not walk out much on account of her shoes. She was obliged to make out with diluted inspiration. The nearest approach she usually made to the study of Nature, was to sit on the wood-pile, under a girdled tree, and there, with her gold pencil in hand, and her "eyne, gray as glas," rolled upwards, poefy by the hour.

And, standing marvel of Montacute, no guest at morning or night ever found the fair Eloise ungloved. Think of it! In the very wilds to be always like a cat in nutshells, alone useless where all were so busy. . . . And then her shoes! "Saint Crispin Crispianus" never had so self-sacrificing a votary. No shoemaker this side of New York could make a sole papery enough; no tannery out of France could produce materials for this piece of exquisite feminine foppery.

Now Elinor Wylie's version in *The Orphan Angel*:

Miss Rosalie Lillie was seated upon the woodpile in an attitude of negligent grace; her fine eyes were fixed above the distant tamarack-trees in contemplation of some winged chimæra of the mind. A gold pencil-case was suspended by a delicate chain around the lady's creamy throat; a notebook peeped out from the pocket of her blue satin apron, and a gilded album lay within reach. Under a furred cloak her attire was frail and silken; she wore thin-soled bronze slippers, and her hands were encased in gloves of primrose kidskin.

Miss Lillie was a singularly lovely girl; her features were regular and her figure tall and classically formed. She had a rich abundance of chestnut hair

and her velvet eyes were the color of purple-brown pansies. She looked very expensive and unsuitable against a background of enormous forest trees and ragged rail fences; the smoky November sun picked out the Italian cameo upon her bosom and increased the splendid damask of her cheek.

The document wanders, the work of art marches. One stroke, and the lady is mounted upon her woodpile. Another, and she is contemplating some winged chimæra of the mind, not merely rolling her eyes. Stroke by stroke, the portrait is laughingly perfected. Kind epithets increase the lady's beauty. Her useless shoes become thin-soled bronze slippers. Her nondescript gloves appear as primrose kidskin. Her merely gray eyes turn to the color of purple-brown pansies. She is no longer the object of homespun ridicule. If she looks very expensive and unsuitable against her background of trees and fences, that may not be, the overtones imply, entirely her fault, but partly the fault of nature for being so vast and of the works of man for being so small and mean.

What Elinor Wylie did with Eloise Fidler in making her over into Miss Rosalie Lillie she did with all the subjects of her art, and, for that matter, with her life. She both wrote and spoke with a lovely, amused formality which baffled the downright. But life had two or three times got out of hand with her and had been tragic. She could never forget that. It kept alive the perpetual contradictions of her nature. She was a woman who had beauty and genius. Beauty compelled her and genius compelled her, both of them without always giving her simple motives for her compulsions. Doubly driven, she was doubly sensitive. Two careers side by side in one woman. No wonder she often seemed ruthless, often hysterical, habitually bewildering. Within a few moments she could be suspicious and ingenuous, insolent and tender, capricious and steadfast, desperate and hilarious, stirringly profound and exquisitely superficial.

And there was her vanity, which might have been unendurable if she had not so freely admitted it and laughed about it. Before her sister Nancy Hoyt came from Washington Elinor Wylie made me promise—and everybody else, I suppose—that I would faithfully tell her if I thought Nancy more beautiful than

she. Once when Jacqueline Embry of Kentucky was visiting in New York I took her to call. Elinor Wylie could hardly wait to ask her guest to show her bronze hair and let it be compared with Elinor Wylie's own. At a large dinner a strange and tactless Russian woman said, "Mrs. Benét, I have heard you were not really beautiful, but I think you are." Elinor Wylie, disregarding the present compliment, wept that anybody could ever have said that she was not beautiful. One evening at a large party at Dreiser's studio she felt herself neglected. She could not bear being less than first in any company. Nothing on earth would do but that a few of her close friends should join her in another room and hear her read some poems—say some poems, as she always put it. Her friends humored her in such tantrums of vanity and went to all lengths in flattering her. She liked flattery as a lizard likes the sun. "How can she take it," Jacqueline Embry asked me, "in such spoonfuls? Even if it is the very best butter?" Perhaps the friends who humored and flattered her the most were sometimes bored by her vain tantrums. I know I was, though I admired and adored her.

5

In June, 1928, when I arrived in London, Elinor Wylie was already there, living in her tiny house in Chelsea. She had asked me to meet her the first evening at Osbert Sitwell's, where she was to be. Barely off the boat, I misjudged the occasion, which was for Sunday evening, and did not dress. The whole evening was spoiled for her by my improper tweeds—or so it seemed. "But you did bring evening clothes, didn't you? I am giving you a party this week, and I've already asked everybody to meet you, and I can't bear to have you come in this brown coat." I told her I should not think of wearing it, but she would not be reassured, as she did not listen. "Please don't wear the brown coat to my party." She made me think of an anxious young girl who had planned something that was to be very grown-up and correct and was afraid that one of her guests might treat it as if it were for children.

Her house in Chelsea when I got there was in a headless confusion over water streaming from a broken pipe. She had writers not

plumbers for dinner. After I had telephoned the water company for an emergency repairman, she forgave me my mistake of Sunday evening. "Nobody but an American," she announced with fantastic extravagance, "would have known what to do. And no American but Carl would have known how to do it in London." I felt like a disconcerted elder brother in the face of his sister's bragging.

When the others left she asked me to stay behind to hear her say some new poems she had written. They were sonnets, she told me. So, sitting in her Chelsea drawing-room, I heard a dozen or so of the nineteen sonnets which she later called "One Person," and which belong to the supreme love poetry in English or in any language. I heard them, and I read them, too much moved to notice that one of them lacked a line. In her passion she had lost count. It was as strange in her, most accurate poet, as if she had forgotten to tend her hair or hands.

At first reticent and watchful while I heard and read, she was quickly warmed by my excitement over the poems, threw off her secrecy, and—then at a later dinner in Soho—told me the story behind them. I must know the whole story, she said. There was a man—she told me his name—whom at last she loved absolutely. To me she did not make him sound glorious, though she tried. All the glory was in her. She had never been in love before, she was sure. She had only been loved.

I have believed me obdurate and blind
To those sharp ecstasies the pulses give:
The clever body five times sensitive
I never have discovered to be kind.

This is one of her sonnets. In her speech, the same thing in troubled yet exultant prose. Now at last the pulses had wakened in her blood and her senses leapt. Little enough had actually come of it. Jealous circumstances had kept the lovers apart, and they had been alone only in a forest. Three trysts: "And afterward," she said, "you won't believe it, but we realized that we had met under an oak, an ash, and a thorn." Little could ever come of it. She would not disrupt her life again. This must remain a radiant experience of the mind. But it did not belong solely to her mind. It was flesh too, and it tore at her. She cried out against the cruel

separation. "I don't want much. I don't expect it. I could be satisfied if I could know that sometime, maybe when we are very old, we could spend the same night under one roof. It would not have to be together. Only under the same roof, peacefully. Is that too much to expect? Don't you think I could dare to hope for that?" I soothed her as well as I could, but she was overwhelmed by the most shaking emotion I ever saw in her. Even Shelley could not help her:

A woman by an archangel befriended.
Now must I end the knightly servitude
Which made him my preserver, and renounce
That heavenly aid forever and at once. . . .

Love is what it means to the lover, not to the bystander, and I could not question the reality of the tempest which racked her. All that she had written in the sonnets she said, in rushing sentences. "And am I not your child who has come home? And am I not your hound for faithfulness?" At last, she said, she had learned to feel humble and obedient.

O dear my lord, believe me that I know
How far your virtues have outnumbered mine.

She herself was nothing beside him, who had borne everything. "The little beauty that I was allowed,"—what was that to his "degree of noble and of fair"? How could she deserve, how comfort him?

How is it possible that this hand of clay,
Though white as porcelain, can contrive
a touch
So delicate it shall not hurt too much?
What voice can my invention find to say
So soft, precise, and scrupulous a word
You shall not take it for another sword?

"To educate me fitly for your bride" an eternity might be enough. In the meantime let him be patient with her. Let him make what use of her he could, though he only set her like a timber in his house to "bear a little more than I can bear." Her words rushed and tumbled, and her eyes were wild. She was as pale as a priestess at the mercy of her oracle, flaming through her.

I never saw her alive again, and I remember her best for these perfect sonnets and her broken commentary. What she and the sonnets together said was that this final love had come

to her like first love, and had dissolved her to her youngest elements, but that she was no less a poet than before, and she could instinctively find ripe, skilful words for emotions which ordinarily go no farther than sighs and tears, timid raptures and pitiful despairs. For once in the world, youth knew and age could. The heart of sixteen spoke with the tongue of forty.

I went to Paris and Cannes for a summer among the expatriates. I heard mysteriously about her that she had had a fall and had hurt herself, but could get no definite news about her. Back in New York, I still heard only uncertain rumors. She had had a stroke, the rumors said, and one side of her face was paralyzed. Her friends could not believe she would ever survive disfigurement. When in December she came home I did not go at once to see her, but telephoned her and asked when I might. This would allow her to choose the time or to put it off indefinitely. She said she was not well and very busy but that she must see me early in the coming week. She died that Sunday night, as swiftly as the curtain falls after a tragedy.

Tragedy and triumph. Now she would have to drag out no long old age, beauty fading, strength fraying. Her end was as neat as her art. Perhaps she had been beaten in that early career from which she had turned, at thirty-five, to poetry, but she had outlived her defeats. No poet of her time would be longer remembered, and no woman. In her last scene the poet and the woman in her had shared a triumph beyond which neither could hope to go. Lift the trumpets upon this peroration. Let the black curtain fall.

Her dead face was lovely and serene and proud. Those who were to miss her most took their tone from her, as they had when she was alive, and bore themselves gracefully as well as seriously at her funeral. Death became her, and they could not wish for her life which she might not herself desire. The lives of the immortals are not measured by their fevered years.

A young man was speaking softly. He was Philip Hichborn, he said, her son. He had been brought up to think she was evil, a mother who had wantonly left her child. Two years ago, in England, he had gone to see her. (She had told me about that. He had come to see

her, and had been silent, and had hated her, she thought.) Now he was saying that when he had seen her he had believed her beautiful and magical, and had not known what to say or how to say it. He was sure she had thought he did not love her. But he did, at sight. He had since then read her books and had found out all he could about her, and he had determined that this Christmas he would visit her again. At last they would be mother and son. "And now it is like this." There is no death quite complete. However it ties its ultimate knot, some loose strand dangles in the wind of life.

JUSTIN BROOKS ATKINSON

Known principally as a drama critic and war correspondent, Justin Brooks Atkinson (1894-) has written extensively in other fields. Five years after graduation from Harvard in 1917, he began book reviewing for the New York Times. It was not until 1925 that he became drama critic for that newspaper, continuing until he became a foreign correspondent during World War II. In 1925 appeared Sky-line Promenade, reflections on mountain climbing and similar adventurous pursuits. East of the Hudson appeared in 1931; Cingalese Prince, 1934, gave early evidence of Atkinson's wide-ranging interests. A sensitive, catholic, and scholarly critic, Atkinson found a kindred spirit in Thoreau and in 1927 published Henry Thoreau: The Cosmic Yankee (see II, 112). The following selection is more than profile or portrait; the first part is a biographical sketch emphasizing background and influences, the second part an understanding critical evaluation of Thoreau's writings and philosophy.

THOREAU¹

Thoreau was the genius of Concord, where he was born on July 12, 1817. Although that venerable and tranquil town was sheltering two other eminent men of letters—Emerson and Hawthorne—and at least two minor literary notables—Alcott and Channing—Thoreau was bone of Concord's bone and flesh of Concord's

flesh, and he could never be torn away from the town where he was born. Several other New England towns might have nourished him well; he was a man of infinite resource and could find all truth within himself. There are towns in the White Mountains or on Cape Cod that would have provided a career for him, if he had lived in them his healthy prose would have caught their rhythm and his character would have taken shape in their image, for he was the poet of New England locality. But if Concord was fortunate in numbering him amongst her subjects, he was fortunate in Concord where the meadows were fertile, the hills gentle, the woods hospitable, and where the natural resources were rich without being wild. For there was a pond in Concord—Walden Pond—which all the world recognizes now as a masterpiece, and two pleasant rivers flowed through the bosom of the town, filled with fluvial treasures and offering passage to other parts of the universe.

Nor was that all Concord had to offer a man of original mind and great personal character. Lying close to Boston, where the intellectual life of America was most resolute, Concord was simmering with ideas. When Thoreau was a young man Emerson was already the fountain-head of Concord's intellectual and spiritual life. Transcendentalism, which believed in the infinity of man, flowed out of Emerson's books, lectures, neighborhood relationships and walks in the fields. Everything Emerson said and did was part and parcel of his faith. But he was no solitary in Concord. Concordians in general were alert. People discussed religion, philosophy and politics in the parlors, church vestries, at the stores and even along the streets. Already famous in national history, Concord was making spiritual history by the interest it cultivated in the vague, aspiring ideas of the time. It was a fine place for a man whose curiosity about life was unlimited.

Having chosen a good town for his nativity Thoreau also chose good parents and relatives. His father was descended from sea captains and merchants from the Channel island of Jersey; his grandfather had accumulated moderate wealth from privateering and storekeeping in Boston. His mother had descended from a wealthy and notable Tory family whose estates had been confiscated during the Revolution.

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By the time of Thoreau's generation the wealth on both sides had dwindled to almost nothing; his immediate family was always hard-pressed. But his parents were people of independent mind, probity and vigor of spirit, and they were capable of hard work. Although their means were limited they sent Henry to Harvard College, class of 1837, for they believed in cultivating the mind. Being practical people, they may have hoped to have him succeed in one of the established professions, as other good students generally did. But the profession he practiced was a strange one that he evoked from his private character, and it paid him nothing but his self-respect. If his parents, his brother and sisters were disappointed there is no record of regret or rebuke. They were people of intelligence and principle; probably they always understood his potentialities and admired his vital integrity, and it is certain that they loved him with the warm affection of a family that lived on intimate terms.

To some of his neighbors Thoreau seemed austere. But his family had all the best of him, which was affectionate, kind and loyal; and whenever Thoreau wrote to his mother from Staten Island or to his sisters in Roxbury or Bangor, the thoughts were homely, the style was glowing and the concern with family affairs was anxious. When his father died he dropped in large part the career he had carved out of himself and Concord and took over the responsibilities of the head of the family. Although that burden must have involved a considerable sacrifice, he accepted it calmly and discharged his duty, for the Thoreaus were in the habit of regarding personal honor as a natural part of their lives.

He was a writer. He was the author of thirty-nine manuscript volumes, only two of which were published during his lifetime; and it is doubtful if he ever earned much more from his writings than they cost him. For the volumes of which he was author were almost entirely the journals where he industriously assembled his thoughts and observations and tried to extract the basic truth of the cosmos. In fact, his journals were the core of his life; he confessed to them and then drew sustenance from them, "as a bear sucks his claws in winter"; and all his published works were made out of them. "Henry Thoreau—Writer of

Journals" might well be the description of his profession. *Walden* and *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* are only parts of the treasures buried in his copy-books.

5 When he was graduated from college he might have had hopes of a less private career. He was a serious young man. He had already made up his mind that most of the ways by which men earn a living are degrading and that men sell themselves into perpetual bond-
10 age by conforming to the traditional ways of the world. Most of his principles that developed into passionate accusations in his mature philosophy are to be found in his college essays, for the life of Thoreau was a straight, firm line
15 of moral development from youthful introspection into the militant wisdom of his last years. At first he tried to teach school, which was the ordinary profession of college graduates. In association with his brother, who was an attractive, high-spirited young man with considerable ability, Thoreau did teach school in Concord for a year or two, much to the delight
20 of the students and their parents. Like everything with which he was connected, it was no routine scheme for earning a living, but a forward-looking school that gave full value in book education and that tried to enrich the lives of the students by personal association
25 with the teachers during walks in the fields and picnics on the river where some of the more luxuriant facts about life could be learned. All his life Thoreau had a winning way with children; more than some of their elders they could appreciate the kindness and frankness
30 of a naturally upright man. But his brother died, a particularly agonizing death that left its mark on everyone who loved him, and Thoreau gave up the school.

40 For a few years he had no settled employment. He lived in Emerson's home, taking charge of all those practical things to which the grand old man of Concord was so conspicuously unsuited; he toiled over his thoughts,
45 which was his lifetime occupation, and wrote for *The Dial*, which was the Pierian Spring of Transcendentalism. For a few months he lived with William Emerson's family on Staten Island, New York, as a tutor, meanwhile apparently looking around in New York for a literary association where he could find a market for his wares. But the magazines and news-

papers in New York in 1843 were not ready to pay cash for the kind of fiercely independent thoughts Thoreau struggled with in his journals. Presently he was back in Concord, which he regretted having left, and settled down with his family in their pencil business. Probably he knew, what he had long suspected, that the world was not ready to receive him on his own exacting terms.

If Thoreau had never gone to live alone in a hut at Walden Pond it is possible that he would never have been celebrated. That was the most dramatic thing he ever did; the chronicle of his adventure is a classic. In 1845 the time was ripe for a bold move. He was at loose ends; his brother's death was still a source of misery. Furthermore, he was a romantic youth, under the mask of truculent sobriety; he was only 28 years of age, a lover of nature and an honest and capable workman with his hands. As it happened, a friend of his had lived one winter in a hut on the shore of a pond in the next township and Thoreau very likely helped him build the camp. As Thoreau's bosom companion, Ellery Channing,² wrote in the spring of 1845: "It seems to me you are the same old sixpence you used to be, rather rusty, but a genuine piece. I see nothing for you in this earth but that field which I once christened 'Briars'; go out upon that, build yourself a hut and there begin the process of devouring yourself alive."

By the end of March he borrowed an axe from Alcott,³ cut down some white pine timber beside Walden Pond to frame a hut, and on Independence Day, which was highly propitious, he moved in and lived there alone for two years. Watching and listening, studying, thinking, dreaming, attending to the varying moods of the pond, writing in his journals, trying the virtue of the great world outside by the simple truths of his secluded existence—all that brought his career to fruition. Although he left the hut in 1847 and supported himself by surveying, pencil-making, and other homely crafts, he had found the path to a wise approach to life at Walden Pond, and from that time on he was a man whose destiny was in

full view. Sometimes Thoreau seemed needlessly morose in his responses to human society; it was late in life before he threw down his guards and took men as good companions with human gusto. But the opening up of his career began at Walden, after that camping experience with its philosophical, economic and romantic aspects he wrote with confidence, force and clarity; he understood and rejoiced in his place in the world.

The rest of his career is quickly stated. In 1849 he published at his own expense *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, which was the record, with glorious discussions, of a boat voyage he had made with his brother into New Hampshire ten years earlier. In 1854 he published *Walden*, which slowly brought his original rebellion to the notice of the world. Meanwhile, in various contemporary periodicals he published *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*, which is an insurgent essay that has helped to reshape the world; also his savory records of journeys to Canada, the Maine Woods and Cape Cod, and many other minor essays. All his life he and the other members of his family had been ardent abolitionists, and at times took part in helping Negro slaves to escape. In 1845 he had personally seceded from the Union as the most earnest protest he could make against a government that tolerated slavery, and he spent a night in jail to make his point public. When John Brown defied the government at Harper's Ferry, Thoreau, who was eminently a practical man, found a concrete cause that illuminated all he had ever thought and written about freedom; suddenly he was transfigured into a man of action. His several speeches on John Brown are grand summonses to battle—angry, rebuking and founded on principle.

Soon after this inspiring episode in his career his health began to fail rapidly. Although he made one desperate attempt to recover it by a futile journey to Minnesota, he soon realized that he was doomed, and he patiently spent the last two frail years of his life getting his myriad papers in order, compiling articles from his journals for the *Atlantic Monthly*—sometimes riding out with his sister to look on the beauties of Concord which he had devoted his life to discovering and describing. His submissive death was the surest proof that he wholly be-

² William Ellery Channing (1818–1901), New England poet.

³ Amos Bronson Alcott (1799–1888), educational reformer.

lied the faith he had lived. He had no regrets or misgivings. "One world at a time," he said to Channing, who was speculating on the hereafter. When someone else inquired whether he had made his peace with God, he answered, "We have never quarreled." On May 6, 1862, when he was almost 45 years of age and when the fruit blossoms were out and the fragrance was coming in at the window, he died, as he had lived, with complete faith in the wisdom of nature. His sister remarked that he was the most upright man she had ever known.

2

As a writer Thoreau embraced so many subjects that it is still difficult to catalogue him. He was "poet-naturalist," as Channing described him; but he was also philosopher, historian, economist, rebel, revolutionary, reporter. Apart from its poetic record of an idyllic adventure, *Walden* is the practical philosophy of rebellion against the world's cowardly habits of living. Most formless of his books and yet most winning and light-hearted, *The Week* is a compound of thought, scholarship, speculation and narrative. *The Maine Woods* is the most pungent and profound study of woods and camping that has ever been written. *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience* is an eloquent declaration of the principles that make revolution inevitable in times of political dishonor. The John Brown papers are political pamphleteering. Large portions of the journals are character studies of the people in Concord whom Thoreau most admired. Although he rarely left Concord and seldom read the newspapers, he was well informed about the life of his times and had fiery opinions about slavery and justice. His achievements in those fields have somewhat overshadowed the range of his scholarship and the brilliance of his detached portraits of people. Almost nothing escaped the keen eyes and mind of this tireless writer; there is a bewildering variety in his work.

Although it is impossible to catalogue him neatly, there is in everything he did a concrete point of view that gives a clear-cut unity to the abundance and disarray of his writing. Primarily he was a moral philosopher. From those first tentative college essays, which are touch-

ing in their youthful fortitude, to the fulminating John Brown polemics there was a grave, responsible, pure-minded attitude toward life in all his work. He had a passion for wise and honorable living. As a whole, the Transcendentalists were not systematic philosophers, bent on arranging the pattern of life into a logical sequence. Quite the contrary: they believed in living by inspiration. Believing that man and the universe were God, they worshipped Him by trying to live in spiritual harmony with the great laws of nature—trying humbly to be good men. Their philosophy was little more than a collection of "thoughts," of individual aspirations and manifestations distilled from the sunshine and the mist over the river. They believed that they were living the good life, not by accumulating knowledge or acquiring possessions, but by quickening their awareness of the beauties of nature and human nature. Thoreau yearned to be as pure and innocent as the flowers in the field. Although the Transcendentalists were not as a whole consistent churchgoers in a period when churchgoing was an integral part of community life, they were nevertheless deeply religious people. In a humble way, they represented God on earth; they were His agents because they were trying to live in His image and they believed that men might yet find Heaven on earth by looking into their own hearts for the rules of life and by following the direction of their finest instincts.

Thoreau was the most enduring of the lot because he had the most intimate knowledge and understanding of nature and was, accordingly, practical and concrete. That was the source of what Emerson admired as "the oaken strength" in his writing. For Thoreau did not merely write verses to the evanescent beauties of the out-of-doors and stroll placidly through the fields after a stuffy day in the study; he made it his business to know everything that he could about nature from personal observation. He wanted to know the cold by the tingle in his finger-tips and the darkness by stumbling through the woods at night, and he felt most elated when his senses were as alert as those of the woodchuck and the loon. He felt that his whole life was on the most solid footing when his boots were deep in the river-bank muck in the springtime. Although he

acquired an enormous fund of knowledge by the persistence of his goings forth in all kinds of weather and by the extraordinary capacity he had for observation, he was not a modern scientist. On the contrary, he suspected science because he believed that it dealt in specimens rather than in life. No one has ever given himself to nature so passionately, so confidently, so privately. It was a rich, turbulent, exhausting life he led. Although the world was at loose ends and his neighbors lived lives of "quiet desperation," he believed that he was on the right track and had nothing but immortality to fear when he was present to greet the first bluebird in late February or early March and to find the first hepatica blooming among the late snowdrifts. Spring always convinced him that he could live forever on the lavish bounty of God. God was good: he knew because he listened to the song of God in the woods.

Everything remarkable about Thoreau sprang directly from his devotion to nature. It was nature more than man, it was the out-of-doors more than books or political discussions that taught him the necessity for independence. A free man himself—free by his own principle and vigilance—he despised the cowards who conformed. He had a poor opinion of his townsmen who mortgaged their lives for a farm and pushed a house, barn and sixty-acre woodlot down through the long years before them. He disliked the gentlemen who had isolated themselves from life by civil employment or social artifice. He was contemptuous of the million compromises men make with their governments to acquire wealth or to preserve the peace on a false basis. As for himself, he knew the fundamentals of life so thoroughly from personal association with the flowers he ministered unto and the woodlots he surveyed for his neighbors, that he had no intention of making any compromises with his genius whatsoever, and he swore that he at least should be a free man though everyone else sold his soul to comfort and convenience.

That is why he refused to pay a poll tax to a government that tolerated slavery, and that is why John Brown was his man. All his life he had been conducting an individual rebellion against the slavery of thought, commerce and manners. When John Brown rebelled against

Negro slavery at Harper's Ferry⁴ on principle alone at the certain risk of his life, Thoreau completely understood him. It was his sort of thing on a greater scale. It was what he had been waiting for. Although some of his neighbors counselled caution, Thoreau took the initiative into his own hands, summoned a village meeting and pled with his townsmen for justice and action with more cogency and eloquence than he had ever imparted to a speech before. He carried the John Brown defense to Boston at considerable personal risk. Although the militant John Brown episode may seem alien to the life of a solitary philosopher, it was really the logical and brilliant climax to his philosophy. To love nature was to worship freedom. To believe in nature was to rebel.

Certainly it was no passport into good society. Especially in his early years before his philosophy was fully formed and when perhaps he felt a little wounded by the world's indifference to his talents, he had a truculent way with people and it annoyed or grieved them according to their natures. There was in those days a taciturn or forbidding streak in his deportment. One of his neighbors said she could love him but that she could not like him. Emerson said: "Henry is—with difficulty—sweet." For the brazenly independent life he had set his mind on living put him on the defensive in a town accustomed to the amenities. Being shy and abnormally sensitive, Thoreau protected himself by erecting around him a high wall of reserve, skepticism and external misanthropy. To those who had never glanced down into the ringing depths of his character he was an odd stick, and many people resented him.

That rasp in his social relations was a defect of personality rather than the truth of his character. Fundamentally, he was a man of abiding affections. Although he distrusted gentlemen and hated impostors, he had such exalted standards of friendship that his friends sometimes had difficulty in meeting his requirements. For the simple, honest folks of the town he had great relish and he liked to talk to them and keep well posted on their affairs. He admired an honest farmer more than a clever publican, and made no secret of his preference.

⁴ John Brown . . . Harper's Ferry: see II, 331.

When he believed that he was among friends he could be an exuberant comrade on occasions. With Channing, his familiar companion out-of-doors, he was on terms of long-suffering and humorous affection; there was "an inexhaustible fund of good fellowship" in Channing, to use Thoreau's own words of appreciation. Although his moral philosophy had given him an austere appearance, he had a Yankee sense of humor; he liked puns and ludicrous incongruities and comic turns of phrase.

When the secret of his life was fairly published in *Walden* and people began to seek him out as a leader of thought, his defenses began to drop one by one. He had made many friends and did them the honor of taking them seriously. The last eight years of his life were conspicuously social. He visited and was visited. He enjoyed the companionship of congenial people at home, in the woods and on journeys to the White Mountains and the Maine woods. When his health began to fail there was a need for companionship greater than he had experienced before; and when he planned to go to Minnesota in search of his health he was reluctant to go alone. For Thoreau was no misanthrope. He required, as he said, "broad margins to his leisure," so that his thoughts might grow freely. His perceptions were so acute, his understanding of men was so penetrating that he was unhappy in company that misjudged him. A person who was spiritually coarse wounded him grievously. But he was always civil, courteous and kind in his ordinary relationships around town; he had abundant affection for his family and his friends; he was generous with his talents; and in those last ten years of his life, when his private battle with life was won, he overflowed with good will toward good men. It may have surprised him a little to discover how glorious life can be in the company of good people. Certainly it expanded his horizons enormously.

Since he was all of one piece—man, matter and spirit—it is impossible to discuss his style of writing apart from himself. At his best he wrote the most vigorous and pithy prose in American literature; and no wonder, for his training was extraordinarily complete. On the one hand, he was a remarkable classical scholar;

all his life he read Greek and Latin poetry and translated into English poetry the classic verses he admired most. On the other hand, he had learned out-of-doors the great truth of fresh simplicity. There are no literary flourishes in his style; everything grows out of nature. "Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity," were the three great maxims of his life; and they stood guard over the notes he scribbled in the field and the sentences he developed out of them when he expanded them in his journal, rewriting more than once until they carried his thought with the greatest strength and directness of statement he could master. "The one great rule of composition—and if I were a professor of rhetoric I should insist on this—is to speak the truth," he said. He approached his subject as though he were the first man to write about this world which has been so long inhabited and so carelessly spattered with ink. Since his mind was clear, the facts are accurately stated, and the thoughts and impressions endure in words that feel concrete—a part of old Mother Earth.

It is noticeable that his writing improved according to his familiarity with a subject. When he first went into the Maine woods he was in new territory, which put him on his guard, and his Ktaadn essay shows the reserve of a stranger who had not shed his Concord experience. After his third journey, described in the Allegash essay, he wrote with the assurance and enthusiasm of a man who had conquered his subject and enjoyed the labor of recording it. When he first went to Cape Cod he felt uneasy and a little hostile to such meagre land; after his third visit he was writing with the humorous, genial relish of an old inhabitant. There is no better prose in American literature than the clear, sinewy, fragrant writing in *Walden* which discusses the homely details of house-building and kitchen economy and rejoices in the romantic loveliness of sounds at night and bird notes by day—and speculates on the beauties of good living—all in plain images and simple phrases that do not change pace with the change of subject. Although his writing looks easy, only a man of keen mind and remarkable skill could have made a sentence carry so much baggage and have given living form to impulses of the imagination.

But that was Thoreau—a man with the skill of an artisan and the aspiration of a poet. He had disciplined himself so that the two were perfectly mated. What he was as a man looks sternly out of every page he wrote; it represents his deliberate conviction. When Thoreau was dying, Bronson Alcott described him in a familiar letter as “the most sagacious and wonderful Worthy of his time, and a marvel to coming ones.” That was the generous thought of a neighbor who was moved by the prospect of losing a noble friend. But perhaps it was not unreasonably excessive. For by faith and works Thoreau learned how to live a life, which is a thing rarely heard of; and his writings have helped thousands of his kinsmen to make their lives more rich and honest and able.

GERALD WHITE JOHNSON

Gerald White Johnson (1890–) was born in North Carolina and has been a newspaperman, critic, historian, and biographer since his graduation from college. Among his many books are *Andrew Jackson, 1927*; *Roosevelt: Dictator or Democrat?, 1941*; *Woodrow Wilson, 1944*; and *Honorable Titan: A Biographical Study of Adolph S. Ochs, 1946*. The selection here reprinted is an excellent illustration of the weaving together of character analysis and biographical detail. Starting with the contrasts in public opinion of Wilson and proceeding to an analysis and clarification of issues in the critical years 1919 and 1920, Johnson moves smoothly and skillfully into description and discussion of Wilson's formative years. The author has few peers among contemporary biographers for industry and exactitude in research and for lucid exposition and character analysis.

WOODROW WILSON: THE EARLY YEARS¹

“Oh, the immovably shining, smiling man!”

Thus William Bolitho described Woodrow Wilson as he appeared to Europe in 1919.

“The perfect model of the Christian cad.”

¹ From *Woodrow Wilson* by Gerald W. Johnson, Harper & Brothers, 1944. Copyright, 1944, by Look, Inc. Reprinted by permission.

Thus H. L. Mencken described Woodrow Wilson as he appeared to a considerable number of Americans in 1920.

Between these verdicts public opinion has shifted for years, but we are beginning to realize that neither is altogether true, neither altogether false.

Woodrow Wilson did appear to a large part of the world as the carrier of all its hopes. Woodrow Wilson failed, and because he was full of faults it was easy to attribute his failure to his own shortcomings.

He is one of the easiest of our great leaders to condemn. He was full of faults. They stuck out like spines upon a cactus. Everyone could see them, and nobody who came close to him could avoid them. He was arrogant. He was bullheaded. He was punitical. He was vengeful. He could be icy and he could be blistering. It is doubtful that he really was, but he appeared to be self-righteous. It is doubtful that he really was, but he appeared to be hypocritical. He had a genius for rubbing men the wrong way. He could—and frequently did—convert former friends and admirers into the bitterest enemies.

All Wilson's faults were glaring, and in addition to them he possessed an unusual share of the more hateful virtues. He was frightfully candid. He was utterly truthful in discussing, especially to their faces, the faults and flaws of other men. He was scrupulously honest in financial affairs and would not waver a hair's breadth to favor his best friend. He was pious and would not tolerate ribaldry in those around him. He was learned and impatient with ignorance. He had the unhappy faculty of being right in the most irritating way. Someone has pointed out that he could make men so furious that they became downright maudlin in their hatred.

For years, many—perhaps most—Americans have accepted the explanation that Wilson failed because he made so many enemies that in the end they dragged him down. He was, people say, the cause of his own defeat, and that's all there was to it.

But that was not all. If that were all, then Wilson, being down would stay down. But he doesn't. For the past two years, especially, he has haunted our minds like a bad conscience. Americans are thinking and talking of Wilson

more than they are of some political leaders who consider themselves very much alive, whereas Wilson was buried in the crypt of the Episcopal Cathedral at Washington twenty years ago.

So men have begun to examine him again, and they find an interesting thing. His faults stuck out; they did not drive in. Take the list and examine its items, one by one. They are bad enough, but none is proof of any interior rottenness, except, perhaps, hypocrisy and it is not certain that Wilson was hypocritical.

On the other hand, the hidden faults that people do not see until too late are missing from that list. His bitterest enemy never called Woodrow Wilson weak. No one called him stupid. No one said he could be bought or bullied. No one accused him of being frivolous or lazy. Yet these are the great vices of rulers, flaws that ruin their countries as well as themselves.

Elizabeth of England had every one of Wilson's faults except Puritanism and for that she substituted half a dozen others that he never had; yet nobody doubts that she was a very great ruler.

Was Woodrow Wilson?

It is not a pleasant idea, for if he was right, then the rest of us were wrong, terribly wrong, and it is part of our credo that a hundred and thirty million Americans can't be wrong. Yet that belief has been looking doubtful since December 7, 1941. Dead men scattered from the Solomon Islands to Italy suggest that we may have been wrong. Fine ships by hundreds shattered and sunk suggest that we may have been wrong. Billions upon uncounted billions wrung from our toil; mourning in every city and town, in crowded tenements and lonely farmhouses, weeping women and prematurely old men, "blood and toil and sweat and tears" suggest that we may have been wrong.

When events seem to prove that a nation has been wrong, that nation, like a man in similar circumstances, should examine its conscience.

PORTRAIT OF A FAILURE

Who and what was this man Wilson, dead twenty years but refusing to be forgotten? Why should his memory return to trouble us in the hour of our agony and loss? We repudiated, dismissed and buried him long ago; why will

he not stay dead? Why cannot we shut him out of our minds as we do other leaders who have failed and gone into oblivion? He will not be dismissed, he will not be ignored, he haunts us by night and by day. Is he, in a sense, the conscience of America?

They have told us that he was The Man Who Would be King—nay, more—The Man Who Would be God, and it is slyly suggested that he was smitten for his blasphemy. We have been told that he was without principles, without morals, without honor, avid only of power and at heart scornful of the simpletons who granted him power.

On the other hand, we have been told that he was a moony romantic, honest enough, but hopelessly incompetent, who assumed to deal on equal terms with clever and unscrupulous men who cheated him, stripped him and turned him out, laughing at him and at a nation foolish enough to put its destiny in his hands. We have been told that he was an "impractical idealist" who saw a vision of the New Jerusalem and allowed it to blind his eyes to every earthly, and earthy, fact, to his own ruin and that of his nation, and we have been told that he was an ice-cold cynic, incapable of a single generous emotion, who took advantage of the loyalty of other men, used them for his own purposes and then tossed them aside ruthlessly and with Satanic amusement.

We have been given all these explanations and, to some extent, we have believed them; yet they do not fit together. The explanations simply do not explain. If some are true, then others must be false, for they are contradictory. If Wilson was a shrewd man, he couldn't have been a fool. If he was an idealist, he couldn't have been a cynic. If he was an honest innocent, he couldn't have been an astute scoundrel.

It is true that every man is a bundle of contradictions. None is so honest that he has not sometime, somewhere, committed some sin, none so high-minded that he hasn't occasionally done something base, none so wise that he has not played the fool. But we are asked to believe of this man that he was both supremely wise and utterly foolish, profoundly honest and thoroughly corrupt, at once powerful and helpless. This is beyond belief.

One thing, however, we know positively: Woodrow Wilson was a titanic failure.

But even this is not in itself conclusive. A failure gigantic enough leaves upon the world an impression far more lasting than an ordinary success. Socrates had to drink the hemlock. Caesar ended prostrate at Pompey's marble feet. Napoleon died a prisoner. The long roll of the martyrs is a record of failure. The most successful of all religious leaders was Mohammed, but his triumphant career has not shaken the world as did another that led to a felon's death on Calvary. A failure big enough is not necessarily a failure at all, and Wilson's was immense.

PORTRAIT OF AN IDEAL

But his undertaking was also immense. It was, in his own words, "to make the world safe for democracy." It was not, as some have said, to establish the millennium. It was not even to abolish war, except indirectly. He knew that democracy is not a warlike form of government except when it is threatened with destruction; hence if it could be made safe, it would be unlikely to fight. In this way wars would become rare events.

As we look back on it now, this seems to be reasonable, indeed, nothing but plain common sense. Yet twenty-five years ago it was looked upon as terrific. Even then it was not the idea that startled people. Senator Watson, of Indiana, one of Wilson's opponents, said that eighty per cent of the American people favored the League of Nations. It was not the idea, but the machinery to put the idea into effect, that aroused opposition.

Wilson thought, and said, that he was defeated by "a little group of willful men," but he was wrong. He said this and believed it, because the Republican party, as a party, was not opposed to the League. On the contrary, many Republicans, including such eminent figures as William H. Taft, Charles E. Hughes, Elihu Root and Nicholas Murray Butler were strong supporters of the League. Among its opponents William E. Borah, of Idaho, and Robert M. La Follette, of Wisconsin, are almost the only ones big enough to be bracketed with the pro-League Republicans. George W. Norris, of Nebraska, opposed it at the time, but later came over. For the rest, the opposition was headed by such senators as Lodge, of Massachusetts, and Fall, of New Mexico, among the Repub-

licans, with Reed, of Missouri, and Watson, of Georgia, among the Democrats. Wilson was wrong, however, in believing that these men not only headed the opposition, but composed it.

Let us face the fact. The defeat of the League of Nations may have been effected in the first instance by Fall and Lodge and Reed and Borah and the rest of the "little group of willful men," but their victory would have been short-lived had it not been accepted by a majority of the American people. Defeat of the League was not altogether liked, but it was accepted. The guilt cannot be shoved off on any little group; it lies upon us all. And not the smallest part of its weight presses upon those who believed in their hearts that Wilson was right but who were too tired, or too indolent, to do anything about it.

Let us face the fact. Warren G. Harding was our choice in 1920. True, his nomination may have been decided upon by a small gang of politicians in a smoke-filled hotel room at two o'clock in the morning, but his election was effected by the voters of the United States. "The trouble with Warren," said an old party war horse in a moment of candor, "is that he lacks mentality." The war horse was wrong. It was not the trouble with him, it was his supreme asset. Warren Harding lacked mentality and Woodrow Wilson had too much. Even though Wilson was not in the race, an electorate sick of mentality was determined to register its protest against it. That protest was registered; and that is one reason why American blood and treasure began to spill again in 1941.

Woodrow Wilson happened to belong to the Democratic party, but the League of Nations was not a Democratic idea. It was not originally a Wilsonian idea, nor an American idea, nor altogether an Anglo-Saxon idea. Its most illustrious exponent, until Wilson appeared, was Jan Christiaan Smuts, a South African Boer, a man of Dutch extraction but not of European birth.

Yet although opposition in this country was not partisan in the beginning, the United States refused to support the League, and from then on whatever chance of success it may have had was gone. It was not that the League was thus deprived of physical power. Great Britain and France still had force enough for its purposes,

if force had been sufficient. But any organization devised to bring about the amicable settlement of disputes, whether among individuals or among nations, cannot succeed if its only argument, or if its primary argument, is force. It must have, first of all, a reputation for fairness. The League was not devised merely to settle disputes, but to settle them amicably. Good will was its principal asset, and when the United States refused to participate, the fatal loss was not the loss of American armed strength, but loss of the prestige of the only great power that had nothing either to gain or lose in Europe and that might therefore be expected to take a disinterested view of European questions.

This is the point that the American people never quite understood. "Shall we act as the policeman of turbulent Europe?" was the rhetorical question which opponents of the League shouted over and over again. It was a trick question. It had nothing to do with the point. Europe did not want a policeman. What it lacked was a disinterested judge; and if the orators had asked, "Shall we offer our services as a fair-minded judge?", the people might have said, "Yes."

THE UNKNOWN CHAMPION

It is possible, though, that the main source of the bewilderment that led to the fatal decision was the people's uncertainty about the man whose name was most completely identified with the League of Nations project.

The people are, as a rule, better judges of a man than of an issue, but to judge correctly they must know the man, and the fact is that they did not know Woodrow Wilson. Only from 1913 to 1919—less than seven of the sixty-eight years of his life—was he prominently before them; and during all of those years he was not so much a personality as a political issue. The moment he became a candidate for the Presidency the people were confused by a clamor of contradictory statements about him; and until he became a candidate the masses were hardly aware of his existence. He was already famous as a scholar but not in the world of business and politics. Everyone interested in the history of constitutional government was aware of Woodrow Wilson, but not many are interested in the subject. Even after he became

Governor of New Jersey he appeared before the nation more as the representative of certain ideas than as a person; and a representative of ideas he continued to be, largely because his personality was obscured in a fog of controversy. Lies are told about all Presidents; but rarely has the lying been more continuous, more voluminous, or more enthusiastic than it was about Woodrow Wilson.

Yet he is by no means incomprehensible. True, he was not at all like the Presidents we had become accustomed to since Lincoln, but he looked strange simply because he was in the Presidency of the United States. At Princeton, even those who disliked him never thought of him as outlandish. In a Presbyterian pulpit he would have looked quite at home. He belonged, in fact, to a well-known American type; but it happened to be a type that had not figured conspicuously in politics since the death of the South Carolina statesman, John C. Calhoun, in 1850. Andrew Jackson was also of Wilson's type, but in 1913 he had been dead nearly seventy years. Few remembered either of them, and thus a great many voters never got rid of the idea that Wilson was some sort of queer specimen the like of which had never been seen before.

Woodrow Wilson was Scotch-Irish, a Presbyterian, and a Southerner born in 1856. Each of these three facts is important, for each had much to do with making him what he was.

THE MAKING OF THE MAN

The Scotch-Irish are in many ways an admirable people. They have given us a brilliant array of national heroes and have played a great part in building the nation. But whatever else may be said of them, they are not soft.

How could they be, considering their history? The people of Scotland are not soft; but the Scotch-Irish are even less so, for they are Scots who were moved over to northern Ireland some three centuries ago for the express purpose of holding down a rebellious country. They held it and they hold it yet, but not by being easygoing and amiable. The easygoing were killed off many generations ago, and only the hard survived. Woodrow Wilson's ancestors survived.

Similarly, Presbyterianism has commanded respect for centuries. It has produced saints

and martyrs, and its moral triumphs in America have been many and splendid; but nobody has ever regarded the doctrine of John Knox as a soft faith.

Finally, a Southerner born in 1856 spent his boyhood in a region devastated physically by a great war and even worse devastated morally and socially by a fatally unrealistic policy of "reconstruction." In the years between 1865 and 1890, especially, and to a lesser degree up to 1900, the white population of the South was sifted ruthlessly. The soft either went out or went under. The strong, the resolute, the indomitable—in a word, the hard—survived. Woodrow Wilson himself went out because the South could not use his kind of talent. He was triply hardened, but he wasn't hard enough for the South of sixty years ago.

He was born December 28, 1856, at Staunton, Virginia, in the beautiful valley where Stonewall Jackson was to make his fame as a general half a dozen years later. Less than a year after his birth the family moved to Augusta, Georgia, yet Wilson always regarded himself as a Virginian. As a small boy his ambition was to be a senator from Virginia. He went to the University of Virginia to study law. Yet he was connected with the state only by the accident of birth. His parents came from Ohio and his grandparents from Europe.

He was of distinguished ancestry, if you reckon brains and character as distinction. There were no titles in his family and no money, but his father and grandfather were both religious leaders and scholars. Indeed, Joseph Ruggles Wilson, his father, was regarded as one of the most learned divines in the Presbyterian church. His mother was Janet—although for some unknown reason the family often called her Jessie—Woodrow, daughter of the Rev. Thomas Woodrow, who had been born in Scotland. He, too, was a Presbyterian minister, and he became the ancestor of an extraordinary number of clergymen and teachers who attained eminence. It was his name, Thomas Woodrow, that was given the child born in Staunton, and the boy grew up as Tommy. It was not until he had reached manhood that he dropped the Thomas and used only his middle name.

Wilson was the descendant of able, high-minded men. In that sense, he was an aristo-

crat, but it was an aristocracy of which even Thomas Jefferson approved. All the Wilsons and the Woodrows, so far as the records show, had to work for a living, but they stood high in the community simply because they had brains and character. The greatest of them was a man of good blood, and he knew it. Pride in the fact was an important element in his character.

Nor did the family suffer grinding poverty. For most of his life the Rev. Dr. Joseph Wilson received a smaller income than a competent brickmason can easily earn today; but in the South immediately after the Civil War a dollar meant a great deal more than it does now. The Wilsons were always decently fed and decently clothed. Eventually they owned their house. When Woodrow was seventeen his mother inherited a little money from a brother, and that meant that the children could go to college. In short, it was a respectable, middle-class, American family. There were four children, two boys and two girls, of whom Woodrow was the third child and the elder son.

The second son, Joseph Ruggles Wilson, Jr., went into business, had a successful career as a banker.

After a man becomes famous, people always look back and discover signs and portents in his youth which really mean nothing. It is a little startling, however, to recall that Wilson's earliest memory was of standing at the gate of the family home in Augusta and hearing a passer-by say that Mr. Lincoln had been elected, and there would be war. He ran into the house to ask his father what war was.

THE MINISTER'S SON

His childhood is impressive mainly because this gigantic figure of later years was so much like other boys. In spite of a certain severity, especially in religion, Joseph R. Wilson was an admirable father. He dropped his clerical dignity when he came into his own house, and his children adored him. He joked and played with them and they were never afraid to consult him when things went wrong. Long afterward, when his son had become a famous man of letters and president of a great university, Joseph Wilson retained that son's love and respect.

It is a fact, of course, that a minister's son, especially in a small town, is set a little apart from other boys. In addition to that, this boy's

eyes were bad and he had to wear glasses; and a boy who wears glasses is always a little apart. But there are too many ministers' sons who wear glasses for this separation to be significant. As a rule, Tommy went along with the gang.

Certainly he went along when they played truant from Professor Derry's school to follow the elephant the day the circus came to Augusta; and with the rest he stopped at a cotton warehouse on the way back to place cotton where he thought it would do the most good; but we have the later testimony of Professor Wilson of Princeton University that the pads didn't work very well. He helped form the Lightfoot Club that met in the hayloft of Dr. Wilson's barn in a pleasing aura of the mysterious and sinister to hold sessions under a large, red picture of Satan, cut from an advertisement. He was enough like the rest to get into scrapes by doing idiotic things, as when he went hunting in a grove back of the house with his tomboy cousin, Jessie Bones. Jessie was being a squirrel that day and climbed a tree, whereupon Tommy, an Indian hunter, bent his trusty bow and shot her so well and truly that she slipped from her perch and hit the ground with a *thwack* that winded and momentarily dazed her. And if the folly was typically boyish, so was the storm of grief and remorse that sent him staggering into the house with the collapsed little body in his arms crying, "I am a murderer; it was no accident!"

Indeed, if there was anything that set this lad clearly apart from most of his fellows, it was no indication of future greatness, but the reverse. He was dull in his studies. It is astonishing that one who became a distinguished scholar, president of a great university, and a figure of incalculable force in American education did not learn the alphabet until he was nine years old and could not read with any facility until he was eleven. The Woodrows, even more than the Wilsons, were almost fanatical in their respect for the sort of learning that is obtained from books, and the family letters of the period indicate that they were inclined to sympathize with Dr. and Mrs. Wilson for having so unpromising an elder son.

Classes or no glasses, he managed to play baseball passably, if not brilliantly; he became adept at what is now termed soft-shoe dancing

—even in the White House, although it was a closely guarded secret at the time, he used occasionally to gain relaxation after a long period of labor at his desk by doing a hornpipe—and he had a moderately good tenor voice. But this was the list of his youthful accomplishments. There were probably a hundred boys in Augusta whom a discriminating judge would have picked ahead of the minister's son as future leaders.

HIS METAL IS FORGED

Nevertheless, this boy's years were shaping the man in many important ways. His earliest memory was a prophecy of war and his most impressionable years were spent in the aftermath of a disastrous war. This is important in attempting to understand the man. All the brave array, all the glitter and glamor, the band music and the cheers, came at the beginning of the war so far as the South was concerned, and of this period Woodrow Wilson was too young to remember much. But the slowly gathering despair of the final years, when the glory had departed and nothing was left but grim resistance to inevitable doom, pervaded the atmosphere when he was beginning to be old enough to retain indirect impressions. And from eight to seventeen he lived in the gloom that pervaded the South during the period sardonically called Reconstruction.

At the heart of this darkness, in 1870, when Woodrow Wilson was fourteen, his father received an honor and professional advancement in being selected as a member of the faculty of the Presbyterian theological seminary in Columbia, South Carolina. This event had two effects, both of which were important in the boy's development.

The move to Columbia brought him into an environment in which religion and learning were not only the two most important factors of family life, but also affected public affairs. Columbia was the capital of South Carolina. Most of the city had been burned by General Sherman in the course of his march to the sea, and what was left had been suffering ever since. The public offices of the State were filled by incompetents. Public morality had been cast overboard and respect for all authority denied.

Honest and intelligent citizens of the State

were denied the right to hold office, or even to vote, because they had participated in the "rebellion."

One result of this travesty was that the church suffered even more than other institutions. Like all the rest, the church suffered property losses; but over and above that the church was attacked at a vital point—the very basis of its philosophy was repudiated, for the government then prevailing in South Carolina sneered at the authority of moral law and derided the theory of democracy by holding that honesty and intelligence rendered a man not fit but unfit to be entrusted with the ballot. Any government energetically trying to make good evil and evil good, offers a sterner challenge to the church than to any other institution.

The boy therefore could not escape the realization, which is never attained by many scholars, that politics is interwoven in the very fibre of intellectual life, and that private morality is inseparably linked with public morality.

NO LILY FINGERS THEN

In South Carolina, in 1870, they couldn't say, "The game of politics is too dirty for a gentleman." There the game had grown so dirty that gentlemen could not ignore it; disfranchised for years, they could do little by direct means, but the subject demanded their most intense mental concentration and their constant attention. Even in the theological seminary men constantly talked politics—indeed, one might say especially in the theological seminary, for the regime under which it lived not only threatened the seminary's continued existence but directly challenged the concept of moral law that was the very reason for its existence.

From fourteen to seventeen, highly impressionable years, the boy associated constantly with a group of men intensely concerned with government and the conduct of public affairs, although it was not their purpose or their wish to seek office. The principles, not the practice, of politics engaged their close and constant thought; and since many of those who frequented the Wilson home were men of high intellectual capacity, they reasoned clearly and well. Is it surprising, then, that this boy exhibited in later years a deep conviction that the

principles of politics are based, first of all, on the principles of morality?

Yet this very tendency of Wilson to reduce all political questions to the elemental difference between right and wrong, observed by people who took no account of the man's early training, was set down as something certainly odd and probably suspicious. Attempts to identify his own desires with eternal principles of moral law are a favorite device of the canting hypocrite; and that is how many of Wilson's opponents saw him in later years. Even persons who granted his sincerity frequently regretted the intensity of his conviction on what he regarded as moral issues. They saw in it a touch of fanaticism, an oddity that made the man not quite human.

If one does take into account the years in Columbia, however, this bent of mind is not only completely human, but inevitable. Not many Americans, fortunately, have lived under a regime so utterly defiant of every consideration of decency as to entangle in politics every phase of existence—economic, intellectual, social, moral or physical. But one who has is almost certain to emerge with conviction that the handling of public affairs actually is, at bottom, a question of right and wrong. Ask those intelligent men who have escaped after living awhile under the rule of Hitler, or Mussolini! Clear recognition of political issues as moral issues is not necessarily proof of fanaticism, it may be due simply to the experience of having to face elemental facts, raw and brutal facts usually kept decently veiled from sight.

Teaching, however, did not satisfy Joseph R. Wilson for long. After three years in Columbia he resigned to accept the pastorate of a church in Wilmington, North Carolina. The same year he sent his son to Davidson College, in that State. It was the best Presbyterian school in the region, but, like every other Southern college at the time, it was in bad shape. Endowment and equipment had been lost in the maelstrom of war, and a ruined constituency was able to replace them only slowly.

Davidson is a charming place, in the Appalachian foothills, and today it is as pleasant a college town as one can find anywhere; but life was rugged there in 1873. The boys were expected to fend for themselves, even to cutting wood for the fireplaces that were the sole

means of heating dormitory rooms. In 1873 the science of dietetics was hardly even a name at Davidson; the boys ate what the boardinghouse landlady could find, and not only was she usually unimaginative, but she was handicapped by a market so restricted that the modern generation can hardly imagine it. Davidson had its virtues in 1873, and they were notable, but it was not exactly the place to build up a frail physique.

Hard study, hard physical labor, and what was probably an extremely ill balanced diet were too much for young Wilson. Both his eyes and his stomach gave way, and before the end of the school year he was in a state of collapse that forced him to quit. He suffered physically, but he probably suffered much worse mentally. Not yet eighteen and already sickly—what boy wouldn't be downcast and soured by the experience? Writers since have cited this as showing that he was different from ordinary people, but the record doesn't read that way. He was already a great man in embryo, but there was nothing to foretell it. On the contrary, he acted very much as any boy of mediocre intellectual capacity might be expected to act. He was low-spirited, miserable, and apparently he took it out on the place in which he found himself: he hated Wilmington.

His father's delight in the town is evidenced by the fact that he remained there eleven years, content and happy; but Joseph Wilson had not come there sick and defeated. Tommy had. In an ordinary man that would be enough to set up in his mind a sharp distaste for the place. This Wilson seems to be still Tommy, the ordinary, not Woodrow, the genius. One feature of the town did interest him. It was a seaport, and all his life he had lived inland. Once more, he acted as one would expect any boy to act; he spent all the time he could about the docks, investigating the ships. Indeed, in this instance, he acted rather like a stupid and clumsy boy, for on one occasion he fell down an open hatch and was lucky not to break his neck.

Yet, little as he liked the place, Wilmington was good for him. After a year he was so far restored in health that resumption of his education became possible. But he took no more chances with the rigorous existence of a small Southern college; instead, he entered his father's *alma mater*, Princeton.

STARTING TOWARD MANHOOD

Here, again, people have tried to discover something extraordinary in the record, the friendly ones endeavoring to prove that the college boy was plainly marked for greatness, unfriendly ones to prove that he was an odd fish, void of ordinary human characteristics. Neither effort has had much success. Wilson's career at Princeton is, in fact, remarkably commonplace, in that it conforms to what one might expect, considering all the circumstances. He entered badly prepared and his first year's marks were low—well, why not? But he had a good mind, and as he surmounted the initial difficulties his scholastic record steadily improved—and again, why not? He graduated in 1879 fairly well up, but not at the top of the class.

He was neither a failure nor a dazzling success. He had a group of intimate friends, and a very jolly group, too, but he never was the idol of the campus. He and his friends were not above indulging in the characteristic idiocies of college boys, especially making what was probably woeful music at all hours, but they never were classified as rounders. Once or twice, college authorities may have looked at them with a cold eye, but they never got into serious trouble.

His college years did for Wilson what they should do for any young man with high ideals and an able mind—they taught him how to think clearly, clarified and fixed the intellectual and moral qualities that he already possessed. Out of those years at Columbia he had brought the belief that the conduct of public affairs is not a separate compartment of existence but is intertwined with every phase of private life, including the intellectual; his studies at Princeton sharpened and strengthened that belief until it became the basis of his philosophy. Grant this, and grant, in addition, that he was a youth of high ideals, and all the rest follows logically and naturally. He saw in public life a decent man's best chance to do something worth doing; and to be doing something important, not something easy, was his idea of the way to have a good time in the world.

This conviction is not as obvious to everyone as it was to Wilson. To many of his associates at Princeton, and later, it was not obvious at all. To the greater number, indeed, politics as a

career seemed fantastic; but the greater number had not had the experience of living in a society in which government had broken down. Wilson had, and the effect was ineradicable. Far from being evidence that he was inhuman, this is the strongest evidence that his reactions were natural.

It is true, of course, that Wilson at this time was not merely ill-equipped, he was almost fantastically ill-equipped for the practice of politics as it was, and is, commonly conducted in this country. He was somewhat diffident, he was thin-skinned, and he was idealistic. Three worse handicaps for a career in practical politics can hardly be imagined. But is it abnormal to wish to do exactly what one can't do? Don't we all do just that? Is it not the born comedian who yearns to play Hamlet, the Mr. Milque-toast who would be D'Artagnan, the drab little maid who burns with the fiercest desire to be a movie star? Woodrow Wilson's boyhood wish to be a senator from Virginia was precisely the same sort of aspiration and the best proof of his complete, if slightly absurd, humanity.

Additional proof is found in his decision, after graduating from Princeton, to study law. Up to a point, he was singularly clear-headed about it. He knew that he had no strong liking for the law as a career. The possibility of becoming a great advocate, or a great judge, never thrilled him as the possibility of becoming a senator from Virginia did.

But there were two considerations that impelled him to the choice of law; one was the fact that the law was then—and still is—the main avenue of approach to politics; the second was that in the South sixty years ago business was not a career for an educated man with the qualifications of a leader. Business was commerce and commerce calls for the ability of a trader, not that of an organizer. There was next to no industry in the South, therefore next to no opportunity for the capacity to command men that is a mark of the able industrialist as it is of the able soldier and, to some extent, of the able statesman. An educated Southerner was, in effect, restricted to three professions—medicine, theology, and law. Of these, medicine offered few opportunities for leadership, and Wilson, in spite of his heritage, was not drawn to theology. Only the law was left, so that path he took.

Now the singular thing is not that Woodrow Wilson studied law, but the fact that one of the most powerful intellects in American history failed to grasp what many lesser men have understood with no difficulty at all. This is the character of the law as a jealous mistress. So many people have shouted so loudly and so often that Woodrow Wilson was a thinking machine, all mind, an intelligence that operated perfectly in the field of reason, that we tend to forget that even in this field he was no more than a man—a great one, to be sure, but without a man, therefore capable, like Tom, Dick, and Harry, of exhibiting a startling lack of intelligence now and then. He did just this when he assumed that he, with his lifelong intensity of purpose, was capable of using any profession, and especially the law, simply as a means to another end.

Some men can do it, certainly. Many men have used the law as a steppingstone to political power, to a great place in the world of business, or to the acquisition of money. But they are not the sort of men who must do perfectly whatever they set out to do. Wilson was. He couldn't do anything with half his mind. Even in the law school of the University of Virginia he began to perceive that something was wrong. The historical development of law, the philosophy of law, fascinated him, and that part of the course he absorbed like a sponge; but the dull, grinding labor that is indispensable to the making of a competent practicing attorney, the mastery of picayune details of procedure, of maxims that sometimes seemed doubtful, of precedents that sometimes seemed stupid, of the strange words that may conceal innumerable traps and tricks—all this was to him well-nigh intolerable drudgery. He completed his course, but with difficulty.

The really fruitful part of his stay at the University of Virginia was the time spent not in the classrooms but in the debating societies, where he labored endlessly at something that really interested him—the perfection of his mode of expression. The ability to speak clearly and convincingly is part of the equipment of a first-rate trial lawyer; and this part Wilson developed marvelously. He left Charlottesville admittedly the best speaker in the University; but he was no star as a lawyer.

He hung out his shingle in Atlanta, at the

time the only really up-and-coming city in the South. He had as partner Edward I. Renick, a school friend of about his own age. It was probably as good a firm as any composed of a pair of young graduates. But too many others had had the same idea. In 1882 Atlanta had a total population of 37,000, served by no less than 143 lawyers. The competition was too desperate to be dignified, and such work as came to the younger men consisted largely of the defense of chicken-thieves and attempts to collect debts that were not merely bad but beyond all reasonable hope. This was too much for a man of Wilson's temperament, and a year of it convinced him that this was not the path of his destiny.

Then what was? He had observed at close hand not only the actual practice of police court law but also the actual practice of local politics, which was more sordid and mindless. He was plainly unfitted for either, yet his conviction that dealing with public affairs was his mission in life was not shaken. How could he touch them without wading through the mire of ward politics? One possibility remained—if he could not participate in public life, he would at least study it, and perhaps influence it as a consultant, if not as an actor. Yet he must live, for he was now twenty-seven years old and still a burden on his father. Where can a man make a living by study, or at least in part by study? Obviously in the schools, and nowhere else. At the end of his year in Atlanta, Wilson determined to become a professor.

THE SCHOOL AND THE GIRL

This was a highly critical moment in his career, and nobody can understand Wilson without carefully considering two things that happened to him at this moment—he decided to study at the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore and he fell in love.

At this time Woodrow Wilson was still unformed. His character, to be sure, had long been determined, but his habits, especially his intellectual habits, were not yet fixed, and it is fairly clear that it was the odd combination of love and the Johns Hopkins that fixed them. At twenty-seven he was still far from being a great man. He possessed the elements of greatness, of course, but not the ability to use them. Up to this time, while he had shown ability in

many lines, he had never done anything conspicuously well. He had gone through Princeton creditably, but not brilliantly; he had gone through the University of Virginia law school exactly the same way; his first year in practice was not, as some writers have asserted, a complete failure but, on the contrary, was about as successful as that of the average young lawyer of ordinary talents. Wilson, so far as outward appearances went, was ordinary; the power was in him, but it had never been set moving.

Then he encountered a young woman and a young university; the first made him want to work and the second taught him how to work. Together they produced a marvel.

Ellen Axson was a minister's daughter whom Woodrow Wilson saw first in the Presbyterian church at Rome, Georgia, where he had gone to consult with an uncle about some of his mother's business affairs. It was not precisely love at first sight, but it was a definite impression at first sight. The young man immediately sought an introduction and quickly realized that this was the woman for him. It was probably the smartest decision Woodrow Wilson ever made, for the girl had exactly the qualities most valuable to him: good sense, good temper, and complete certainty that he was destined to be a great man. But it is by no means certain that it was this combination of fine qualities that captured Wilson in the first place, for she also had a quiet but very definite personal charm that had made her one of the most sought-after young women in her town. After a first meeting in early summer, he rushed her into a promise to marry him; it was all arranged by the time he left to enter the Johns Hopkins University.

It is interesting to note that if either the woman he chose or the university he chose had a fault, it was the same—that of being a little on the solemn side. If Ellen Axson took life seriously, the Johns Hopkins took education very seriously indeed; and that was not the fashion among American universities at this time. Our universities still adhered to the philosophical English model, in whose thinking logic played a more prominent role than observation.

Not until 1876 did the famous Daniel Coit Gilman, educated in Germany, get a chance to introduce into American education the German

idea of intellectual discipline resting as heavily upon science as the English discipline rested upon philosophy. Once introduced, however, it proved amazingly successful.

But the new university was austere. As is frequently the way of the advocate of a new idea, perhaps it went to extremes in its devotion to nothing but brains. It is interesting to know that the ideals of the Johns Hopkins at this period were so lofty that it seems to have looked somewhat scornfully upon the Ph.D. Men were not encouraged to work for a mere doctorate, but were urged rather to learn some one thing more thoroughly than the average Ph.D. learned anything. Wilson, for instance, did not seek a degree during his two years' residence and that course apparently was regarded as not in the least abnormal.

It is noteworthy that this man, whom his enemies later were to denounce as all cold intellect, with no trace of common humanity, during his first weeks in Baltimore felt about the Johns Hopkins pretty much as many of the rest of us, who make no pretensions to high intellectual capacity, would have felt. He loathed it.

He fell into the hands of Herbert B. Adams, New England-born, German-trained, and tough. Adams, head of the history department, rode his students with whip and spur, furiously and mercilessly. Long afterward, Woodrow Wilson was to acknowledge that this man had revolutionized the method of teaching history in America, but at the time he hated him bitterly. The fact seems to be that Wilson's mind, while a good one, was still somewhat soft, and Adams' apparently random and unfeeling battering was really forging it into fine steel. But Wilson didn't like it any more than you or I would.

His reaction, though, was not mere fury. It included also grim determination. His idea had been to write of the philosophy of government, but Adams made him realize the cold fact that the real philosophy of government is to be found not in what men have said about it but in the way government has actually operated. The Founding Fathers' statements of principles are all very well, but principles never applied in action remain mere statements; if Wilson wanted to do something worth-while, therefore, he would write, not of what the Fathers intended

to do, but of what had actually been done and how it was done.

What had been done, the young man, for all his reading, didn't know. Actually, nobody knew, for the facts were buried in thousands of documents in dusty files—official reports of all sorts, the records of Congress, many of them antedating the *Congressional Record*, private letters and diaries of political leaders, old newspapers and scores of other sources, many of them the dullest of dull reading.

This mass of data, formidable both in its size and in its difficulty, Wilson attacked with an intensity rendered almost savage by his smoldering rage against the professor who had set him such a task. But within a month or two that rage began to be replaced by interest. His steady, persistent digging in the confused mass began to reveal traces of a pattern. He perceived indications that government in this country had pursued a definite course, not at all the course the Fathers planned for it, and not the course that most contemporaries thought it had followed, but perfectly consistent, easily understandable, perhaps even inevitable, taking into account all the circumstances.

Then, indeed, he was off and nothing could have stopped him—which was, of course, what Professor Adams had been working toward from the beginning.

THE YOUTH BECOMES A MAN

He knew how to write. From boyhood he had been fascinated by the masters of English prose and had been striving to develop a style so lucid and yet so exact that no one could misunderstand it. The English essayist, Walter Bagehot, was at once his delight and his despair, and he had already acquired a fair approximation of that excellent model's clarity and precision. Now that he really had something to write about, he did wonderfully well; in two years he had produced a book, *Congressional Government*, that, in the staid way of scholarly works, was sensationally successful. It did not bring him much money, but all historians began to talk of it immediately and college presidents learned that here was a young scholar who had an actual achievement, and a brilliant one, to his credit.

Among these was James E. Rhoads, who was at the moment engaged in the difficult task of

organizing a new college for women somewhat on the Johns Hopkins model. Dr. Rhoads was a fine old Quaker but he was, in fact, merely the imposing front behind which the real work was being done by the dean, M. Carey Thomas, later to be recognized as one of the most remarkable women in the history of American education. There is no doubt that it was Miss Thomas, five days younger than Woodrow Wilson, who really chose the author of *Congressional Government* as the first professor of history at Bryn Mawr.

The salary was only fifteen hundred dollars, but it was a salary and it meant more than than the same amount means now. It gave Wilson the feeling that at last he was a full-grown man. It gave him confidence to marry Ellen, who had waited for him two years while he was studying in Baltimore. The young pair showed up at Bryn Mawr when it was far indeed from being the relatively lordly institution that it is today. Physically, Bryn Mawr was not much in 1885, but intellectually it was a power. In the half century that followed it acquired a brilliant history and expanded enormously; but for sound, scholarly work within its field it is doubtful that the college has ever done better than it did in those early years.

Yet Wilson didn't like Bryn Mawr. He had high respect for his colleagues, he enjoyed the intellectual atmosphere, he developed an effective classroom technique, and he was doing excellent work outside the classroom. But an inborn prejudice boiled up in him and poisoned Bryn Mawr: he didn't like to teach women.

This is curious and interesting, because the man all his life exhibited unusual respect for the advice and opinions of women. He found them intellectually, as well as emotionally, stimulating; and his wife, especially, influenced his thinking profoundly. Ellen Axson Wilson was artistic. She was a painter of real ability and her taste was sound in music and in the sort of literature that is labelled "creative." Her husband's artistic taste was at that time relatively undeveloped and he learned a vast amount from Ellen. The poets, for example, were all but unknown to him until she revealed them. Nor did he learn unconsciously. He was well aware of what she was giving him, and respected her knowledge and judgment. An intelligent woman always pleased him and,

unlike some men, he was capable of genuine friendship with an able woman.

Nevertheless, he didn't like teaching women. Possibly both the past and the future influenced him. Among other things, Southern chivalry always was an excellent means of keeping woman in her place. Wilson was a Southerner and a Presbyterian, so it is unlikely that he escaped this influence altogether.

As for the future, woman suffrage was not to come for thirty-four years when Wilson began teaching at Bryn Mawr. His burning ambition to influence public affairs therefore could not be well served, if it could be served at all, by teaching students without a vote, much less eligibility for office. Nevertheless, he was conscientious and he worked successfully. Moreover, while he may have regarded woman in the abstract with a slightly supercilious eye, the specimens before him in the classroom were persons, interesting and likeable enough, and he got along with them excellently.

Nor did he miss the humors of the situation. He appeared at Bryn Mawr with a luxuriant, flowing and impressive mustache, but when a friend met him a few months later he was clean-shaven. To a startled inquiry why the mustache had disappeared, he replied with a grin,

"Oh, all the young ladies seemed to set their faces against it."

At the end of three years when his good work at Bryn Mawr brought him an offer of a post in a man's college, he accepted enthusiastically. The school was Wesleyan, at Middletown, Connecticut, and there, according to his official biographer, Ray Stannard Baker, Wilson spent the two happiest years of his life as a teacher. It had everything Bryn Mawr had, and in addition the students were men!

He continued his first-rate work as a teacher, but what made him a howling success was the fact that shortly after his arrival he appeared on the football field one afternoon, full of ideas. Wesleyan football was then at so low an ebb that the team was willing to accept suggestions even from a professor of history. Imagine their delighted surprise, then, when they found that the suggestions were good! They worked in one game, thereafter were applied diligently, and Wesleyan, starting in the dumps, ended the season with a blazing record.

By Christmas, student opinion held that Professor Wilson was frittering away his time teaching history, but if he wanted to do so, it was a bit of folly easily pardonable in a first-class coach.

In the meantime, Wilson, on the advice of his friends added to the urging of Ellen, had taken his Ph.D. at the Johns Hopkins, offering *Congressional Government* as his dissertation and cleaning up the few remaining requirements at odd times. He had not changed his opinion that the doctorate, in itself, means little; but he saw the force of the argument that it is a convenient label in a world so complex that it must rely to a large extent on labels.

This point must be emphasized because there is no understanding Wilson unless it is first realized that, although he was a doctor of philosophy, he did not consider a doctor of philosophy as necessarily an educated man. He never put an entire trust in labels, of any kind. Later he was to puzzle a great many people first by refusing to grant that a man is a student simply because he is in a college, and later, by refusing to grant that a man is a Democrat simply because he is in the Democratic party. The old rules held that a student is a man in college and a Democrat is a man who votes the party ticket; when Wilson showed that he thought otherwise, the impression grew up that he was a strange creature altogether different from ordinary men. He was different, but only in that he had the extraordinary courage to say exactly what he thought and act on it; what he thought was, in essence, pretty much what other honest men thought.

THE MAN BECOMES FULL-GROWN

He stayed two years at Wesleyan and then Princeton called him. He accepted without hesitation, but the idea that he rushed back to his *alma mater* with unclouded delight is not true. The job at Princeton was tough, and he knew it; but the field was wider. At Wesleyan he had his work thoroughly in hand, his colleagues were pleasant and intelligent, his academic superiors were appreciative, and he had enough leisure to study and write. But "we are not put into this world to sit still and know," as he said later; "we are put into it to act." Wesleyan, he explained at the time, was delightful, but not sufficiently stimulating. It was highly

probable that Princeton would be much less delightful, but it was certain to be more stimulating; and stimulation to action he regarded as more important than ease and comfort.

That is another striking thing about Wilson but, after all, is there anything strange about it? Indeed, who denies the assertion? We all know that to act is more important than to be comfortable. We all know that the very fact that a job is tough is a reason for accepting it, not for rejecting it, if it is a job worth doing. We all know this, but the difference between a big man and a little one is that the big man not only knows it, but governs himself accordingly, while the little man knows, but sits still.

Woodrow Wilson had attained his full mental stature, although not his full strength, when he went to Princeton in 1890. He changed thereafter only in the sense that the exercise of his powers continued to develop them. He became stronger and stronger, but otherwise he remained the same sort of man until the day of his death.

SAMUEL HOPKINS ADAMS

Samuel Hopkins Adams (1871-) was a newspaperman and magazine editor for several years after his graduation from Hamilton College in 1891. He later turned to writing highly popular and sometimes sensational books, among them Revelry, 1926; It Happened One Night (motion picture), 1934; The Harvey Girls, 1943; Plunder, 1948. The excerpt below is Chapter IV of a complete biography, the detailed, carefully prepared and entertaining account of Woolcott's "life and world." Woolcott (1887-1943) was a notable opinion-maker and publicist who has been compared with Dr. Samuel Johnson. Adams knew Woolcott intimately for many years and to this biography has made the contributions of a minor Boswell.

THE SACRED GROVE¹

To the impressionable freshman of the class of 1909, the forested campus, high above the valley of the Oriskany, with its grave and an-

¹ Reprinted from Samuel Hopkins Adams's *A. Woolcott. His Life and His World*, Reynal & Hitchcock, Inc., New York.

cient dignity of weathered-stone architecture, struck home with an enduring sense of splendor. A quarter of a century after graduation he was vaunting himself in print as "an old grad of the most virulent type" and, as the Town Crier, sounding the praises of Alma Mater over the air waves:

It stands on a lovely hilltop near Clinton in the State of New York; stands in a noble park still marked out with the treaty stones of the Indians, placed there as a pledge of sanctuary when first the school was built. Men whose business takes them to all the universities, both of this country and Europe, have told me that, except for the University of Upsala in Sweden, the Hamilton campus is the most beautiful in the world.

For Alexander Woollcott, too, it was sanctuary. Throughout his life, he returned there periodically to refresh his spirit in the peace and beauty of the spot.

Two women of the Root family, daughters of Oren ("Square") Root, took him in hand. He could not have had a more propitious introduction to the pleasant and cultured little community on the hill. Alice Root (Mrs. Thomas F.) Nichols, wife of one of the younger faculty members, constituted herself his mentor, a role which in after life he never permitted her wholly to relinquish. The younger sister, Laura, a little later to become the wife of Stanley Gilbert (Aleck never quite forgave him), taught the neophyte to dance and permitted him to act as occasional escort to college parties. He promptly fell in love and, with that singular tenacity which characterized his early associations, preserved a gently romantic attachment for her to the day of her death, two years before his own. The letter he wrote me after the funeral, which I unfortunately have lost, is a touching and sincere tribute to an early love.

The college's impression of Woollcott was less favorable than his impression of the college. Of the fifty-five entrants in his class, he was easily the queerest. It was not an eccentricity which commended itself to his mates. His gnomish maturity and squeaky cocksureness marked him for a butt.

"They could not understand a freshman who had pondered, read, and thought so much," said Lloyd Paul Stryker, a senior when Woollcott matriculated.

As fraternity material he was unpromising. He conformed to no pattern of campus good form. Although he arrived under Sigma Phi auspices (the Root family), the Sigs turned thumbs down on him, a procedure which caused some immediate dissension between certain alumni and the chapter, as well as later heartburnings when the callow youth developed into Hamilton's most important alumnus.

Theta Delta Chi, at the time numerically weak, looked him over. His chief backer was Royal W. France, an influential young alumnus who had come back to help out the Theta Delt with their rushing. At first dubious, France took the freshman on a long walk and came back convinced that here was a "rare and specialized and highly exciting personality." Another backer was Merwyn Nellis, crack center on the football team and otherwise a prominent campus figure. But several of the younger chapter members demurred. France writes that they "... looked a bit askance at Aleck, who, at that time, had a high-pitched voice, a slightly effeminate manner and an unusual—even eccentric—personality and appearance. He was far enough from the norm so that the first impression on a lot of healthy and immature boys was that he was a freak."

The objectors were persuaded or overruled and the freshman was duly advised of his selection. He was exultant.

"It's a great life," he wrote Smyser Agnew, telling him of his new affiliation.

Of his fraternity mates he particularly admired a tough little sophomore named McMartin who played football, chewed tobacco, and might, his admirer thought, have been valedictorian had he not preferred bridge to books. While a loyal and even an enthusiastic Theta Delt, he did not limit his friendships to fellow members. His closest individual association, at least in his underclassman years, was Phil Welch, an athlete and a roughneck, member of a rival group; "idol of my heart and chum of my busy days," as he wrote Agnew.

The class of '09, small in numbers, was of unusual mental caliber. Through the centripetal force of common tastes a group of four formed within it whose tastes were intellectual as opposed to—or negligent of—athletics. Because of a certain preciosity they were de-

risively known as the Sorority. Throughout his course, Aleck was identified with this inner circle.

From the association there evolved a game of the brain-twister type which for a time enjoyed a wide vogue among those addicted to cerebral gymnastics. By Aleck's account, Hawley Truax, valedictorian of the class, was the originator, but others say that both Aleck and Bob Rudd contributed. "Shedding Light," as they called the pastime, eventually found its way between book covers as *Who and What?*

For the test an individual pits himself against the wits of the group. The propounder identifies himself with the character portrayed, giving a first-person description with deceptive but reasonably identifiable clues. For example:

I was the Helen of my time, irresistible in my beauty. I married in turn a weakling, a fool, and a brute, and I loved a fiddler. To the weakling I brought nothing; to the fool and the fiddler, death; to the brute, disaster. I was born to power but my personality and charm determined my career as much as my rank. I was a kingmaker who loved an alien country more than my own. A relative, weeping and distraught, killed me and I went to my death with a wig on lest men should see that my beauty had turned gray.

If the outline proved insufficient, the contestants could demand "More light," and the postulant must then answer any question not too leading.

The Woollcott contribution to the book was, as might have been expected, allusively difficult, though not unfairly obscure:

I have made sundry appearances on the world's stage. Once, long ago, I was charged with a somnolence that raised agricultural havoc, and was urged to perform a solo; a much later account of my life, also written in America, deals with a still longer sleep. I suppose that my military establishment would hardly have attained the specifications of the American Defense Society, but my forces made up in dogged loyalty what they lacked in numbers. I was also fond of pets and one of mine was true unto death and after. Neither my first name nor my last is known; I have always been called by an affectionate nickname derived from my regimentals.

The answer is Little Boy Blue, and the second reference is to Eugene Field's famous poem, while the allusion to agricultural havoc

and the solo is obvious. As for the earlier example, it will hardly be necessary to identify that as Mary, Queen of Scots.

A modification of the game was being played at the Woollcott island home thirty years later.

Neither admittance to a fraternity nor inclusion in the group of budding intellectuals was enough to establish young Woollcott in the status to which he aspired. His fondest ambition was now to be accepted by the campus as "regular." But the root of the matter was not in him. Though his few intimates swore by him, the generality of his fellow students refused to take him at his own valuation. He was a "fresh Ike," a bit of a "sissy"; he did not quite belong.

Knowing himself a misfit in the collegiate pattern, he devised a personality for public display. He presented to his fellows the picture most likely, in his belief, to enlist their admiration, edifying his classmates with high-colored tales of precocious vice. His nickname of "Putt" (for "putrid") flattered him. He was correspondingly depressed when a rebuking upper-classman stigmatized him as "a naughty little Rollo." Under the sting he did go down to the village and succeed in getting drunk, a condition which he vaingloriously advertised. Incredible though it may seem, he maintained this dubious pride, and, at the age of fifty, supplied this note on his undergraduate days, for a biographical sketch:

I was a good deal of a drunkard, being stinko through three of the four years, and particularly in Sophomore year addicted morosely to the use of absinthe which was available everywhere. . . . It would be accurate to describe me in my undergraduate days as a ubiquitous, depraved, and unpopular Ishmaelite.

It would be more accurate to describe him as a naive and ineffectual self-dramatizer. After that first splurge, for advertising purposes only, his dissipations were mildly and conventionally beerish. It is doubtful whether he ever saw an absinthe bottle; certainly not within a ten-mile radius of the Hill. He was, in fact, a natural though not overindustrious scholar, as mentally mature as he was psychologically callow. His true preoccupations were with talking, reading, and things of the mind. As for his excursions into depravity, they were pure sham. A mem-

ber of the class of 1910, who elects to remain anonymous, thus estimates him:

In his underclass years he was a picturesque, conspicuous young eccentric and was—and revelled in being—humorously thought of and slammed around as a “putrid.” All through college and to a considerable extent for years afterward, he had a social eye-to-business that made him more or less obsequious to anyone who would be or who some day might be of use to him, including those who were or would be impressive and with whom it would be good publicity to be associated. . . . He was conscious of his handicaps and obsessed with a deep conviction that his make-up, his personal endowment was one he’d simply got to make the best of and there was no use in his being thin-skinned about it. In other words—“I knew before you did that I’m an odd fish, so call me Putt or caricature me as you like and see if I care! I’ll help you do it and go you one better.”

Soon the precarious eminence won by his pretensions became untenable. He strove pathetically to restore it by affecting slovenly dress and bizarre mannerisms. The faculty wives shuddered at “that dreadful little Woolcott cub.” The younger feminine element was inclined to regard him as “cute.” The sophomores made him the special quarry of their hazing; tossing “Slimer” Woolcott into the fountain became a popular form of exercise. There is an unauthenticated legend involving him and a familiar campus pest of the day, an octogenarian alumnus who was wont to revisit the scene from time to time and wander about, buttonholing students and catechizing them upon their aims in life. According to report, he held up the freshman, trotting oozily back to change after an involuntary bath at the hands of his persecutors, with the stock query:

“And what, my young friend, is our Alma Mater training you to become when you go out into the world?”

“A fish, you darn old fool!” said Woolcott bitterly.

Culturally the strongest influence in Aleck’s course was his association with Professor Herman Carl George Brandt, a born teacher, a notable scholar, and a philologist of international repute. The jovial, irascible, sharp-tongued, warmhearted, and well-loved head of the Department of Romance Languages at

once sensed the unusual quality of Woolcott’s mind and made him free of the house below the campus with its arched motto carved above the hospitable portal, *Das liebste Haus, das beste Haus*.² The friendship long outlasted Aleck’s course, and he never returned to the Hill without dropping in to visit with “Schnitz” Brandt, the calls being often enlivened by a duel of sharpshooting at their respective prejudices and foibles.

There was one among his intimates who followed Smyser Agnew’s earlier prevision of him as a future great man. Alex F. Osborn, who, as head of a large advertising agency, was later to pay his classmate a fabulous radio wage, was the prophet of success.

“Aleck,” he would say earnestly, “you’re going to be another Dr. Johnson. You’re going to be a greater Dr. Johnson. Don’t you let them get you down.”

Whether or not Aleck believed Alex, his friend’s faith encouraged him to try for literary honors. George M. Weaver, Jr., and I had founded an annual award for the best undergraduate writing in the extracurricular field, called, in commemoration of our class, the Ninety-one Manuscript Prize. Its sole distinction in college annals was destined to be that Alexander Woolcott was the first winner. His entry, “The Precipice: a Story of Bohemia,” opened as follows:

“Pardon, my good woman,” cried the Colonel raising a protesting hand against the merry chatter with which he was beset. “Before you go on, just what sort of person is this Nana you’re all talking about?”

I can still see George Weaver’s face as he brought me this gem, fresh from the prize committee’s hands.

“My God,” said he. “Look what we’ve done.”

This was not the worst. It could not have been, since his next year’s attempt was unsuccessful. “Pearl” took its title from the beautiful and virtuous waitress who is discovered at the outset serving the hero, Billy, with oysters. Billy, a man of the world, a seductive fellow with a mordant wit, inspires the suspicion that Author Woolcott was not writing without a model in mind.

² “The loved house is the best house.”

"Is that why they call you Pearl, my dear?" he asked, pointing to the oysters. "Or is it because you are without price?"

"Oh, no!" she retorted quickly. "It's because I'm cast before swine."

These excerpts are cited, not in wanton malice, but as explanation of why the author early and wisely abandoned the field of creative fiction to which his first ambitions tended. In his senior year he won the Ninety-one prize again.

His earlier success was the greater. With that instinct for profitable repetition which was to alarm and dismay future editors, after collecting the twenty-five dollars of prize money he sent the manuscript to *The Bohemian*, a contemporary pulp magazine which paid him twelve dollars for it.

This is the first in a long succession of twice-sold tales.

His freshman vacation he spent doing janitor work in the Roycroft colony, Elbert Hubbard's pretentiously cultural project in East Amora, N. Y.; "a debased Oberammergau,"³ he called it. He brought back with him an old .45-caliber revolver, picked up in a pawnshop, and exhibited it to the Sorority.

"Some morning," he said hollowly, "they'll knock at the door of Carnegie Eleven and there'll be no answer."

It was not wholly pose. The boy was really melancholic over his failure to be "regular." When, two years after graduation, a college mate asked him whether he actually had any suicidal intent, he replied soberly: "I thought I had. I was going through a mental conflict just then."

Failing to impress his circle by these dark hints, he turned tough. He ruffled around the campus, picking fights, preferably with the huskiest athletes. As he was of puny physique, these combats could have only one end.

"He never shirked a fight and never won one," Alex Osborn recalls.

After a football defeat, he would swagger up to some two-hundred-pound tackle and blithely accost him.

"Why, you big cheesebrain! You don't know enough to recognize your own signals."

³ village in Bavaria, Germany, well known for its Passion Play performance every ten years.

One of his victims, thick of brain as he was of muscle, became so weary of beating up his tormentor that he took to scuttling around corners when the slight figure appeared, and eventually burst into helpless tears under the goad. Aleck was abashed.

"Why, I didn't know I was hurting his feelings," he confided to a friend. "I didn't know he *had* any feelings. I really kinda like the big stiff."

Though the adventures in pugilism did little to toughen the flabby body, they did endow the Woolcott spirit with hardihood and fortitude. The college began to have a sort of puzzled respect for the dogged and inglorious scrapper. It did not yet amount to popularity; Aleck never attained that; but it did constitute a reluctant recognition of character. He capitalized on it by organizing Hamilton's first successful dramatic club, The Charlatans. So expert did he prove as an actor that the glee club took him on tour as a monologist in the character of "Mabel, the Beautiful Shopgirl," his own creation.

His passion for dramatics, begun when he appeared in the *tableaux vivants* of Sash-curtain Row,⁴ intensified by his theater attendance with Roswell M. Field and by the private theatricals of Germantown, and professionalized, so to speak, by his support of E. H. Sothern, now became a ruling passion of his undergraduate days. He assumed for himself the feminine lead of every production of The Charlatans. Once, while away, learning that a cast had been made up without him, he wired with the berserk fury of a thwarted prima donna, "What do you fools think you're doing? No Woolcott, no play." He cut classes, going to Utica to "take in the show," good or bad. He spent hours in the library reading drama, from Plautus to Pinero. He wrote several short stories dealing with footlight life, which did not get into *The Bohemian*—or anywhere else.

Between indulging his femininity on the stage and proving his masculinity on the campus, he was leading an active life. At this time he became obsessed with sex, particularly in its abnormal manifestations. He read avidly in

⁴ local name given to the block on which the Woolcotts lived in Kansas City in 1890.

Havelock Ellis and Kraft-Ebing, and would sit up half a night discussing and analyzing the Oscar Wilde scandal. It may well be that he was still in some confusion about himself. It may even be that this was the "mental conflict" to which he sought a possible .45-caliber solution.

He was a brilliant student, learning with little effort and expanding far beyond the requirements of the course. In an exceptionally high-caliber class, he took his Phi Beta Kappa key in junior year. In one department he was strangely unsuccessful. It has always seemed to me something of a reflection upon my Alma Mater that a college which specially prided itself on its training in public speaking should have ignored a talent destined to develop into so notable a success. Alexander Woollcott was never so much as "placed" in the chapel oratorical contests.

In junior year he attained to the hitherto uncoveted editorship of the *Lit* (*Hamilton Literary Monthly*, by formal title), into which flaccid organ he injected so much vivacity that, from being a dull and mechanical reprint of chapel orations and prize essays, it developed into a formative influence in campus life.

Vacations were devoted to earning money. He pushed a wheeled chair and took tickets at Chautauqua, where he hoped that he might (but did not) profit by the cultural opportunities; waited on table, read to hospital patients at fifty cents an hour, and worked in field and orchard at the Phalanx.⁵ Yet he was chronically short of cash and laments his inability to pay for a Senior Ball ticket, one year. Why is not clear. Patron Humphreys' annual \$750 would amply cover all maintenance charges. There was the scholarship to help out. Not only did he pick up quite a bit by his various enterprises, but from the Phalanx a family friend, Mr. Sauerwein, "often donates a little cash." If young Aleck found himself cramped in his social activities, it was because he was spendthrift in other directions.

Much as his status had improved by junior year, he still had fits of depression which, though they led to the acquisition of no more

pistols, did so darken his vista that he considered dropping out of college. He might have done so but for the support of a new friend and fraternity mate, Albert A. Getman of the class of 1911. Getman was a lad as solid of character as of physique. He was a good scholar, a crack football player, and almost at once one of the popular figures of the campus, altogether such a one as Aleck most desired to be, himself. There began a friendship which never flagged and which proved one of the most stable and influential in Aleck's life.

By his senior year he had become, in the words of a classmate, "easily the most remarkable and accomplished person on the campus." This same friend said to him with the frankness, verging on brutality, which was then a campus fashion among intimates:

"I suppose you are the most unpopular man in college, Aleck."

"Yes; and you, I suppose, are the most popular," returned Woollcott composedly without a trace of irony, leaving his detractor "speechless and deflated."

"This quality" (in Woollcott), he writes, "few people ever noted; that he could squash with a compliment as well as with a smashing blow."

In the spring of 1909 I was talking with some fellow trustees on the library steps when an odd figure came into view, crossing the campus with an undulant prance. The youth was clad in excessively wrinkled and bagged trousers, a misshapen corduroy coat, grimy sneakers, and a red fez with gilt tassel. As this preceded the ragtag-and-bobtail era of campus fashion, the costume was patently devised to produce an effect. Besides the mild astonishment evoked by this grotesquerie, I was struck with the owlish gravity of the eyes behind the large lenses, and an air not so much cocky as confident, suggesting the trustfulness of a tenderly reared baby.

Introducing himself as Alexander H. Woollcott, he mentioned that he had just won for the second time the prize "generously offered by you and Mr. Weaver." With that doggedly bohemian *conte*, "The Precipice," thus recalled to my mind, I suppose I must have shuddered, for he blinked uncertainly and murmured that he had hoped for my help in getting a job. What kind of job? A newspaper job.

⁵ community project near Red Bank, New Jersey, founded in mid-nineteenth century as a political and social experiment. Alexander Woollcott was born there on January 19, 1887.

I tried to picture that egregious figure, the all-important copy of *The Bohemian* tucked beneath its arm, telling a metropolitan desk that it would like to be a journalist, and I am afraid I shuddered again. Alexander H. Woolcott continued to talk, in tones somewhat less assured. Would I mind stepping aside and looking over a few numbers of the *Lit*?

Having done so, I felt better. The editorials were spirited, timely, and mature. The selective judgment was sound. The nonfiction contributions signed A. W. (he had dropped the Humphreys in the interests of euphony) went far to obliterate the dire memories of the bohemian Nana and the virtuous Pearl. When he asked, diffidently enough, whether I did not think that he might make a reporter, I was able to give him a qualified affirmative. At least, he could write.

He became more expansive. Upon graduation he would badly need a job. Indeed, he must have one, if he was to continue eating. Nothing was to be hoped for from his family, whose fortunes were at extreme ebb. Further aid from Mr. Humphreys he would not accept. The principalship of a public school in Hudson, N. Y., was available, but he mistrusted his ability to handle pupils of twice his weight. He had had enough battering from his peers.

So I wrote, on his behalf, to one of my old bosses of the *Sun*, Carr Van Anda, who, as managing editor, was then raising the *Times* to the position of being the most important and influential newspaper in New York. To the best of my recollection and that of the recipient my support was on the cautious side. I guaranteed nothing, but gave my opinion, for what it was worth, that the young man had possibilities, and that it might be worth while to give him a trial.

Some thirty-odd years afterward, my old friend "Van" had a jog of memory. He seemed to recall (correctly) that he had never acknowledged my letter. So he sat down and wrote, thanking me warmly for having recommended Alexander Woolcott to the *Times*, and added that he wished I had sent several more like him.

Hamilton served Alexander Woolcott well. It gave him a sound cultural education. It

toughened his fiber morally and physically. It confirmed two of his ruling tendencies, writing and showmanship. A small college, while it does not afford so broad an entry upon life as a great university, gives more scope to personality. There is no pressure toward a patterned form; individuality, not conformity, is the criterion of success. On the other hand, its intimate contacts tend to tone down and chasten extremes of self-assertiveness. This it did to a limited degree for Undergraduate Woolcott.

He took with him lasting and affectionate associations with the Roots, with the Percy Saunders, with Phil Welch, Bob Rudd, Hawley Truax, the foremost scholar and valedictorian of '09, with Al Getman, afterward his physician, with Walker McMartin, Lloyd Stryker, Harry Esty Dounce, Alex Osborn, George Gouge, and, above all, with the college itself. His career was to be stormy with the violence of quarrels and the pain of disrupted friendships. But his companions of the campus were immune from his injuries. The peculiar and in a sense illogical quality of his sentiment shines in his having risen from a sickbed at the age of fifty-five and gone, literally at risk of his life, to the funeral of one whom he had loved as a college mate but who had, for many years, ceased to count for anything in his scheme of existence.

• Even with the considerable measure of prominence and success accruing to him in senior year, he was still unfulfilled and thwarted. He would far rather have "made" Pentagon, the undergraduate-elected honor society, than Phi Beta Kappa. He would have preferred a modest popularity to stardom in *The Charlatans* or the editorship of *Lit*. Always he was acutely conscious—and, by a queer perversity, more than a little proud—of being exotic, egregious, never quite in tune. Alex Osborn thought that the fondest hope of his course, disappointed throughout the four years, was to be generally accepted without any reservations of fellowship.

He was never quite adjusted, never really happy. It is the more strange that he should have given to the college the most steadfast and enduring loyalty of his heart.

"When Aleck dies," said Dorothy Parker, "he'll go to Hamilton."

PAUL McCLELLAND ANGLE

The Lincoln Reader is an integrated, full-length biography of Lincoln comprised of 179 passages by 65 authors. From popular and from little-known biographies of Lincoln, Paul M. Angle has fashioned a vivid narrative of Lincoln's life from birth to assassination, blending the various accounts with careful and shrewd commentary. Scholarliness, intimacy, and vigorous movement are the result.

Paul McClelland Angle (1900–) is a noted Lincoln scholar and director of the Chicago Historical Society. Among his books are *Mary Lincoln, Wife and Widow* (with Carl Sandburg), 1932; *Here I Have Lived—A History of Lincoln's Springfield*, 1935; and *A Handbook of Illinois Society*, 1943. The passage reprinted here, "Gettysburg," is Chapter XX of *The Lincoln Reader*. The first paragraph in each of the five sections of this excerpt is by Angle; other contributors to the chapter are Carl Sandburg (see I, 354), Lincoln himself, Representative Carr of Illinois, and John Hay (eminent Lincoln biographer).

GETTYSBURG¹

Soon after the Battle of Chancellorsville, Lee took the exultant Army of Northern Virginia across the Potomac and started north. Perhaps his ultimate objective was Washington, perhaps it was the rich cities of Pennsylvania, where dwindling supplies might be replenished. No one knew. Hooker, whose army had not been demoralized by defeat, started north at the same time, skillfully disposing his troops so that they would stand as a shield between the Confederates and the national Capital.

Early in the morning of June 28, 1863, George Gordon Meade, commanding Hooker's Fifth Corps, was awakened by a messenger from the President placing him in command of the Army of the Potomac. Four days later his forward elements stumbled into Lee's advance guard, and the Battle of Gettysburg began. For three days Lee sent troops hitherto invincible against blue lines that at first yielded and then stood firm. When it was over, his

army, bled by 20,000 casualties, had lost one of the decisive battles of history.

1

Carl Sandburg recounts the first great victory of the Army of the Potomac.

From day to day neither Meade nor Lee had been certain where the other was. Lee would rather have taken Harrisburg, its stores and supplies, and then battled Meade on the way to Philadelphia. In that case Lee would have had ammunition enough to keep his artillery firing with no letup, no orders during an infantry charge that ammunition was running low and must be saved.

Lee rode his horse along roads winding through bright summer landscapes to find himself suddenly looking at the smoke of a battle he had not ordered nor planned. Some of his own marching divisions had become entangled with enemy columns, traded shots, and a battle had begun that Lee could draw away from or carry on. He decided to carry on. He said Yes. His troops in their last two battles and on general form looked unbeatable. Against him was an untried commander with a jealous staff that had never worked as smoothly as his own. If he could repeat his performances with his men at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, he could then march to Harrisburg, use the State Capitol for barracks, replenish his needs, march on to Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, lay hold of money, supplies, munitions, win European recognition, and end the war.

The stakes were immense, the chances fair. The new enemy commander had never planned a battle nor handled a big army in the wild upsets of frontal combat on a wide line. Also fifty-eight regiments of Northern veterans who had fought at Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, had gone home, their time up, their places filled by militia and raw recruits.

One factor was against Lee: he would have to tell his cannoners to go slow and count their shells, while Meade's artillery could fire on and on from an endless supply. Another factor, too, was against Lee: he was away from his Virginia, where he knew the ground and the people, while Meade's men were fighting for their homes, women, barns, cattle, and

¹ From *The Lincoln Reader*, copyright, 1947, by Paul M. Angle. Reprinted by permission of Rutgers University Press.

fields against invaders and strangers, as Meade saw and felt it.

To Lee's words, "If the enemy is there, we must attack him," Longstreet who now replaced Stonewall Jackson, spoke sharply, "If he is there, it will be because he is anxious that we should attack him—a good reason, in my judgment, for not doing so." This vague and involved feeling Longstreet nursed in his breast; attack was unwise, and his advice rejected. It resulted in hours of delay and wasted time that might have counted.

Lee hammered at the Union left wing the first day, the right wing the second day, Meade on that day sending word to Lincoln that the enemy was "repulsed at all points." On the third day, July 3, 1863, Lee smashed at Meade's center. Under Longstreet's command, General George Edward Pickett, a tall arrow of a man, with mustache and goatee, with long ringlets of auburn hair flying as he galloped his horse, headed 15,000 men, who had nearly a mile to go up a slow slope of land to reach the Union center. Pickett might have had thoughts in his blanket under the stars some night that week of how long ago it was, twenty-one years, since he, a Virginia boy schooled in Richmond, had been studying law in his uncle's office in Quincy, Illinois, seeing men daily who tried cases with the young attorney, Abraham Lincoln. And the Pickett boy had gone on to West Point, graduated at the bottom of his class, the last of all, though later he had been first to go over the parapets at Chapultepec in 1847, and still later, in 1859, had taken possession of San Juan Island at Puget Sound on the delicate mission of accommodating officials of the Buchanan administration in bringing on a war with Great Britain, with the hope of saving his country from a threatened civil war by welding its divided sections. British diplomacy achieved joint occupation of the island by troops of two nations and thus averted war. On the Peninsula, Pickett's men had earned the nickname of "The Game Cock Brigade," and he considered love of woman second only to the passion for war.

Before starting his men on their charge to the Union center, Pickett handed Longstreet a letter to a girl in Richmond he was to marry if he lived. Longstreet had ordered Pickett to go

forward and Pickett had penciled on the back of the envelope, "If Old Peter's (Longstreet's) nod means death, good-by, and God bless you, little one!" An officer held out a flask of whiskey to Pickett: "Take a drink with me; in an hour you'll be in hell or glory." And Pickett said No; he had promised "the little girl" he wouldn't.

Across the long rise of open ground, with the blue flag of Virginia floating ahead, over field and meadow Pickett's 15,000 marched steadily and smoothly, almost as if on a drill ground. Solid shot, grape and canister, from the Union artillery plowed through them, and later a wild rain of rifle bullets. Seven-eighths of a mile they marched in the open sunlight, every man a target for the Union marksmen behind stone fences and breastworks. They obeyed orders; Uncle Robert had said they would go anywhere and do anything.

As men fell their places were filled, the ranks closed up. As officers tumbled off horses it was taken as expected in battle.

Perhaps half who started reached the Union lines surmounting Cemetery Ridge.

Then came cold steel, the bayonet, the clubbed musket. The strongest and last line of the enemy was reached. "The Confederate battle flag waved over his defences," said a Confederate major, "and the fighting over the wall became hand to hand, but more than half having already fallen, our line was too weak to rout the enemy."

Meade rode up white-faced to hear it was a repulse and cried, "Thank God!" Lee commented: "They deserved success as far as it can be deserved by human valor and fortitude. More may have been required of them than they were able to perform." To one of his colonels, Lee said, "This has been a sad day for us, a sad day, but we cannot expect always to gain victories."

As a heavy rainfall came on the night of July 4, Lee ordered a retreat toward the Potomac.²

2

Cemeteries mark battlefields. How that at Gettysburg came to be created, and how Lin-

² From *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years* by Carl Sandburg, copyright, 1939, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

coln was invited to dedicate it, are related by Clark E. Carr, the Illinois member of the cemetery commission.

Scarcely had the reverberations of the guns of the battle died away when the Honorable David Wills, a citizen of Gettysburg, wrote to the Honorable Andrew C. Curtin, the great war Governor of Pennsylvania, suggesting that a plot of ground in the midst of the battlefield be at once purchased and set apart as a soldiers' national cemetery, and that the remains of the dead be exhumed and placed in this cemetery. He suggested that the ground to be selected should be on what was known as Cemetery Hill, so called because adjoining it is the local cemetery of Gettysburg. . . .

Governor Curtin at once approved of the recommendation of Mr. Wills, and correspondence was opened with the governors of the loyal States whose troops had engaged in the battle, asking them to co-operate in the movement. The grounds proposed by Mr. Wills . . . were at once purchased. . . .

It was proposed, as the work proceeded, that memorial dedicatory exercises be held to consecrate this sacred ground, which was finally determined upon. The day first fixed upon for these exercises was the twenty-third of October, 1863.

The Honorable Edward Everett, of Massachusetts, was then regarded as the greatest living American orator, and it was decided to invite him to deliver the oration; and this was done. But he replied that it was wholly out of his power to make the necessary preparation by the twenty-third of October. So desirous were we all to have Mr. Everett that the dedication was postponed to Thursday, the nineteenth of November, 1863—nearly a month—to suit Mr. Everett's convenience. The dedication took place on that day.

A formal invitation to be present was sent to the President of the United States and his Cabinet, to Major General George G. Meade . . . and to the officers and soldiers who had participated in, and gained, the memorable victory. Invitations were also sent to the venerable Lieutenant General Winfield Scott and to Admiral Charles Stewart, the distinguished and time-honored representatives of the army and navy, to the diplomatic corps, represent-

ing foreign governments, to the members of both Houses of Congress, and to other distinguished personages.

All these invitations and all arrangements for the dedicatory exercises—as was the case with everything relating to the cemetery—were considered and decided upon by our Board of Commissioners, and were, insofar as he was able, under the direction of the Board, carried into effect by Mr. Wills, our president. As we were all representing and speaking for the governors of our respective States, by whom we were appointed, we made all the invitations in their names.

The proposition to ask Mr. Lincoln to speak at the Gettysburg ceremonies was an afterthought. The President of the United States had, like the other distinguished personages, been invited to be present, but Mr. Lincoln was not, at that time, invited to speak. In fact, it did not seem to occur to any one that he could speak upon such an occasion.

Scarcely any member of the Board, excepting the member representing Illinois, had ever heard him speak at all, and no other member had ever heard, or read from him, anything except political discussions. When the suggestion was made that he be invited to speak, while all expressed high appreciation of his great abilities as a political speaker, as shown in his debates with Senator Douglas, and in his Cooper Institute address, the question was raised as to his ability to speak upon such a grave and solemn occasion as that of the memorial services. Besides, it was said that, with his important duties and responsibilities, he could not possibly have the leisure to prepare an address for such an occasion. In answer to this it was urged that he himself, better than any one else, could determine as to these questions, and that, if he were invited to speak, he was sure to do what, under the circumstances, would be right and proper. . . .

It was finally decided to ask President Lincoln "after the oration" (that is to say, after Mr. Everett's oration), as Chief Executive of the nation, "to set apart formally these grounds to their sacred use by a few appropriate remarks." This was done in the name of the governors of the States, as was the case with others, by Mr. Wills; but the invitation was not settled upon and sent to Mr. Lincoln until

the second of November, more than six weeks after Mr. Everett had been invited to speak, and but a little more than two weeks before the exercises were held.³

3

Tardy as it was, the invitation to speak was promptly accepted by the President. On November 18, 1863, he and his party proceeded from Washington to Gettysburg by special train. Of that trip and the preliminaries of the dedicatory exercises, John Hay preserved much in his diary, at the same time demonstrating that a man with a finely developed literary instinct does not always recognize a masterpiece when he hears it.

On our train were the President, Seward, Usher and Blair; Nicolay and myself; Mercier and Admiral Reynaud; Bertinatti and Capt. Isola and Lt. Martinez and Cora; Mrs. Wise; Wayne MacVeagh; McDougal of Canada, and one or two others. We had a pleasant sort of a trip. . . .

At Gettysburg the President went to Mr. Wills who expected him, and our party broke like a drop of quicksilver spilled. MacVeagh, young Stanton, and I foraged around for awhile—walked out to the college, got a chafing dish of oysters then some supper, and finally loafing around to the Court House where Lamon was holding a meeting of marshals, we found Forney and went around to his place, Mr. Fahnestock's, and drank a little whisky with him. He had been drinking a good deal during the day and was getting to feel a little ugly and dangerous. He was particularly bitter on Montgomery Blair. MacVeagh was telling him that he pitched into the Tycoon coming up, and told him some truths. He said the President got a good deal of that from time to time and needed it. . . .

We went out after a while following the music to hear the serenades. The President appeared at the door and said half a dozen words meaning nothing and went in. Seward, who was staying around the corner at Harper's, was called out, and spoke so indistinctly that I did not hear a word of what he was saying. Forney

and MacVeagh were still growling about Blair.

We went back to Forney's room, having picked up Nicolay, and drank more whisky. Nicolay sang his little song of the "Three Thieves," and we then sang "John Brown." At last we proposed that Forney should make a speech and two or three started out, Shannon and Behan and Nicolay, to get a band to serenade him. I stayed with him. So did Stanton and MacVeagh. He still growled quietly and I thought he was going to do something imprudent. He said, "If I speak, I will speak my mind." The music sounded in the street, and the fuglers came rushing up imploring him to come down. He smiled quietly, told them to keep cool, and asked, "Are the recorders there?" "I suppose so of course," shouted the fugler. "Ascertain," said the imperturbable Forney. "Hay, we'll take a drink." They shouted and begged him to come down. The thing would be a failure—it would be his fault, etc. "Are the recorders congenial?" he calmly insisted on knowing. Somebody commended prudence. He said sternly, "I am always prudent." I walked downstairs with him.

The crowd was large and clamorous. The fuglers stood by the door in an agony. The reporters squatted at a little stand in the entry. Forney stood on the threshold, John Young and I by him. The crowd shouted as the door opened. Forney said, "My friends, these are the first hearty cheers I have heard tonight. You gave no such cheers to your President down the Street. Do you know what you owe to that great man? You owe your country—you owe your name as American citizens."

He went on blackguarding the crowd for their apathy and then diverged to his own record, saying he had been for Lincoln in his heart in 1860—that open advocacy was not as effectual as the course he took—dividing the most corrupt organization that ever existed—the proslavery Democratic party. He dwelled at length on this question and then went back to the eulogy of the President, that great, wonderful, mysterious, inexplicable man who holds in his single hands the reins of the Republic; who keeps his own counsels; who does his own purpose in his own way, no matter what temporizing minister in his Cabinet sets himself up in opposition to the progress of the age.

³ Clark E. Carr, *Lincoln at Gettysburg*, pp. 8-10, 18-25.

And very much of this.

After him Wayne MacVeagh made a most touching and beautiful speech of five minutes and Judge Shannon of Pittsburgh spoke effectively and acceptably to the people.

"That speech must not be written out yet," says Young. "He will see further about it when he gets sober," as we went upstairs. We sang more of "John Brown" and went home.

In the morning I got a beast and rode out with the President's suite to the Cemetery in the procession. The procession formed itself in an orphanly sort of way and moved out with very little help from anybody, and after a little delay, Mr. Everett took his place on the stand—and Mr. Stockton made a prayer which thought it was an oration; and Mr. Everett spoke as he always does, perfectly—and the President, in a fine, free way, with more grace than is his wont, said his half dozen words of consecration, and the music wailed and we went home through crowded and cheering streets. And all the particulars are in the daily papers.⁴

4

Here are the "half dozen words of consecration."

Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what

⁴ From *Lincoln and the Civil War* by Tyler Dennett, copyright, 1939, by Dodd, Mead & Company, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Dodd, Mead & Company.

we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.⁵

5

In prose only less memorable than Lincoln's own, Carl Sandburg has written the epilogue to Gettysburg.

After the ceremonies at Gettysburg, Lincoln lunched with Governor Curtin, Mr. Everett, and others at the Wills home, held a reception that had not been planned, handshaking nearly an hour, looking gloomy and listless but brightening sometimes as a small boy or girl came in line, and stopping one tall man for remarks as to just how high up he reached. At five o'clock he attended a patriotic meeting in the Presbyterian church, walking arm-in-arm with old John Burns, and listening to an address by Lieutenant Governor-elect Anderson of Ohio. At six-thirty he was on the departing Washington train. In the dining car his secretary, John Hay, ate with Simon Cameron and Wayne MacVeagh. Hay had thought Cameron and MacVeagh hated each other, but he noted: "I was more than usually struck by the intimate jovial relations that existed between men that hate and detest each other as cordially as do the Pennsylvania politicians."

The ride to Washington took until midnight. Lincoln was weary, talked little, stretched out on one of the side seats in the drawing room and had a wet towel laid across his eyes and forehead.

He had stood that day, the world's foremost spokesman of popular government, saying that democracy was yet worth fighting for. He had

⁵ Nicolay and Hay, *Abraham Lincoln, Complete Works*, II, 439.

spoken as one in mist who might head on deeper yet into mist. He incarnated the assurances and pretenses of popular government, implied that it could and might perish from the earth. What he meant by "a new birth of freedom" for the nation could have a thousand interpretations. The taller riddles of democracy stood up out of the address. It had the dream touch of vast and furious events epitomized for any foreteller to read what was to come. He did not assume that the drafted soldiers, substitutes, and bounty-paid privates had died willingly under Lee's shot and shell, in deliberate consecration of themselves to the Union cause. His cadences sang the ancient song that where there is freedom men have fought and sacrificed for it, and that freedom is worth men's dying for. For the first time since he became President he had on a dramatic occasion declaimed, howsoever it might be read, Jefferson's proposition which had been a slogan of the Revolutionary War—"All men are created equal"—leaving no other inference than that he regarded the Negro slave as a man. His outwardly smooth sentences were inside of them gnarled and tough with the enigmas of the American experiment.

Back at Gettysburg the blue haze of the Cumberland Mountains had dimmed till it was a blur in a nocturne. The moon was up and fell with a bland golden benevolence on the new-made graves of soldiers, on the sepulchers of old settlers, on the horse carcasses of which the onrush of war had not yet permitted removal. The New York *Herald* man walked amid them and ended the story he sent his paper: "The air, the trees, the graves are silent. Even the relic hunters are gone now. And the soldiers here never wake to the sound of reveille."

In many a country cottage over the land, a tall old clock in a quiet corner told time in a tick-tock deliberation. Whether the orchard branches hung with pink-spray blossoms or

icicles of sleet, whether the outside news was seedtime or harvest, rain or drouth, births or deaths, the swing of the pendulum was right and left and right and left in a tick-tock deliberation.

The face and dial of the clock had known the eyes of a boy who listened to its tick-tock and learned to read its minute and hour hands. And the boy had seen years measured off by the swinging pendulum, and grown to man size, had gone away. And the people in the cottage knew that the clock would stand there and the boy never again come into the room and look at the clock with the query, "What is the time?"

In a row of graves of the Unidentified the boy would sleep long in the dedicated final resting place at Gettysburg. Why he had gone away and why he would never come back had roots in some mystery of flags and drums, of national fate in which individuals sink as in a deep sea, of men swallowed and vanished in a man-made storm of smoke and steel.

The mystery deepened and moved with ancient music and inviolable consolation because a solemn Man of Authority had stood at the graves of the Unidentified and spoken the words "We cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. . . . From these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion."

To the backward and forward pendulum swing of a tall old clock in a quiet corner they might read those cadenced words while outside the windows the first flurry of snow blew across the orchard and down over the meadow, the beginnings of winter in a gun-metal gloaming to be later arched with a star-flung sky.⁶

⁶ From *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years* by Carl Sandburg, copyright, 1939, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

FURTHER READINGS IN BIOGRAPHY AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY

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PART V

FICTION: THE SHORT STORY

FICTION: THE SHORT STORY

THE ELEMENTS OF FICTION

Unlike certain other types of literature (essays, philosophic poems, biography, and autobiography), narration, whether in short story or novel form, is designed to appeal primarily and immediately to the *emotions* of the reader. Its first basic purpose is to make the reader feel, its method to reach him through his senses rather than through his intellect. Although the tools employed in fiction must be those of the intellect, and although stories which appeal only to one's emotions are likely to be shallow and insignificant, the primary aim of narration is not to impart knowledge, to convince, or to paint a picture. The superior novel or short story does fulfill these functions, but only secondarily; good fiction makes a reader think by first making other approaches. Guy de Maupassant has summed up the purposes of narration: "The public is composed of numerous groups who cry to us [writers]: 'Console me, amuse me, make me sad, make me sympathetic, make me dream, make me laugh, make me shudder, make me weep, make me think.'"

Short-story writers and novelists have long known that activity of any kind portraying someone facing a problem will usually appeal to a reader's emotions. Life is, for everyone, a problem-solving business; our activities constantly involve conflicts of some kind. Problems, struggles, dilemmas—these are the materials of fiction. In order properly to depict these essential materials, novels and short stories contain four ingredients: character, action, setting, and a basic idea, or theme. That is, characters act out a situation against a setting or background; the way in which they act means something and conveys an idea or

a theme to the reader. In these respects, the ingredients of narrative and dramatic writing are identical. An understanding of these four elements is essential for intelligent, critical understanding and evaluation of fiction.

Character. Each of us is interested in people, because people are important in our individual lives. Some people we like, others we dislike—all for our own good reasons. And so in narrative: the reader is primarily interested in the individuals concerned. As in old-fashioned melodrama, his natural tendency is to identify himself with the hero and to hate the villain. If the central character is appealing, the reader wishes him to find a way out of his difficulties; he resents any person or circumstance that interferes with a successful outcome.

It is naturally difficult to identify oneself with a character whom one does not know or understand. This is why characterization is important in fiction. Before a writer can make his reader sympathize with a character, that character must come alive: the reader wants to see him act and hear him talk—wants to be able to visualize him. From our own experience we realize that we want to know people intimately enough to share their joys or sorrows. But we must be able to identify ourselves with them before we can be happy when they are happy, or sad when they are sad.

In some novels and short stories, the individualities of characters are so important, their traits developed so fully, that a primary concern of the reader is an understanding of these protagonists. In other words, fiction stressing character portrayal derives its major effect by centering attention upon *who* is involved in the action rather than on *what*

happens (action), or the place *where* the action occurs (setting), or the *theme* itself. For example, our interest in Sherwood Anderson's "Sophistication" (II, 472) focuses upon the two central characters, little action occurs in the story and the setting is not important. In Katherine Mansfield's "A Cup of Tea" (II, 487) our real concern is with jealous Rosemary's reaction to her husband's approval of Miss Smith. These two illustrations, however, suggest the impossibility of fully accurate classification, for each narrative is not alone one of character; the theme, or idea, is important in both. But they are *primarily* stories of character, and, of course, all good fiction of whatever type does *mean* something.

Action. The word "action" should be used in its broadest sense to include not only physical but also mental activity. Every narrative moves from one point to another, from the events and circumstances that set the story in motion to those which conclude it. Dramatic conflict, in varying degrees of intensity, is the core of all fiction and is always revealed by the activity of protagonists in some mental or physical form.

The first type of conflict is *elemental*, or *physical*: a struggle between man and the physical world. It represents man versus the forces of nature: the difficulties and dangers, for example, faced by explorers, navigators, aviators. Rain, cold, heat, wild beasts in the jungle, treacherous tides—these are constant obstacles to mankind. Such elemental conflicts are frequently found in moving pictures, in melodramatic plays, and in pulp magazines; occasionally, combined with other ingredients, they appear in narrative or dramatic masterpieces.

Another type of conflict is *social*: a struggle between man and man. Much popular fiction is based on social conflict: two men trying to win the love of a girl; the competition of businessmen; a girl having difficulties with her parents over her conduct; racial and religious prejudices, etc.

The third kind of conflict is *internal*, or *psychological*: a struggle between desires within the same person. External forces may be important and other characters may appear in the narrative, but the focus is always upon the central figure's inner turmoil.

Stevenson's "Markheim" (II, 438) is a superb example of internal struggle, whereas Conrad's "Youth" (II, 564) is based in large part upon physical conflict, and Green's "Fine Wagon" (II, 506) is primarily social.

Setting. The background against which the action of a story takes place is of varying importance, depending on the subject with which the author is dealing. Setting may serve merely as stage scenery, as a visual aid to the reader's imagination. It becomes more important when, as in Kipling's "The Man Who Was" (II, 457), it contributes to an understanding of the mood of a story or of a character; here it serves the same function as does a musical accompaniment to a play or moving picture. And, finally, setting sometimes becomes so important that it assumes the role of an actor in the story, a dramatic force, as in Hawthorne's "The Ambitious Guest" (II, 433) or Hardy's "The Three Strangers" (II, 446).

The careful reader will attempt to evaluate the importance of setting in every narrative. He will ask himself: "Is setting in this story only a backdrop for the action? Is it a kind of musical accompaniment to the action? Or is it a vital force that influences the outcome?"

Theme, or Idea. Of all the four necessary ingredients of fiction, the theme, or idea, is the most difficult to define or to understand. Character, setting, and action are relatively concrete, whereas theme is abstract. The reader can observe character, he can visualize setting, he can measure action. But theme in most novels and stories is intangible; it is rarely stated specifically, and for that reason the reader must find it between the lines.

If we compare a story to a building, the story itself upon the printed page (characters in action against a setting) is the superstructure; the theme or idea that underlies it is the foundation. The casual reader sees only the words on the page, just as the man in the street sees only that part of a building above the ground. But the idea on which a story is based is as important as the foundation of a house.

The average reader speaks of the "plot" of a story or novel. By that he usually means "What happened?" But this question is not nearly so important as "Why did it happen?" The ending of every narrative, it is true, does

present some kind of outcome; something, however little, does "happen." But the reasons for this outcome are more important than the actual events themselves; behind the events lies a meaning. This meaning the reader accepts or rejects, depending on whether the author has been able to convince him that the outcome coincides either with his own experience with life, or with life as the author has represented it.

The problem of every writer, then, is to construct his story on a firm foundation—on an idea which he can persuade his reader to believe. Katherine Mansfield, in her previously mentioned "A Cup of Tea," has convinced us that there are women so vain, egotistical, and selfish that they perform acts of charity to glorify their own ego, and that when an event occurs which threatens their own security and peace of mind, charity will fly out the window. To appreciate the significance of this idea, we have only to imagine what would have happened if Katherine Mansfield had ended her story by having Rosemary Fell go through with her charitable enterprise instead of abandoning it. Rosemary is presented to us at the beginning of the story in her true character; she acts out that character consistently as far as the climax of the story. For her suddenly to have shed these traits and to have acted contrary to her character is unthinkable. The story would have had no meaning or idea at all.

Character, action, setting, and theme are the four ingredients of fiction. By judicious selection and careful arrangement of them, the fiction writer tries to make his readers feel and understand the particular phase of living he is presenting and the meaning which that phase embodies. His fictional purpose may be achieved in a novel, in a short story, or in the long narrative which has characteristics of both novel and short story and which is represented in this volume.

THE NOVEL

Although the novel is too long for inclusion in this volume, it represents a major literary type which deserves discussion. The novelist is free to expand as fully as he wishes the experience which he is representing. Yet the most satisfying novel is a unified arrangement of the basic fictional elements discussed above.

Like any other modern literary type, the novel evolved from various unsettled forms which preceded it. The professional teller of tales was an important figure for centuries before the invention of printing and still retains prominence in places where reading is not widespread. In ancient Egypt, in India and in Greece and in Rome, fables of beasts, fairy tales, and stories of adventure thrived. Italy and France produced many narrative writers, and for three centuries the medieval romance flourished in England. In Elizabethan England people began to turn to fiction as well as to drama for entertainment.

Immediate precursors of the modern novel, so-called "histories" and "novels" of Elizabethan times, were largely adaptations of medieval romances. John Lyly's *Euphues* (1579), Sidney's *Arcadia* (1590), and Lodge's *Rosalynde* (1590) appear overly intricate and ornamented; they seem to allegorize and preach excessively, denying reader identification. The realistic content of *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), its insistence on detail, clarity, and credibility, served to replace some of the improbabilities and impossibilities of earlier fiction. *Robinson Crusoe* may with reason, therefore, be called the first actual novel in English. With the novels of Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, and Sterne the novel became firmly established during the eighteenth century. These writers expanded the concept of the novel and attempted to write narrative as an art form. The popularity of the novel has increased until today it is the most universally accepted single literary type.

The novelist is virtually unhindered by considerations of method, time, or space. (The dramatist must present his material on a stage within the space of a few hours and must use characters to present ideas; the short-story writer is restricted within basic limitations of unity and focus.) The novelist can appear in his story or can assume omniscience. He may, if he chooses, reveal not only the conscious (spoken or written) thoughts of his characters but those which lie beneath the surface. He may inject his own ideas and philosophies at will. No restrictions of subject matter apply: the novelist can, and frequently does, handle subjects technically impossible for the dramatist, too wide-ranging for the short-story writer.

Into the fabric of his fiction a novelist may weave the material of ethics, philosophy, history, politics, science, or any social problem.

Again, the novel has no set form or length. For example, Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) is made up of letters; Dos Passos's trilogy, *U. S. A.* (1930-1936), is largely biographical and employs several camera and motion-picture devices and techniques. These two contrasting forms, here competently handled, suggest the immense variety of the novel. They also suggest that the advantages which a novelist has can be abused. Twentieth-century writers, especially, often sacrifice unity and balance to the mere piling on of details for no discernible artistic purpose. In spite of its flexibility, the novel, like any other art form, loses its effectiveness when basic elements are carelessly selected and haphazardly arranged.

As noted later, a short story is sharply focused on one character, or a limited group, in a single situation. The novel, with its broader scope, ordinarily develops several major characters and a large group of minor ones. It may also build to a number of climactic situations and its moods and impressions may be numerous.

Between the sharply limited short story and the wide-ranging novel lies a cognate type of fiction called, variously, the long short story, the novelette, or the novella. Its fictional purpose is identical with that of both other varieties, but it sometimes lacks the essential unity of the short story as well as the novel's freedom of space and time. Its pace is more leisurely than that of the former, its incidents and number of characters fewer than in the latter. Although more than twice the length of the usual short story, however, Conrad's "Youth" (II, 564), James's "The Lesson of the Master" (II, 533), and Cather's "Neighbor Rosicky" (II, 580) more closely resemble the short story in mood and tone than they do the novel. Careful analysis of them will reveal the limitations, defects, and possibilities of both related types.

THE SHORT STORY

Although little more than a century old, the short story traces its ancestry to earlier forms of prose fiction. The type as we know it has evolved not only from the novel but, like the

novel itself, from brief tales told by cavemen in the long ago, from the fables of Aesop, and from ancient Oriental episodes and stories. Quite probably in origin the oldest of all literary forms, the short story certainly owes something to that famous medieval potpourri, the *Gesta Romanorum*, to Chaucer and *The Canterbury Tales*, to Boccaccio's *Decameron* and Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, to "novels" and "histories" of the Elizabethan age, and to many other influences.

From these precursors of the short story has evolved a definite type of literature, a type really founded by Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849). When Poe discarded the leisurely narrative methods of earlier writers, Washington Irving among them, and began to construct narratives notable for unity and compression, the modern short story was born. It should be remembered, however, that Poe did not "invent" the short story. His contribution was the shaping and arranging of materials and elements known and used for centuries. When Hawthorne (1804-1864) shortly followed Poe's stories with his somber, reflective, slowly paced fiction, the type may be said to have been both born and weaned. It rapidly grew to adulthood, first in America and somewhat later in England.

It is impossible to give a satisfactory definition of the short story. Although many attempts have been made, all have failed. The definitions have been too narrow or too broad. One that is too restricting puts the short story form into a strait jacket that inevitably hampers its freedom of movement so that it does not include, as it must, certain types of successful experimental stories which do not conform to a rigid pattern. And a definition that is too broad is likely to mean little or nothing.

Instead of trying to define a short story in precise terms, it is more helpful to study its possibilities and its limitations—what it can do and what it cannot do. The following suggestions introduce some of the possibilities and limitations of the type.

The limitation of the short story is the limitation of space: it must be short. The average story, because generally it must not exceed five or six thousand words, has not the range of the novel. The short-story writer paints miniatures; the novelist paints murals. Because

he must confine himself to a small canvas, the writer of the short story ordinarily observes certain principles. He knows, because his story must be short, that he must limit the number of characters in it and that usually its focus must fall on one character, or at most on a limited group of characters. He must similarly restrict the number of settings he uses, within a short space of time he cannot with impunity move his characters from place to place. Also he must not allow his story to consume any more time than is necessary. And, finally, he knows that he must focus the reader's attention on a single situation, the climax of his story. Whereas a novel can build up an infinite number of scenes before the climax is reached, the short story is proportionately restricted; its climax must be reached quickly.

The possibilities of the short story are the outgrowth of its limitations. Its assets capitalize on its liabilities. Although a story cannot deal with subjects suitable for a novel, conversely it can deal with certain situations that a novel could not handle effectively. Just because a story is short, the writer can concentrate his material most effectively, whereas the novelist may be more diffuse. A short story is like a newspaper editorial on a local tax problem; a novel resembles a treatise on economics. Each serves a need, but in a different way.

The great advantage of the short story is that it can focus sharply on a single character (or a very limited group of characters) in a single situation. Even a casual reading of the stories in this volume will reveal the fact that each builds to a single climactic situation. All the incidents in the forepart of each story are calculated nicely to focus the reader's attention on the ending. The novel, too, adopts this method of construction; but its subject is likely to be wider, its scope broader, its characters

more numerous, its situations, comparatively speaking, more varied and unrelated.

We may well conclude that the guiding principle of the short story is unity. The stories concentrate on a single unified situation; the characters are reduced to a minimum number, and the author usually focuses on only one. Even when the spotlight of our attention is almost equally divided between two or more, the focus is shared, not divided.

Unity, then, is the basic principle of the short story: a story concentrates whenever possible on a single character in a single situation at a single moment.

Here are some hints as to what to look for in short stories. All these questions will not apply to every narrative, furthermore, they are designedly general. Intelligent and continued reading will suggest further and more specific questions. But these basic questions will serve as a starting point for analysis and will suggest differences between short and long narratives.

1. Who is the central character of the story? (Or is there more than one central character? If so, how does the author preserve the unified focus?)
2. What are the dominant traits of the central character?
3. What forces make up the main conflict of the story?
4. How is this conflict resolved? If it is not resolved, what prevents a resolution?
5. What part does setting play in the story?
6. What is the theme, or idea, that underlies the story?
7. From what point of view is the story told? How does the author economize by shortening the actual elapsed time of the story?
8. Which of the four basic elements of fiction dominates the story?

EDGAR ALLAN POE

Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849), whose sinister tales are reflective of his tragic life, was born in Boston and orphaned less than three years later. His unhappiness in the foster home of the Allans of Richmond, his brief attendance at the University of Virginia and West Point, his poverty-stricken and unstable later life are familiar legends. Poe's reputation as the founder of the modern short story stems from the meticulously fashioned, unified "single effect" which he devised. His stories and many of his poems (1, 287) are sustained studies in mystery and horror. Among his most famous short stories are "Ligeia," 1838; "The Fall of the House of Usher," 1839; "Murders in the Rue Morgue," 1841; "The Masque of the Red Death," 1842; "The Black Cat," 1843; "The Gold-Bug," 1843; "The Tell-Tale Heart," 1843; and "The Purloined Letter," 1845. "The Cask of Amontillado" is a highly compressed story which contains, in the early part, an example of Poe's subtle psychological analysis. Plot, character, setting, and atmosphere are skillfully integrated to produce the intense climactic impression of ghastliness and horror.

THE CASK OF AMONTILLADO

The thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could; but when he ventured upon insult, I vowed revenge. You, who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that I gave utterance to a threat. At length I would be avenged; this was a point definitively settled—but the very definitiveness with which it was resolved precluded the idea of risk. I must not only punish, but punish with impunity. A wrong is unredressed when retribution overtakes its redresser. It is equally unredressed when the avenger fails to make himself felt as such to him who has done the wrong.

It must be understood that neither by word nor deed had I given Fortunato cause to doubt

my good will. I continued, as was my wont, to smile in his face, and he did not perceive that my smile now was at the thought of his immolation.

5 He had a weak point—this Fortunato—although in other regards he was a man to be respected and even feared. He prided himself on his connoisseurship in wine. Few Italians have the true virtuoso spirit. For the most part their enthusiasm is adopted to suit the time and opportunity, to practise imposture upon the British and Austrian millionaires. In painting and gemmery,¹ Fortunato, like his countrymen, was a quack, but in the matter of old wines he 15 was sincere. In this respect I did not differ from him materially;—I was skillful in the Italian vintages myself, and bought largely whenever I could.

It was about dusk, one evening during the 20 supreme madness of the carnival season, that I encountered my friend. He accosted me with excessive warmth, for he had been drinking much. The man wore motley. He had on a tight-fitting parti-striped dress, and his head 25 was surmounted by the conical cap and bells. I was so pleased to see him that I thought I should never have done wringing his hand.

I said to him—"My dear Fortunato, you are luckily met. How remarkably well you are looking today. But I have received a pipe² of what passes for Amontillado,³ and I have my doubts."

"How?" said he. "Amontillado? A pipe? Impossible! And in the middle of the carnival!"

35 "I have my doubts," I replied; "and I was silly enough to pay the full Amontillado price without consulting you in the matter. You were not to be found, and I was fearful of losing a bargain."

"Amontillado!"

40 "I have my doubts."

¹ knowledge of precious gems.

² a large cask.

³ a pale-colored Spanish sherry.

"Amontillado!"

"And I must satisfy them."

"Amontillado!"

"As you are engaged, I am on my way to Luchresi. If any one has a critical turn it is he. He will tell me—"

"Luchresi cannot tell Amontillado from Sherry."

"And yet some fools will have it that his taste is a match for your own."

"Come, let us go."

"Whither?"

"To your vaults."

"My friend, no; I will not impose upon your good nature. I perceive you have an engagement. Luchresi—"

"I have no engagement;—come."

"My friend, no. It is not the engagement, but the severe cold with which I perceive you are afflicted. The vaults are insufferably damp. They are encrusted with nitre."

"Let us go, nevertheless. The cold is merely nothing. Amontillado! You have been imposed upon. And as for Luchresi, he cannot distinguish Sherry from Amontillado."

Thus speaking, Fortunato possessed himself of my arm; and putting on a mask of black silk and drawing a *roquelaure*⁴ closely about my person, I suffered him to hurry me to my palazzo.

There were no attendants at home; they had absconded to make merry in honor of the time. I had told them that I should not return until the morning, and had given them explicit orders not to stir from the house. These orders were sufficient, I well knew, to insure their immediate disappearance, one and all, as soon as my back was turned.

I took from their sconces two flambeaux, and giving one to Fortunato, bowed him through several suites of rooms to the archway that led into the vaults. I passed down a long and winding staircase, requesting him to be cautious as he followed. We came at length to the foot of the descent and stood together upon the damp ground of the catacombs of the Montresors.

The gait of my friend was unsteady, and the bells upon his cap jingled as he strode.

"The pipe," he said.

"It is farther on," said I; "but observe the

white web-work which gleams from these cavern walls."

He turned towards me and looked into my eyes with two filmy orbs that distilled the rheum of intoxication.

"Nitre?" he asked, at length.

"Nitre," I replied. "How long have you had that cough?"

"Ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh! ugh!"

My poor friend found it impossible to reply for many minutes.

"It is nothing," he said, at last.

"Come," I said, with decision, "we will go back; your health is precious. You are rich, respected, admired, beloved; you are happy, as once I was. You are a man to be missed. For me it is no matter. We will go back; you will be ill, and I cannot be responsible. Besides, there is Luchresi—"

"Enough," he said; "the cough is a mere nothing; it will not kill me. I shall not die of a cough."

"True—true," I replied; "and, indeed, I had no intention of alarming you unnecessarily—but you should use all proper caution. A draught of this Medoc⁵ will defend us from the damp."

Here I knocked off the neck of a bottle which I drew from a long row of its fellows that lay upon the mold.

"Drink," I said, presenting him the wine.

He raised it to his lips with a leer. He paused and nodded to me familiarly, while his bells jingled.

"I drink," he said, "to the buried that repose around us."

"And I to your long life."

He again took my arm, and we proceeded.

"These vaults," he said, "are extensive."

"The Montresors," I replied, "were a great and numerous family."

"I forget your arms."

"A huge human foot d'or, in a field azure; the foot crushes a serpent rampant whose fangs are embedded in the heel."

"And the motto?"

"*Nemo me impune lacessit.*"⁶

"Good!" he said.

⁴ a cloak reaching to the knees.

⁵ a claret wine produced in southwestern France.

⁶ "No one attacks me with impunity."

The wine sparkled in his eyes and the bells jingled. My own fancy grew warm with the Medoc. We had passed through long walls of piled skeletons, with casks and puncheons intermingling, into the inmost recesses of the catacombs. I paused again, and this time I made bold to seize Fortunato by an arm above the elbow.

"The nitre!" I said; "see, it increases. It hangs like moss upon the vaults. We are below the river's bed. The drops of moisture trickle among the bones. Come, we will go back ere it is too late. Your cough—"

"It is nothing," he said; "let us go on. But first, another draught of the Medoc."

I broke and reached him a flagon of De Grève.⁷ He emptied it at a breath. His eyes flashed with a fierce light. He laughed and threw the bottle upwards with a gesticulation I did not understand.

I looked at him in surprise. He repeated the movement—a grotesque one.

"You do not comprehend?" he said.

"Not I," I replied.

"Then you are not of the brotherhood."

"How?"

"You are not of the masons."

"Yes, yes," I said, "yes, yes."

"You? Impossible! A mason?"

"A mason," I replied.

"A sign," he said, "a sign."

"It is this," I answered, producing from beneath the folds of my *roquelaure*, a trowel.

"You jest," he exclaimed, recoiling a few paces. "But let us proceed to the Amontillado."

"Be it so," I said, replacing the tool beneath the cloak, and again offering him my arm. He leaned upon it heavily. We continued our route in search of the Amontillado. We passed through a range of low arches, descended, passed on, and, descending again, arrived at a deep crypt, in which the foulness of the air caused our flambeaus rather to glow than flame.

At the most remote end of the crypt there appeared another less spacious. Its walls had been lined with human remains, piled to the vault overhead, in the fashion of the great catacombs of Paris. Three sides of this interior crypt were still ornamented in this manner.

From the fourth the bones had been thrown down, and lay promiscuously upon the earth, forming at one point a mound of some size. Within the wall thus exposed by the displacing of the bones, we perceived a still interior recess, in depth about four feet, in width three, in height six or seven. It seemed to have been constructed for no especial use within itself, but formed merely the interval between two of the colossal supports of the roof of the catacombs, and was backed by one of their circumscribing walls of solid granite.

It was in vain that Fortunato, uplifting his dull torch, endeavored to pry into the depth of the recess. Its termination the feeble light did not enable us to see.

"Proceed," I said; "herein is the Amontillado. As for Luchresi—"

"He is an ignoramus," interrupted my friend, as he stepped unsteadily forward, while I followed immediately at his heels. In an instant he had reached the extremity of the niche, and finding his progress arrested by the rock, stood stupidly bewildered. A moment more and I had fettered him to the granite. In its surface were two iron staples, distant from each other about two feet, horizontally. From one of these depended a short chain, from the other a padlock. Throwing the links about his waist, it was but the work of a few seconds to secure it. He was too much astounded to resist. Withdrawing the key I stepped back from the recess.

"Pass your hand," I said, "over the wall; you cannot help feeling the nitre. Indeed, it is *very* damp. Once more let me *implore* you to return. No? Then I must positively leave you. But I must first render you all the little attentions in my power."

"The Amontillado!" ejaculated my friend, not yet recovered from his astonishment.

"True," I replied; "the Amontillado."

As I said these words I busied myself among the pile of bones of which I have before spoken. Throwing them aside, I soon uncovered a quantity of building stone and mortar. With these materials and with the aid of my trowel, I began vigorously to wall up the entrance of the niche.

I had scarcely laid the first tier of the masonry when I discovered that the intoxication of Fortunato had in a great measure worn off.

⁷ a French wine.

The earliest indication I had of this was a low moaning cry from the depth of the recess. It was *not* the cry of a drunken man. There was then a long and obstinate silence. I laid the second tier, and the third, and the fourth; and then I heard the furious vibrations of the chain. The noise lasted for several minutes, during which, that I might hearken to it with the more satisfaction, I ceased my labors and sat down upon the bones. When at last the clanking subsided, I resumed the trowel, and finished without interruption the fifth, the sixth, and the seventh tier. The wall was now nearly upon a level with my breast. I again paused, and holding the flambeaux over the mason-work, threw a few feeble rays upon the figure within.

A succession of loud and shrill screams, bursting suddenly from the throat of the chained form, seemed to thrust me violently back. For a brief moment I hesitated, I trembled. Unsheathing my rapier, I began to grope with it about the recess; but the thought of an instant reassured me. I placed my hand upon the solid fabric of the catacombs, and felt satisfied. I reapproached the wall; I replied to the yells of him who clamored. I re-echoed, I aided, I surpassed them in volume and in strength. I did this, and the clamorers grew still.

It was now midnight, and my task was drawing to a close. I had completed the eighth, the ninth and the tenth tier. I had finished a portion of the last and the eleventh; there remained but a single stone to be fitted and plastered in. I struggled with its weight; I placed it partially in its destined position. But now there came from out the niche a low laugh that erected the hairs upon my head. It was succeeded by a sad voice, which I had difficulty in recognizing as that of the noble Fortunato. The voice said—

"Ha! ha! ha!—he! he! he!—a very good joke, indeed—an excellent jest. We will have many a rich laugh about it at the palazzo—he! he! he!—over our wine—he! he! he!"

"The Amontillado!" I said.

"He! he! he!—he! he! he!—yes, the Amontillado. But is it not getting late? Will not they be awaiting us at the palazzo, the Lady Fortunato and the rest? Let us be gone."

"Yes," I said, "let us be gone."

"For the love of God, Montresor!"

"Yes," I said, "for the love of God!"

But to these words I hearkened in vain for a reply. I grew impatient. I called aloud—

"Fortunato!"

5 No answer. I called again—

"Fortunato!"

No answer still. I thrust a torch through the remaining aperture and let it fall within. There came forth in return only a jingling of the bells.

10 My heart grew sick—on account of the dampness of the catacombs. I hastened to make an end of my labor. I forced the last stone into its position; I plastered it up. Against the new masonry I re-erected the old rampart of bones.

15 For the half of a century no mortal has disturbed them. *In pace requiescat.*⁸

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

20 *The Puritan heritage of his Salem, Massachusetts, family was a dominant influence on the work of Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804–1864), but his concern is with moral conflicts rather*
25 *than formal theological and ethical systems. His novel and short-story writing, begun in 1825, denies the optimism of other writers of his generation and reflects a thoughtful interest in moral and psychological problems. The Scarlet Letter, 1850, for example, is a tragic study of the effect of sin on the lives of four people; in The House of the Seven Gables, 1851, he traces the decline of a Puritan family; The Blithedale Romance, 1852, contains a satire on*
30 *the Brook Farm experiment in community living. "The Ambitious Guest" is one of Hawthorne's most somber and compact stories. The intense irony of the situation and skillful use of setting give impact to Hawthorne's idea of*
35 *the futility of human will and Nature's indifference to man.*

THE AMBITIOUS GUEST

45 One September night a family had gathered round their hearth, and piled it high with the driftwood of mountain streams, the dry cones of the pine, and the splintered ruins of great trees that had come crashing down the precipice.

50 Up the chimney roared the fire and brightened

⁸ May he rest in peace.

the room with its broad blaze. The faces of the father and mother had a sober gladness; the children laughed; the eldest daughter was the image of Happiness at seventeen; and the aged grandmother, who sat knitting in the warmest place, was the image of Happiness grown old. They had found the "herb, heart's-ease," in the bleakest spot of all New England. This family were situated in the Notch of the White Hills, where the wind was sharp throughout the year, and pitilessly cold in the winter,—giving their cottage all its fresh inclemency before it descended on the valley of the Saco. They dwelt in a cold spot and a dangerous one; for a mountain towered above their heads, so steep that the stones would often rumble down its sides and startle them at midnight.

The daughter had just uttered some simple jest that filled them all with mirth, when the wind came through the Notch and seemed to pause before their cottage—rattling the door, with a sound of wailing and lamentation, before it passed into the valley. For a moment it saddened them, though there was nothing unusual in the tones. But the family were glad again when they perceived that the latch was lifted by some traveler, whose footsteps had been unheard amid the dreary blast which heralded his approach, and wailed as he was entering, and went moaning away from the door.

Though they dwelt in such a solitude, these people held daily converse with the world. The romantic pass of the Notch is a great artery, through which the lifeblood of internal commerce is continually throbbing between Maine, on one side, and the Green Mountains and the shores of the St. Lawrence, on the other. The stagecoach always drew up before the door of the cottage. The wayfarer, with no companion but his staff, paused here to exchange a word, that the sense of loneliness might not utterly overcome him ere he could pass through the cleft of the mountain, or reach the first house in the valley. And here the teamster, on his way to Portland market, would put up for the night; and, if a bachelor, might sit an hour beyond the usual bedtime, and steal a kiss from the mountain maid at parting. It was one of those primitive taverns where the traveler pays only for food and lodging, but meets with a homely kindness beyond all price. When the footsteps

were heard, therefore, between the outer door and the inner one, the whole family rose up, grandmother, children, and all, as if about to welcome some one who belonged to them, and whose fate was linked with theirs.

The door was opened by a young man. His face at first wore the melancholy expression, almost despondency, of one who travels a wild and bleak road, at nightfall and alone, but soon brightened up when he saw the kindly warmth of his reception. He felt his heart spring forward to meet them all, from the old woman, who wiped a chair with her apron, to the little child that held out its arms to him. One glance and smile placed the stranger on a footing of innocent familiarity with the eldest daughter.

"Ah, this fire is the right thing!" cried he; "especially when there is such a pleasant circle round it. I am quite benumbed; for the Notch is just like the pipe of a great pair of bellows; it has blown a terrible blast in my face all the way from Bartlett."

"Then you are going toward Vermont?" said the master of the house, as he helped to take a light knapsack off the young man's shoulders.

"Yes; to Burlington, and far enough beyond," replied he. "I meant to have been at Ethan Crawford's to-night; but a pedestrian lingers along such a road as this. It is no matter; for, when I saw this good fire, and all your cheerful faces, I felt as if you had kindled it on purpose for me, and were waiting my arrival. So I shall sit down among you, and make myself at home."

The frank-hearted stranger had just drawn his chair to the fire when something like a heavy footstep was heard without, rushing down the steep side of the mountain, as with long and rapid strides, and taking such a leap in passing the cottage as to strike the opposite precipice. The family held their breath, because they knew the sound, and their guest held his by instinct.

"The old mountain has thrown a stone at us, for fear we should forget him," said the landlord, recovering himself. "He sometimes nods his head and threatens to come down; but we are old neighbors, and agree together pretty well upon the whole. Besides, we have a sure place of refuge hard by if he should be coming in good earnest."

Let us now suppose the stranger to have fin-

ished his supper of bear's meat; and, by his natural felicity of manner, to have placed himself on a footing of kindness with the whole family, so that they talked as freely together as if he belonged to their mountain brood. He was of a proud, yet gentle spirit—haughty and reserved among the rich and great; but ever ready to stoop his head to the lowly cottage door, and be like a brother or a son at the poor man's fireside. In the household of the Notch he found warmth and simplicity of feeling, the pervading intelligence of New England, and a poetry, of native growth, which they had gathered when they little thought of it from the mountain peaks and chasms, and at the very threshold of their romantic and dangerous abode. He had traveled far and alone; his whole life, indeed, had been a solitary path; for, with the lofty caution of his nature, he had kept himself apart from those who might otherwise have been his companions. The family, too, though so kind and hospitable, had that consciousness of unity among themselves, and separation from the world at large, which, in every domestic circle, should still keep a holy place where no stranger may intrude. But this evening a prophetic sympathy impelled the refined and educated youth to pour out his heart before the simple mountaineers, and constrained them to answer him with the same free confidence. And thus it should have been. Is not the kindred of a common fate a closer tie than that of birth?

The secret of the young man's character was a high and abstracted ambition. He could have borne to live an undistinguished life, but not to be forgotten in the grave. Yearning desire had been transformed to hope; and hope, long cherished, had become like certainty that, obscurely as he journeyed now, a glory was to beam on all his pathway,—though not, perhaps, while he was treading it. But when posterity should gaze back into the gloom of what was now the present, they would trace the brightness of his footsteps, brightening as meaner glories faded, and confess that a gifted one had passed from his cradle to his tomb with none to recognize him.

"As yet," cried the stranger,—his cheek glowing and his eye flashing with enthusiasm,—"as yet, I have done nothing. Were I to vanish from the earth to-morrow, none would know

so much of me as you; that a nameless youth came up at nightfall from the valley of the Saco, and opened his heart to you in the evening, and passed through the Notch by sunrise, and was seen no more. Not a soul would ask, 'Who was he? Whither did the wanderer go?' But I cannot die till I have achieved my destiny. Then, let Death come! I shall have built my monument!"

There was a continual flow of natural emotion, gushing forth amid abstracted revery, which enabled the family to understand this young man's sentiments, though so foreign from their own. With quick sensibility of the ludicrous, he blushed at the ardor into which he had been betrayed.

"You laugh at me," said he, taking the eldest daughter's hand, and laughing himself. "You think my ambition as nonsensical as if I were to freeze myself to death on the top of Mount Washington, only that people might spy at me from the country round about. And, truly, that would be a noble pedestal for a man's statue!"

"It is better to sit here by this fire," answered the girl, blushing, "and be comfortable and contented, though nobody thinks about us."

"I suppose," said her father, after a fit of musing, "there is something natural in what the young man says; and if my mind had been turned that way I might have felt just the same. It is strange, wife, how his talk has set my head running on things that are pretty certain never to come to pass."

"Perhaps they may," observed the wife. "Is the man thinking what he will do when he is a widower?"

"No, no!" cried he, repelling the idea with reproachful kindness. "When I think of your death, Esther, I think of mine, too. But I was wishing we had a good farm in Bartlett, or Bethlehem, or Littleton, or some other township round the White Mountains; but not where they could tumble on our heads. I should want to stand well with my neighbors and be called Squire, and sent to General Court for a term or two; for a plain, honest man may do as much good there as a lawyer. And when I should be grown quite an old man and you an old woman, so as not to be long apart, I might die happy enough in my bed, and leave you all crying around me. A slate gravestone would suit me as well as a marble one—with just my

name and age, and a verse of a hymn, and something to let people know that I lived an honest man and died a Christian."

"There now!" exclaimed the stranger; "it is our nature to desire a monument, be it slate or marble, or a pillar of granite, or a glorious memory in the universal heart of man."

"We're in a strange way to-night," said the wife, with tears in her eyes. "They say it's a sign of something, when folks' minds go a-wandering so. Hark to the children!"

They listened accordingly. The younger children had been put to bed in another room, but with an open door between them, so that they could be heard talking busily among themselves. One and all seemed to have caught the infection from the fireside circle, and were out-vying each other in wild wishes, and childish projects of what they would do when they came to be men and women. At length a little boy, instead of addressing his brothers and sisters, called out to his mother.

"I'll tell you what I wish, mother," cried he. "I want you and father and grandma'm, and all of us, and the stranger, too, to start right away, and go and take a drink out of the basin of the Flume!"

Nobody could help laughing at the child's notion of leaving a warm bed, and dragging them from a cheerful fire, to visit the basin of the Flume,—a brook which tumbles over the precipice, deep within the Notch. The boy had hardly spoken when a wagon rattled along the road, and stopped a moment before the door. It appeared to contain two or three men, who were cheering their hearts with the rough chorus of a song, which resounded, in broken notes, between the cliffs, while the singers hesitated whether to continue their journey or put up here for the night.

"Father," said the girl, "they are calling you by name."

But the good man doubted whether they had really called him, and was unwilling to show himself too solicitous of gain by inviting people to patronize his house. He therefore did not hurry to the door; and the lash being soon applied, the travelers plunged into the Notch, still singing and laughing, though their music and mirth came back drearily from the heart of the mountain.

"There, mother!" cried the boy again.

"They'd have given us a ride to the Flume."

Again they laughed at the child's pertinacious fancy for a night ramble. But it happened that a light cloud passed over the daughter's spirit; she looked gravely into the fire, and drew a breath that was almost a sigh. It forced its way in spite of the struggle to repress it. Then, starting and blushing, she looked quickly round the circle, as if they had caught a glimpse into her bosom. The stranger asked what she had been thinking of.

"Nothing," answered she, with a downcast smile. "Only I felt lonesome just then."

"Oh, I have always had a gift of feeling what is in other people's hearts," said he, half seriously. "Shall I tell the secrets of yours? For I know what to think when a young girl shivers by a warm hearth, and complains of lonesomeness at her mother's side. Shall I put these feelings into words?"

"They would not be a girl's feelings any longer if they could be put into words," replied the mountain nymph, laughing, but avoiding his eye.

All this was said apart. Perhaps a germ of love was springing in their hearts, so pure that it might blossom in Paradise, since it could not be matured on earth; for women worship such gentle dignity as his; and the proud, contemplative, yet kindly soul is oftenest captivated by simplicity like hers. But while they spoke softly, and he was watching the happy sadness, the lightsome shadows, the shy yearnings of a maiden's nature, the wind through the Notch took a deeper and drearier sound. It seemed, as the fanciful stranger said, like the choral strain of the spirits of the past, who in old Indian times had their dwelling among these mountains, and made their heights and recesses a sacred region. There was a wail along the road, as if a funeral were passing. To chase away the gloom, the family threw pine branches on their fire, till the dry leaves crackled and the flame arose, discovering once again a scene of peace and humble happiness. The light hovered about them fondly, and caressed them all. There were the little faces of the children, peeping from their bed apart, and here the father's frame of strength, the mother's subdued and careful mien, the high-browed youth, the budding girl, and the good old grandma, still knitting in the warmest place.

The aged woman looked up from her task, and, with fingers ever busy, was the next to speak.

"Old folks have their notions," said she, "as well as young ones. You've been wishing and planning, and letting your heads run on one thing and another, till you've set my mind a-wandering too. Now what should an old woman wish for, when she can go but a step or two before she comes to her grave? Children, it will haunt me night and day till I tell you."

"What is it, mother?" cried the husband and wife at once.

Then the old woman, with an air of mystery which drew the circle closer round the fire, informed them that she had provided her grave-clothes some years before,—a nice linen shroud, a cap with a muslin ruff, and everything of a finer sort than she had worn since her wedding day. But this evening an old superstition had strangely recurred to her. It used to be said, in her younger days, that if anything were amiss with a corpse, if only the ruff were not smooth, or the cap did not set right, the corpse in the coffin and beneath the clods would strive to put up its cold hands and arrange it. The bare thought made her nervous.

"Don't talk so, grandmother!" said the girl, shuddering.

"Now,"—continued the old woman, with singular earnestness, yet smiling strangely at her own folly,—*"I want one of you, my children,—when your mother is dressed in the coffin—I want one of you to hold a looking-glass over my face. Who knows but I may take a glimpse at myself, and see whether all's right."*

"Old and young, we dream of graves and monuments," murmured the stranger youth. "I wonder how mariners feel when the ship is sinking, and they, unknown and undistinguished, are to be buried together in the ocean—that wide and nameless sepulcher?"

For a moment, the old woman's ghastly conception so engrossed the minds of her hearers that a sound abroad in the night, rising like the roar of a blast, had grown broad, deep, and terrible, before the fated group were conscious of it. The house and all within it trembled; the foundations of the earth seemed to be shaken, as if this awful sound were the peal of the last trump. Young and old exchanged one wild glance, and remained an instant, pale, affrighted, without utterance, or power to move.

Then the same shriek burst simultaneously from all their lips. "The Slide! The Slide!"

The simplest words must intimate, but not portray, the unutterable horror of the catastrophe. The victims rushed from their cottage, and sought refuge in what they deemed a safer spot—where, in contemplation of such an emergency, a sort of barrier had been reared. Alas! they had quitted their security, and fled right into the pathway of destruction. Down came the whole side of the mountain, in a cataract of ruin. Just before it reached the house, the stream broke into two branches—shivered not a window there, but overwhelmed the whole vicinity, blocked up the road, and annihilated everything in its dreadful course. Long ere the thunder of the great Slide had ceased to roar among the mountains, the mortal agony had been endured, and the victims were at peace. Their bodies were never found.

The next morning, the light smoke was seen stealing from the cottage chimney up the mountain side. Within, the fire was yet smoldering on the hearth, and the chairs in a circle around it, as if the inhabitants had but gone forth to view the devastation of the Slide and would shortly return, to thank Heaven for their miraculous escape. All had left separate tokens, by which those who had known the family were made to shed a tear for each. Who has not heard their name? The story has been told far and wide, and will forever be a legend of these mountains. Poets have sung their fate.

There were circumstances which led some to suppose that a stranger had been received into the cottage on this awful night, and had shared the catastrophe of all its inmates. Others denied that there were sufficient grounds for such a conjecture. Woe for the high-souled youth, with his dream of Earthly Immortality! His name and person utterly unknown; his history, his way of life, his plans, a mystery never to be solved, his death and his existence equally a doubt! Whose was the agony of that death moment?

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

"I frankly believe (thanks to my dire industry) I have done more with smaller gifts than any man in the world," once wrote Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–1894). (For further details

concerning Stevenson see II, 164.) His modesty, his gallantry in the face of ill health, above all his incomparable gifts in romantic fiction, have served to make Stevenson one of the most beloved of modern authors. His desire that "we should gloat over a book, be rapt clean out of ourselves" has been fulfilled by a multitude of readers of *The New Arabian Nights*, 1882; *Treasure Island*, 1883; *Kidnapped*, 1886; and *The Master of Ballantrae*, 1889. His novels and his stories, long and short, are notable for romantic overtones, or moral purpose, or both. "Markheim," published in 1885, is a deeply penetrating psychological study of evil, a moralized romance which is comparable to the work of Hawthorne. Like Stevenson's other work in both fiction and essay, it is painstakingly craftsmanlike, superbly fashioned.

MARKHEIM

"Yes," said the dealer, "our windfalls are of various kinds. Some customers are ignorant, and then I touch a dividend on my superior knowledge. Some are dishonest," and here he held up the candle, so that the light fell strongly on his visitor, "and in that case," he continued, "I profit by my virtue."

Markheim had but just entered from the daylight streets, and his eyes had not yet grown familiar with the mingled shine and darkness in the shop. At these pointed words, and before the near presence of the flame, he blinked painfully and looked aside.

The dealer chuckled. "You come to me on Christmas Day," he resumed, "when you know that I am alone in my house, put up my shutters, and make a point of refusing business. Well, you will have to pay for that; you will have to pay for my loss of time, when I should be balancing my books; you will have to pay, besides, for a kind of manner that I remark in you to-day very strongly. I am the essence of discretion, and ask no awkward questions; but when a customer cannot look me in the eye, he has to pay for it." The dealer once more chuckled; and then, changing to his usual business voice, though still with a note of irony, "You can give, as usual, a clear account of how you came into the possession of the object?" he continued. "Still your uncle's cabinet? A remarkable collector, sir!"

And the little pale, round-shouldered dealer stood almost on tiptoe, looking over the top of his gold spectacles, and nodding his head with every mark of disbelief. Markheim returned his gaze with one of infinite pity, and a touch of horror.

"This time," said he, "you are in error. I have not come to sell, but to buy. I have no curios to dispose of, my uncle's cabinet is bare to the wainscot; even were it still intact, I have done well on the Stock Exchange, and should more likely add to it than otherwise, and my errand to-day is simplicity itself. I seek a Christmas present for a lady," he continued, waxing more fluent as he struck into the speech he had prepared; "and certainly I owe you every excuse for thus disturbing you upon so small a matter. But the thing was neglected yesterday; I must produce my little compliment at dinner; and, as you very well know, a rich marriage is not a thing to be neglected."

There followed a pause, during which the dealer seemed to weigh this statement incredulously. The ticking of many clocks among the curious lumber of the shop, and the faint rushing of the cabs in a near thoroughfare, filled up the interval of silence.

"Well, sir," said the dealer, "be it so. You are an old customer after all; and if, as you say, you have the chance of a good marriage, far be it from me to be an obstacle. Here is a nice thing for a lady, now," he went on, "this hand glass—fifteenth century, warranted; comes from a good collection, too; but I reserve the name, in the interests of my customer, who was just like yourself, my dear sir, the nephew and sole heir of a remarkable collector."

The dealer, while he thus ran on in his dry and biting voice, had stooped to take the object from its place; and, as he had done so, a shock had passed through Markheim, a start both of hand and foot, a sudden leap of many tumultuous passions to the face. It passed as swiftly as it came, and left no trace beyond a certain trembling of the hand that now received the glass.

"A glass," he said hoarsely, and then paused, and repeated it more clearly. "A glass? For Christmas? Surely not?"

"And why not?" cried the dealer. "Why not a glass?"

Markheim was looking upon him with an in-

definable expression. "You ask me why not?" he said. "Why, look here—look in it—look at yourself! Do you like to see it? No! nor I—nor any man."

The little man had jumped back when Markheim had so suddenly confronted him with the mirror; but now, perceiving there was nothing worse on hand, he chuckled. "Your future lady, sir, must be pretty hard favored," said he.

"I ask you," said Markheim, "for a Christmas present, and you give me this—this damned reminder of years and sins and follies—this hand-conscience! Did you mean it? Had you a thought in your mind? Tell me. It will be better for you if you do. Come, tell me about yourself. I hazard a guess now, that you are in secret a very charitable man?"

The dealer looked closely at his companion. It was very odd, Markheim did not appear to be laughing; there was something in his face like an eager sparkle of hope, but nothing of mirth.

"What are you driving at?" the dealer asked.

"Not charitable?" returned the other, gloomily. "Not charitable; not pious; not scrupulous; unloving, unbeloved; a hand to get money, a safe to keep it. Is that all? Dear God, man, is that all?"

"I will tell you what it is," began the dealer, with some sharpness, and then broke off again into a chuckle. "But I see this is a love match of yours, and you have been drinking the lady's health."

"Ah!" cried Markheim, with a strange curiosity. "Ah, have you been in love? Tell me about that."

"I!" cried the dealer. "I in love! I never had the time, nor have I the time to-day for all this nonsense. Will you take the glass?"

"Where is the hurry?" returned Markheim. "It is very pleasant to stand here talking; and life is so short and insecure that I would not hurry away from any pleasure—no, not even from so mild a one as this. We should rather cling, cling to what little we can get, like a man at a cliff's edge. Every second is a cliff, if you think upon it—a cliff a mile high—high enough, if we fall, to dash us out of every feature of humanity. Hence it is best to talk pleasantly. Let us talk of each other; why should we wear this mask? Let us be confidential. Who knows, we might become friends?"

"I have just one word to say to you," said the dealer. "Either make your purchase, or walk out of my shop."

"True, true," said Markheim. "Enough fooling. To business. Show me something else."

The dealer stooped once more, this time to replace the glass upon the shelf, his thin blond hair falling over his eyes as he did so. Markheim moved a little nearer, with one hand in the pocket of his greatcoat; he drew himself up and filled his lungs; at the same time many different emotions were depicted together on his face—terror, horror, and resolve, fascination, and a physical repulsion; and through a haggard lift of his upper lip, his teeth looked out.

"This, perhaps, may suit," observed the dealer, and then, as he began to re-arise, Markheim bounded from behind upon his victim. The long, skewer-like dagger flashed and fell. The dealer struggled like a hen, striking his temple on the shelf, and then tumbled on the floor in a heap.

Time had some score of small voices in that shop, some stately and slow as was becoming to their great age, others garrulous and hurried. All these told out the seconds in an intricate chorus of tickings. Then the passage of a lad's feet, heavily running on the pavement, broke in upon these smaller voices and startled Markheim into the consciousness of his surroundings. He looked about him awfully. The candle stood on the counter, its flame solemnly wagging in a draught; and by that inconsiderable movement, the whole room was filled with noiseless bustle and kept heaving like a sea: the tall shadows nodding, the gross blots of darkness swelling and dwindling as with respiration, the faces of the portraits and the china gods changing and wavering like images in water. The inner door stood ajar, and peered into that leaguer of shadows with a long slit of daylight like a pointing finger.

From these fear-stricken roving, Markheim's eyes returned to the body of his victim, where it lay both humped and sprawling, incredibly small and strangely meaner than in life. In these poor, miserly clothes, in that ungainly attitude, the dealer lay like so much sawdust. Markheim had feared to see it, and, lo! it was nothing. And yet, as he gazed, this bundle of old clothes and pool of blood began to find elo-

quent voices. There it must lie; there was none to work the cunning hinges or direct the miracle of locomotion—there it must lie till it was found. Found! aye, and then? Then would this dead flesh lift up a cry that would ring over England, and fill the world with the echoes of pursuit. Aye, dead or not, this was still the enemy. "Time was that when the brains were out," he thought; and the first word struck into his mind. Time, now that the deed was accomplished—time, which had closed for the victim, had become instant and momentous for the slayer.

The thought was yet in his mind, when, first one and then another, with every variety of pace and voice—one deep as the bell from a cathedral turret, another ringing on its treble notes the prelude of a waltz—the clocks began to strike the hour of three in the afternoon.

The sudden outbreak of so many tongues in that dumb chamber staggered him. He began to bestir himself, going to and fro with the candle, beleaguered by moving shadows, and startled to the soul by chance reflections. In many rich mirrors, some of home designs, some from Venice or Amsterdam, he saw his face repeated and repeated, as it were an army of spies; his own eyes met and detected him; and the sound of his own steps, lightly as they fell, vexed the surrounding quiet. And still as he continued to fill his pockets, his mind accused him, with a sickening iteration, of the thousand faults of his design. He should have chosen a more quiet hour; he should have prepared an alibi; he should not have used a knife; he should have been more cautious, and only bound and gagged the dealer, and not killed him; he should have been more bold, and killed the servant also; he should have done all things otherwise; poignant regrets, weary, incessant toiling of the mind to change what was unchangeable, to plan what was now useless, to be the architect of the irrevocable past. Meanwhile, and behind all this activity, brute terrors, like the scurrying of rats in a deserted attic, filled the more remote chambers of his brain with riot; the hand of the constable would fall heavy on his shoulder, and his nerves would jerk like a hooked fish; or he beheld, in galloping defile, the dock, the prison, the gal-
lows, and the black coffin.

Terror of the people in the street sat down

before his mind like a besieging army. It was impossible, he thought, but that some rumor of the struggle must have reached their ears and set on edge their curiosity; and now, in all the neighboring houses, he divined them sitting motionless and with uplifted ear—solitary people, condemned to spend Christmas dwelling alone on memories of the past, and now startlingly recalled from that tender exercise, happy family parties, struck into silence round the table, the mother still with raised finger, every degree and age and humor, but all, by their own hearths, prying and hearkening and weaving the rope that was to hang him. Sometimes it seemed to him he could not move too softly; the clink of the tall Bohemian goblets rang out loudly like a bell; and alarmed by the bigness of the ticking, he was tempted to stop the clocks. And then, again, with a swift transition of his terrors, the very silence of the place appeared a source of peril, and a thing to strike and freeze the passer-by; and he would step more boldly, and bustle aloud among the contents of the shop, and imitate, with elaborate bravado, the movements of a busy man at ease in his own house.

But he was now so pulled about by different alarms that, while one portion of his mind was still alert and cunning, another trembled on the brink of lunacy. One hallucination in particular took a strong hold on his credulity. The neighbor hearkening with white face beside his window, the passer-by arrested by a horrible surmise on the pavement—these could at worst suspect, they could not know; through the brick walls and shuttered windows only sounds could penetrate. But here, within the house, was he alone? He knew he was; he had watched the servant set forth sweethearting, in her poor best, "out for the day" written in every ribbon and smile. Yes, he was alone, of course; and yet, in the bulk of empty house about him, he could surely hear a stir of delicate footing—he was surely conscious, inexplicably conscious of some presence. Aye, surely; to every room and corner of the house his imagination followed it; and now it was a faceless thing, and yet had eyes to see with; and again it was a shadow of himself; and yet again behold the image of the dead dealer, re-inspired with cunning and hatred.

At times, with a strong effort, he would

glance at the open door which still seemed to repel his eyes. The house was tall, the skylight small and dirty, the day blind with fog; and the light that filtered down to the ground story was exceedingly faint, and showed dimly on the threshold of the shop. And yet, in that strip of doubtful brightness, did there not hang wavering a shadow?

Suddenly, from the street outside, a very jovial gentleman began to beat with a staff on the shop door, accompanying his blows with shouts and raileries in which the dealer was continually called upon by name. Markheim, smitten into ice, glanced at the dead man. But no! he lay quite still; he was fled away far beyond ear-shot of these blows and shoutings; he was sunk beneath seas of silence; and his name, which would once have caught his notice above the howling of a storm, had become an empty sound. And presently the jovial gentleman descended from his knocking and departed.

Here was a broad hint to hurry what remained to be done, to get forth from this accusing neighborhood, to plunge into a bath of London multitudes, and to reach, on the other side of day, that haven of safety and apparent innocence—his bed. One visitor had come; at any moment another might follow and be more obstinate. To have done the deed, and yet not to reap the profit, would be too abhorrent a failure. The money, that was now Markheim's concern; and as a means to that, the keys.

He glanced over his shoulder at the open door, where the shadow was still lingering and shivering; and with no conscious repugnance of the mind, yet with a tremor of the belly, he drew near the body of his victim. The human character had quite departed. Like a suit half-stuffed with bran, the limbs lay scattered, the trunk doubled, on the floor; and yet the thing repelled him. Although so dingy and inconsiderable to the eye, he feared it might have more significance to the touch. He took the body by the shoulders, and turned it on its back. It was strangely light and supple, and the limbs, as if they had been broken, fell into the oddest postures. The face was robbed of all expression; but it was as pale as wax, and shockingly smeared with blood about one temple. That was, for Markheim, the one displeasing circumstance. It carried him back,

upon the instant, to a certain fair day in a fishers' village: a gray day, a piping wind, a crowd upon the street, the blare of brasses, the booming of drums, the nasal voice of a ballad singer, and a boy going to and fro, buried over head in the crowd and divided between interest and fear, until, coming out upon the chief place of concourse, he beheld a booth and a great screen with pictures, dismally designed, garishly colored: Brownrigg with her apprentice, the Mannings with their murdered guest; Weare in the death grip of Thurtell; and a score besides of famous crimes. The thing was as clear as an illusion, he was once again that little boy, he was looking once again, and with the same sense of physical revolt, at these vile pictures; he was still stunned by the thumping of the drums. A bar of that day's music returned upon his memory, and at that, for the first time, a qualm came over him, a breath of nausea, a sudden weakness of the joints, which he must instantly resist and conquer.

He judged it more prudent to confront than to flee from these considerations, looking the more hardily in the dead face, bending his mind to realize the nature and greatness of his crime. So little a while ago that face had moved with every change of sentiment, that pale mouth had spoken, that body had been all on fire with governable energies; and now, and by his act, that piece of life had been arrested, as the horologist, with interjected finger, arrests the beating of the clock. So he reasoned in vain; he could rise to no more remorseful consciousness; the same heart which had shuddered before the painted effigies of crime, looked on its reality unmoved. At best, he felt a gleam of pity for one who had been endowed in vain with all those faculties that can make the world a garden of enchantment, one who had never lived and who was now dead. But of penitence, no, not a tremor.

With that, shaking himself clear of these considerations, he found the keys and advanced toward the open door of the shop. Outside, it had begun to rain smartly; and the sound of the shower upon the roof had banished silence. Like some dripping cavern, the chambers of the house were haunted by an incessant echoing, which filled the ear and mingled with the ticking of the clocks. And, as Markheim approached the door, he seemed to hear, in an

swer to his own cautious tread, the steps of another foot withdrawing up the stair. The shadow still palpitated loosely on the threshold. He threw a ton's weight of resolve upon his muscles, and drew back the door.

The faint, foggy daylight glimmered dimly on the bare floor and stairs; on the bright suit of armor posted, halbert in hand, upon the landing; and on the dark wood carvings and framed pictures that hung against the yellow panels of the wainscot. So loud was the beating of the rain through all the house that, in Markheim's ears, it began to be distinguished into many different sounds. Footsteps and sighs, the tread of regiments marching in the distance, the chink of money in the counting, and the creaking of doors held stealthily ajar, appeared to mingle with the patter of the drops upon the cupola and the gushing of the water in the pipes. The sense that he was not alone grew upon him to the verge of madness. On every side he was haunted and begirt by presences. He heard them moving in the upper chambers; from the shop, he heard the dead man getting to his legs; and as he began with a great effort to mount the stairs, feet fled quietly before him and followed stealthily behind. If he were but deaf, he thought, how tranquilly he would possess his soul! And then again, and hearkening with ever fresh attention, he blessed himself for that unresting sense which held the outposts and stood a trusty sentinel upon his life. His head turned continually on his neck; his eyes, which seemed starting from their orbits, scouted on every side, and on every side were half rewarded as with the tail of something nameless vanishing. The four-and-twenty steps to the first floor were four-and-twenty agonies.

On that first story the doors stood ajar, three of them like three ambushes, shaking his nerves like the throats of cannon. He could never again, he felt, be sufficiently immured and fortified from men's observing eyes; he longed to be home, girt in by walls, buried among bedclothes, and invisible to all but God. And at that thought he wondered a little, recollecting tales of other murderers and the fear they were said to entertain of heavenly avengers. It was not so, at least, with him. He feared the laws of nature, lest, in their callous and immutable procedure, they should preserve some damning evidence of his crime. He feared tenfold more,

with a slavish, superstitious terror, some scission in the continuity of man's experience, some willful illegality of nature. He played a game of skill, depending on the rules, calculating consequence from cause; and what if nature, as the defeated tyrant overthrew the chessboard, should break the mold of their succession? The like had befallen Napoleon (so writers said) when the winter changed the time of its appearance. The like might befall Markheim: the solid walls might become transparent and reveal his doings like those of bees in a glass hive; the stout planks might yield under his foot like quicksands and detain him in their clutch; aye, and there were soberer accidents that might destroy him: if, for instance, the house should fall and imprison him beside the body of his victim; or the house next door should fly on fire, and the firemen invade him from all sides. These things he feared; and, in a sense, these things might be called the hands of God reached forth against sin. But about God himself he was at ease; his act was doubtless exceptional, but so were his excuses, which God knew; it was there, and not among men, that he felt sure of justice.

When he got safe into the drawing-room, and shut the door behind him, he was aware of a respite from alarms. The room was quite dismantled, uncarpeted besides, and strewn with packing cases and incongruous furniture; several great pier glasses, in which he beheld himself at various angles, like an actor on a stage; many pictures, framed and unframed, standing with their faces to the wall; a fine Sheraton sideboard, a cabinet of marquetry, and a great old bed, with tapestry hangings. The windows opened to the floor; but by great good fortune the lower part of the shutters had been closed, and this concealed him from the neighbors. Here, then, Markheim drew in a packing case before the cabinet, and began to search among the keys. It was a long business, for there were many; and it was irksome, besides; for, after all, there might be nothing in the cabinet, and time was on the wing. But the closeness of the occupation sobered him. With the tail of his eye he saw the door—even glanced at it from time to time directly, like a besieged commander pleased to verify the good estate of his defenses. But in truth he was at peace. The rain falling in the street sounded natural and pleas-

ant. Presently, on the other side, the notes of a piano were awakened to the music of a hymn, and the voices of many children took up the air and words. How stately, how comfortable was the melody! How fresh the youthful voices! Markheim gave ear to it smilingly, as he sorted out the keys; and his mind was thronged with answerable ideas and images; churchgoing children and the pealing of the high organ; children afield, bathers by the brookside, rambblers on the brambly common, kite-flyers in the windy and cloud-navigated sky; and then, at another cadence of the hymn, back again to church, and the somnolence of summer Sundays, and the high, genteel voice of the parson (which he smiled a little to recall), and the painted Jacobean tombs, and the dim lettering of the Ten Commandments in the chancel.

And as he sat thus, at once busy and absent, he was startled to his feet. A flash of ice, a flash of fire, a bursting gush of blood, went over him, and then he stood transfixed and thrilling. A step mounted the stair slowly and steadily, and presently a hand was laid upon the knob, and the lock clicked, and the door opened.

Fear held Markheim in a vise. What to expect he knew not, whether the dead man walking, or the official ministers of human justice, or some chance witness blindly stumbling in to consign him to the gallows. But when a face was thrust into the aperture, glanced round the room, looked at him, nodded and smiled as if in friendly recognition, and then withdrew again, and the door closed behind it, his fear broke loose from his control in a hoarse cry. At the sound of this the visitant returned.

"Did you call me?" he asked pleasantly, and with that he entered the room and closed the door behind him.

Markheim stood and gazed at him with all his eyes. Perhaps there was a film upon his sight, but the outlines of the newcomer seemed to change and waver like those of the idols in the wavering candlelight of the shop: and at times he thought he knew him; and at times he thought he bore a likeness to himself; and always, like a lump of living terror, there lay in his bosom the conviction that this thing was not of the earth and not of God.

And yet the creature had a strange air of the commonplace, as he stood looking on Mark-

heim with a smile; and when he added: "You are looking for the money, I believe?" it was in the tones of every-day politeness.

Markheim made no answer.

5 "I should warn you," resumed the other, "that the maid has left her sweetheart earlier than usual and will soon be here. If Mr. Markheim be found in this house, I need not describe to him the consequences."

10 "You know me?" cried the murderer.

The visitor smiled. "You have long been a favorite of mine," he said; "and I have long observed and often sought to help you."

"What are you?" cried Markheim: "the devil?"

"What I may be," returned the other, "cannot affect the service I propose to render you."

"It can," cried Markheim; "it does! Be helped by you? No, never; not by you! You do not know me yet; thank God, you do not know me!"

"I know you," replied the visitant, with a sort of kind severity or rather firmness. "I know you to the soul."

25 "Know me!" cried Markheim. "Who can do so? My life is but a travesty and slander on myself. I have lived to belie my nature. All men do; all men are better than this disguise that grows about and stifles them. You see each dragged away by life, like one whom bravos have seized and muffled in a cloak. If they had their own control—if you could see their faces, they would be altogether different, they would shine out for heroes and saints! I am worse than most; myself is more overlaid; my excuse is known to me and God. But, had I the time, I could disclose myself."

"To me?" inquired the visitant.

40 "To you before all," returned the murderer. "I supposed you were intelligent. I thought—since you exist—you would prove a reader of the heart. And yet you would propose to judge me by my acts! Think of it; my acts! I was born and I have lived in a land of giants; giants have dragged me by the wrists since I was born out of my mother—the giants of circumstance. And you would judge me by my acts! But can you not look within? Can you not understand that evil is hateful to me? Can you not see within me the clear writing of conscience, never blurred by any willful sophistry, although too often disregarded? Can you not

read me for a thing that surely must be common as humanity—the unwilling sinner?”

“All this is very feelingly expressed,” was the reply, “but it regards me not. These points of consistency are beyond my province, and I care not in the least by what compulsion you may have been dragged away, so as you are but carried in the right direction. But time flies; the servant delays, looking in the faces of the crowd and at the pictures on the hoardings, but still she keeps moving nearer; and remember, it is as if the gallows itself were striding toward you through the Christmas streets! Shall I help you—I, who know all? Shall I tell you where to find the money?”

“For what price?” asked Markheim.

“I offer you the service for a Christmas gift,” returned the other.

Markheim could not refrain from smiling with a kind of bitter triumph. “No,” said he, “I will take nothing at your hands; if I were dying of thirst, and it was your hand that put the pitcher to my lips, I should find the courage to refuse. It may be credulous, but I will do nothing to commit myself to evil.”

“I have no objection to a death-bed repentance,” observed the visitant.

“Because you disbelieve their efficacy!” Markheim cried.

“I do not say so,” returned the other; “but I look on these things from a different side, and when the life is done my interest falls. The man has lived to serve me, to spread black looks under color of religion, or to sow tares in the wheat field, as you do, in a course of weak compliance with desire. Now that he draws so near to his deliverance, he can add but one act of service—to repent, to die smiling, and thus to build up in confidence and hope the more timorous of my surviving followers. I am not so hard a master. Try me. Accept my help. Please yourself in life as you have done hitherto; please yourself more amply, spread your elbows at the board; and when the night begins to fall and the curtains to be drawn, I tell you, for your greater comfort, that you will find it even easy to compound your quarrel with your conscience, and to make a truckling peace with God. I came but now from such a death-bed, and the room was full of sincere mourners, listening to the man’s last words; and when I looked into that face, which had been set as

a flint against mercy, I found it smiling with hope.”

“And do you, then, suppose me such a creature?” asked Markheim. “Do you think I have no more generous aspirations than to sin, and sin, and sin, and, at last, sneak into heaven? My heart rises at the thought. Is this, then, your experience of mankind? or is it because you find me with red hands that you presume such baseness? and is this crime of murder indeed so impious as to dry up the very springs of good?”

“Murder is to me no special category,” replied the other. “All sins are murder, even as all life is war. I behold your race, like starving mariners on a raft, plucking crusts out of the hands of famine and feeding on each other’s lives. I follow sins beyond the moment of their acting; I find in all that the last consequence is death; and to my eyes, the pretty maid who thwarts her mother with such taking graces on a question of a ball, drips no less visibly with human gore than such a murderer as yourself. Do I say that I follow sins? I follow virtues also; they differ not by the thickness of a nail, they are both scythes for the reaping angel of Death. Evil, for which I live, consists not in action but in character. The bad man is dear to me; not the bad act, whose fruits, if we could follow them far enough down the hurtling cata-ract of the ages, might yet be found more blessed than those of the rarest virtues. And it is not because you have killed a dealer, but because you are Markheim, that I offered to forward your escape.”

“I will lay my heart open to you,” answered Markheim. “This crime on which you find me is my last. On my way to it I have learned many lessons; itself is a lesson, a momentous lesson. Hitherto I have been driven with revolt to what I would not; I was a bondsman to poverty, driven and scourged. There are robust virtues that can stand in these temptations; mine was not so: I had a thirst of pleasure. But to-day, and out of this deed, I pluck both warning and riches—both the power and a fresh resolve to be myself. I become in all things a free actor in the world; I begin to see myself all changed, these hands the agents of good, this heart at peace. Something comes over me out of the past; something of what I have dreamed on Sabbath evenings to the sound of the church organ, of what I forecast when I shed tears over

noble books, or talked, an innocent child, with my mother. There lies my life; I have wandered a few years, but now I see once more my city of destination."

"You are to use this money on the Stock Exchange, I think?" remarked the visitor; "and there, if I mistake not, you have already lost some thousands?"

"Ah," said Markheim, "but this time I have a sure thing."

"This time, again, you will lose," replied the visitor, quietly.

"Ah, but I keep back the half!" cried Markheim.

"That also you will lose," said the other.

The sweat started upon Markheim's brow. "Well, then, what matter?" he exclaimed. "Say it be lost, say I am plunged again in poverty, shall one part of me, and that the worse, continue until the end to override the better? Evil and good run strong in me, hailing me both ways. I do not love the one thing, I love all. I can conceive great deeds, renunciations, martyrdoms; and though I be fallen to such a crime as murder, pity is no stranger to my thoughts. I pity the poor; who knows their trials better than myself? I pity and help them; I prize love, I love honest laughter; there is no good thing nor true thing on earth but I love it from my heart. And are my vices only to direct my life, and my virtues to lie without effect, like some passive lumber of the mind? Not so; good, also, is a spring of acts."

But the visitant raised his finger. "For six-and-thirty years that you have been in this world," said he, "through many changes of fortune and varieties of humor, I have watched you steadily fall. Fifteen years ago you would have started at a theft. Three years back you would have blanched at the name of murder. Is there any crime, is there any cruelty or meanness, from which you still recoil?—five years from now I shall detect you in the fact! Downward, downward lies your way; nor can anything but death avail to stop you."

"It is true," Markheim said huskily, "I have in some degree complied with evil. But it is so with all: the very saints, in the mere exercise of living, grow less dainty, and take on the tone of their surroundings."

"I will propound to you one simple question," said the other; "and as you answer, I

shall read to you your moral horoscope. You have grown in many things more lax; possibly you do right to be so; and at any account, it is the same with all men. But granting that, are you in any one particular, however trifling, more difficult to please with your own conduct, or do you go in all things with a looser rein?"

"In any one?" repeated Markheim, with an anguish of consideration. "No," he added, with despair, "in none! I have gone down in all."

"Then," said the visitor, "content yourself with what you are, for you will never change; and the words of your part on this stage are irrevocably written down."

Markheim stood for a long while silent, and indeed it was the visitor who first broke the silence. "That being so," he said, "shall I show you the money?"

"And grace?" cried Markheim.

"Have you not tried it?" returned the other. "Two or three years ago, did I not see you on the platform of revival meetings, and was not your voice the loudest in the hymn?"

"It is true," said Markheim; "and I see clearly what remains for me by way of duty. I thank you for these lessons from my soul; my eyes are opened, and I behold myself at last for what I am."

At this moment, the sharp note of the door bell rang through the house; and the visitant, as though this were some concerted signal for which he had been waiting, changed at once in his demeanor.

"The maid!" he cried. "She has returned, as I forewarned you, and there is now before you one more difficult passage. Her master, you must say, is ill; you must let her in, with an assured but rather serious countenance—no smiles, no overacting, and I promise you success! Once the girl is within, and the door closed, the same dexterity that has already rid you of the dealer will relieve you of this last danger in your path. Thenceforward you have the whole evening—the whole night, if needful—to ransack the treasures of the house and to make good your safety. This is help that comes to you with the mask of danger. Up!" he cried: "up, friend; your life hangs trembling in the scales: up, and act!"

Markheim steadily regarded his counselor. "If I be condemned to evil acts," he said, "there is still one door of freedom open—I can cease

from action. If my life be an ill thing, I can lay it down. Though I be, as you say truly, at the beck of every small temptation, I can yet, by one decisive gesture, place myself beyond the reach of all. My love of good is damned to bareness; it may, and let it be! But I have still my hatred of evil; and from that, to your gall-ing disappointment, you shall see that I can draw both energy and courage."

The features of the visitor began to undergo a wonderful and lovely change: they bright-ened and softened with a tender triumph; and, even as they brightened, faded and dislimned. But Markheim did not pause to watch or under-stand the transformation. He opened the door and went downstairs very slowly, thinking to himself. His past went soberly before him; he beheld it as it was, ugly and strenuous like a dream, random as chance-medley—a scene of defeat. Life, as he thus reviewed it, tempted him no longer; but on the farther side he per-ceived a quiet haven for his bark. He paused in the passage, and looked into the shop, where the candle still burned by the dead body. It was strangely silent. Thoughts of the dealer swarmed into his mind, as he stood gazing. And then the bell once more broke out into im-patient clamor.

He confronted the maid upon the threshold with something like a smile.

"You had better go for the police," said he; "I have killed your master."

THOMAS HARDY

The fiction of novelist-poet Thomas Hardy (1840–1928) is intimately allied with his native Dorsetshire, England, which he renamed "Wessex" for fictional setting (see I, 337). Predom-inant in Hardy's stories and novels is a semi-fatalistic philosophy depicting man as a puppet in the hands of blind chance. Alternating with this philosophy is a concern with man's adher-ence to destructive social attitudes. Hardy's out-standing novels and short story collections are The Return of the Native, 1878; The Mayor of Casterbridge, 1886; The Woodlanders, 1887; Wessex Tales, 1888; Tess of the D'Urbervilles, 1891; Life's Little Ironies, 1894; and Jude the Obscure, 1895. "The Three Strangers" is characteristically somber in tone

and mood. The setting is a dominant element, and grim harmony exists in the typical Hardy integration of man, nature, and circumstance.

THE THREE STRANGERS

Among the few features of agricultural Eng-land which retain an appearance but little modified by the lapse of centuries may be reckoned the high, grassy and furzy downs, coombs, or ewe-leases, as they are indifferently called, that fill a large area of certain counties in the south and southwest. If any mark of hu-man occupation is met with hereon, it usually takes the form of the solitary cottage of some shepherd.

Fifty years ago such a lonely cottage stood on such a down, and may possibly be standing there now. In spite of its loneliness, however, the spot, by actual measurement, was not more than five miles from a county-town. Yet that affected it little. Five miles of irregular up-land, during the long inimical seasons, with their sleets, snows, rains, and mists, afford withdrawing space enough to isolate a Timon or a Nebuchadnezzar; much less, in fair weather, to please that less repellent tribe, the poets, philosophers, artists, and others who "conceive and meditate of pleasant things."

Some old earthen camp or barrow, some clump of trees, at least some starved fragment of ancient hedge is usually taken advantage of in the erection of these forlorn dwellings. But in the present case, such a kind of shelter had been disregarded. Higher Crowstairs, as the house was called, stood quite detached and un-defended. The only reason for its precise situa-tion seemed to be the crossing of two footpaths at right angles hard by, which may have crossed there and thus for a good five hun-dred years. Hence the house was exposed to the elements on all sides. But, though the wind up here blew unmistakably when it did blow and the rain hit hard whenever it fell, the various weathers of the winter season were not quite so formidable on the coomb as they were imagined to be by dwellers on low ground. The raw rimes were not so pernicious as in the hollows, and the frosts were scarcely so severe. When the shepherd and his family who tenanted the house were pitied for their suffer-ings from the exposure, they said that upon

the whole they were less inconvenienced by "wuzzes and flames" (hoarses and phlegms) than when they had lived by the stream of a snug neighboring valley.

The night of March 28, 182—, was precisely one of the nights that were wont to call forth these expressions of commiseration. The level rainstorm smote walls, slopes, and hedges like the clothyard shafts of Senlac and Crecy. Such sheep and outdoor animals as had no shelter stood with their buttocks to the winds; while the tails of little birds trying to roost on some scraggy thorn were blown inside-out like umbrellas. The gable-end of the cottage was stained with wet, and the eavesdroppings flapped against the wall. Yet never was commiseration for the shepherd more misplaced. For that cheerful rustic was entertaining a large party in glorification of the christening of his second girl.

The guests had arrived before the rain began to fall, and they were all now assembled in the chief or living room of the dwelling. A glance into the apartment at eight o'clock on this eventful evening would have resulted in the opinion that it was as cosy and comfortable a nook as could be wished for in boisterous weather. The calling of its inhabitant was proclaimed by a number of highly polished sheep crooks without stems that were hung ornamentally over the fireplace, the curl of each shining crook varying from the antiquated type engraved in the patriarchal pictures of old family Bibles to the most approved fashion of the last local sheep-fair. The room was lighted by half a dozen candles having wicks only a trifle smaller than the grease which enveloped them, in candlesticks that were never used but at high-days, holy-days, and family feasts. The lights were scattered about the room, two of them standing on the chimney piece. This position of candles was in itself significant. Candles on the chimney piece always meant a party.

On the hearth, in front of a back-brand to give substance, blazed a fire of thorns that crackled "like the laughter of the fool."

Nineteen persons were gathered here. Of these, five women, wearing gowns of various bright hues, sat in chairs along the wall; girls shy and not shy filled the window-bench; four men, including Charles Jake the hedge-carpenter, Elijah New the parish-clerk, and

John Pitcher, a neighboring dairyman, the shepherd's father-in-law, lolled in the settle, a young man and maid, who were blushing over tentative *pour-pairs* on a life-companion-ship, sat beneath the corner-cupboard; and an elderly engaged man of fifty or upward moved restlessly about from spots where his betrothed was not to the spot where she was. Enjoyment was pretty general, and so much the more prevailed in being unhampered by conventional restrictions. Absolute confidence in each other's good opinion begat perfect ease, while the finishing stroke of manner, amounting to a truly princely serenity, was lent to the majority by the absence of any expression or trait denoting that they wished to get on in the world, enlarge their minds, or do any eclipsing thing whatever—which nowadays so generally nips the bloom and *bonhomie* of all except the two extremes of the social scale.

Shepherd Fennel had married well, his wife being a dairyman's daughter from a vale at a distance, who brought fifty guineas in her pocket—and kept them there, till they should be required for ministering to the needs of a coming family. This frugal woman had been somewhat exercised as to the character that should be given to the gathering. A sit-still party had its advantages; but an undisturbed position of ease in chairs and settles was apt to lead on the men to such an unconscionable deal of toping that they would sometimes fairly drink the house dry. A dancing-party was the alternative; but this, while avoiding the foregoing objection on the score of good drink, had a counterbalancing disadvantage in the matter of good victuals, the ravenous appetites engendered by the exercise causing immense havoc in the buttery. Shepherdess Fennel fell back upon the intermediate plan of mingling short dances with short periods of talk and singing, so as to hinder any ungovernable rage in either. But this scheme was entirely confined to her own gentle mind: the shepherd himself was in the mood to exhibit the most reckless phases of hospitality.

The fiddler was a boy of those parts, about twelve years of age, who had a wonderful dexterity in jigs and reels, though his fingers were so small and short as to necessitate a constant shifting for the high notes, from which he scrambled back to the first position

with sounds not of unmixed purity of tone. At seven the shrill tweedle-dee of this youngster had begun, accompanied by a booming ground-bass from Elijah New, the parish-clerk, who had thoughtfully brought with him his favorite musical instrument, the serpent. Dancing was instantaneous, Mrs. Fennel privately enjoining the players on no account to let the dance exceed the length of a quarter of an hour.

But Elijah and the boy, in the excitement of their position, quite forgot the injunction. Moreover, Oliver Giles, a man of seventeen, one of the dancers, who was enamored of his partner, a fair girl of thirty-three rolling years, had recklessly handed a new crown-piece to the musicians, as a bribe to keep going as long as they had muscle and wind. Mrs. Fennel, seeing the steam begin to generate on the countenances of her guests, crossed over and touched the fiddler's elbow and put her hand on the serpent's mouth. But they took no notice, and fearing she might lose her character of genial hostess if she were to interfere too markedly, she retired and sat down helpless. And so the dance whizzed on with cumulative fury, the performers moving in their planet-like courses, direct and retrograde, from apogee to perigee, till the hand of the well-kicked clock at the bottom of the room had traveled over the circumference of an hour.

While these cheerful events were in course of enactment within Fennel's pastoral dwelling, an incident having considerable bearing on the party had occurred in the gloomy night without. Mrs. Fennel's concern about the growing fierceness of the dance corresponded in point of time with the ascent of a human figure to the solitary hill of Higher Crowstairs from the direction of the distant town. This personage strode on through the rain without a pause, following the little-worn path which, further on in its course, skirted the shepherd's cottage.

It was nearly the time of full moon, and on this account, though the sky was lined with a uniform sheet of dripping cloud, ordinary objects out of doors were readily visible. The sad, wan light revealed the lonely pedestrian to be a man of supple frame; his gait suggested that he had somewhat passed the period of perfect and instinctive agility, though not so far as to be otherwise than rapid of motion when

occasion required. At a rough guess, he might have been about forty years of age. He appeared tall, but a recruiting sergeant, or other person accustomed to the judging of men's heights by the eye, would have discerned that this was chiefly owing to his gauntness, and that he was not more than five-feet-eight or nine.

Notwithstanding the regularity of his tread, there was caution in it, as in that of one who mentally feels his way; and despite the fact that it was not a black coat nor a dark garment of any sort that he wore, there was something about him which suggested that he naturally belonged to the black-coated tribes of men. His clothes were of fustian, and his boots hobnailed, yet in his progress he showed not the mud-accustomed bearing of hobnailed and fustianed peasantry.

By the time that he had arrived abreast of the shepherd's premises the rain came down, or rather came along, with yet more determined violence. The outskirts of the little settlement partially broke the force of wind and rain, and this induced him to stand still. The most salient of the shepherd's domestic erections was an empty sty at the forward corner of his hedgeless garden, for in these latitudes the principle of masking the homelier features of your establishment by a conventional frontage was unknown. The traveler's eye was attracted to this small building by the pallid shine of the wet slates that covered it. He turned aside, and, finding it empty, stood under the pent-roof for shelter.

While he stood, the boom of the serpent within the adjacent house, and the lesser strains of the fiddler, reached the spot as an accompaniment to the surging hiss of the flying rain on the sod, its louder beating on the cabbage-leaves of the garden, on the eight or ten beehives just discernible by the path, and its dripping from the eaves into a row of buckets and pans that had been placed under the walls of the cottage. For at Higher Crowstairs, as at all such elevated domiciles, the grand difficulty of housekeeping was an insufficiency of water; and a casual rainfall was utilized by turning out, as catchers, every utensil that the house contained. Some queer stories might be told of the contrivances for economy in suds and dishwaters that are absolutely necessitated in

upland habitations during the droughts of summer. But at this season there were no such exigencies; a mere acceptance of what the skies bestowed was sufficient for an abundant store.

At last the notes of the serpent ceased and the house was silent. This cessation of activity aroused the solitary pedestrian from the reverie into which he had elapsed, and, emerging from the shed, with an apparently new intention, he walked up the path to the house-door. Arrived here, his first act was to kneel down on a large stone beside the row of vessels, and to drink a copious draught from one of them. Having quenched his thirst, he rose and lifted his hand to knock, but paused with his eye upon the panel. Since the dark surface of the wood revealed absolutely nothing, it was evident that he must be mentally looking through the door, as if he wished to measure thereby all the possibilities that a house of this sort might include, and how they might bear upon the question of his entry.

In his indecision he turned and surveyed the scene around. Not a soul was anywhere visible. The garden path stretched downward from his feet, gleaming like the track of a snail; the roof of the little well (mostly dry), the well-cover, the top rail of the garden-gate, were varnished with the same dull liquid glaze; while, far away in the vale, a faint whiteness of more than usual extent showed that the rivers were high in the meads. Beyond all this winked a few bleared lamplights through the beating drops—lights that denoted the situation of the county-town from which he had appeared to come. The absence of all notes of life in that direction seemed to clinch his intentions, and he knocked at the door.

Within, a desultory chat had taken the place of movement and musical sound. The hedge-carpenter was suggesting a song to the company, which nobody just then was inclined to undertake, so that the knock afforded a not unwelcome diversion.

"Walk in!" said the shepherd, promptly.

The latch clicked upward, and out of the night our pedestrian appeared upon the door-mat. The shepherd arose, snuffed two of the nearest candles, and turned to look at him.

Their light disclosed that the stranger was dark in complexion and not unprepossessing as

to feature. His hat, which for a moment he did not remove, hung low over his eyes, without concealing that they were large, open, and determined, moving with a flash rather than a glance round the room. He seemed pleased with his survey, and, baring his shaggy head, said, in a rich, deep voice, "The rain is so heavy, friends, that I ask leave to come in and rest awhile."

"To be sure, Stranger," said the shepherd. "And faith, you've been lucky in choosing your time, for we are having a bit of a fling for a glad cause—though, to be sure, a man could hardly wish that glad cause to happen more than once a year."

"Nor less," spoke up a woman. "For 'tis best to get your family over and done with, as soon as you can, so as to be all the earlier out of the fag o't."

"And what may be this glad cause?" asked the stranger.

"A birth and christening," said the shepherd.

The stranger hoped his host might not be made unhappy either by too many or too few of such episodes and, being invited by a gesture to a pull at the mug, he readily acquiesced. His manner, which, before entering, had been so dubious, was now altogether that of a careless and candid man.

"Late to be traipsing athwart this coomb—hey?" said the engaged man of fifty.

"Late it is, Master, as you say.—I'll take a seat in the chimney corner, if you have nothing to urge against it, Ma'am; for I am a little moist on the side that was next the rain."

Mrs. Shepherd Fennel assented, and made room for the self-invited comer, who, having got completely inside the chimney corner, stretched out his legs and arms with the expansiveness of a person quite at home.

"Yes, I am rather cracked in the vamp," he said freely, seeing that the eyes of the shepherd's wife fell upon his boots, "and I am not well fitted either. I have had some rough times lately, and have been forced to pick up what I can get in the way of wearing, but I must find a suit better fit for working-days when I reach home."

"One of hereabouts?" she inquired.

"Not quite that—further up the country."

"I thought so. And so be I; and by your tongue you come from my neighborhood."

"But you would hardly have heard of me," he said quickly. "My time would be long before yours, Ma'am, you see."

This testimony to the youthfulness of his hostess had the effect of stopping her cross-examination.

"There is only one thing more wanted to make me happy," continued the newcomer, "and that is a little baccy, which I am sorry to say I am out of."

"I'll fill your pipe," said the shepherd.

"I must ask you to lend me a pipe likewise."

"A smoker, and no pipe about 'ee?"

"I have dropped it somewhere on the road."

The shepherd filled and handed him a new clay pipe, saying, as he did so, "Hand me your baccy-box—I'll fill that too, now I am about it."

The man went through the movement of searching his pockets.

"Lost that too?" said his entertainer, with some surprise.

"I am afraid so," said the man with some confusion. "Give it to me in a screw of paper." Lighting his pipe at the candle with a suction that drew the whole flame into the bowl, he resettled himself in the corner and bent his looks upon the faint steam from his damp legs, as if he wished to say no more.

Meanwhile the general body of guests had been taking little notice of this visitor by reason of an absorbing discussion in which they were engaged with the band about a tune for the next dance. The matter being settled, they were about to stand up when an interruption came in the shape of another knock at the door.

At sound of the same the man in the chimney corner took up the poker and began stirring the brands as if doing it thoroughly were the one aim of his existence; and a second time the shepherd said, "Walk in!" In a moment another man stood upon the straw-woven doormat. He too was a stranger.

This individual was one of a type radically different from the first. There was more of the commonplace in his manner, and a certain jovial cosmopolitanism sat upon his features. He was several years older than the first arrival, his hair being slightly frosted, his eyebrows bristly, and his whiskers cut back from his cheeks. His face was rather full and flabby, and yet it was not altogether a face without power. A few grog-blossoms marked the neigh-

borhood of his nose. He flung back his long drab greatcoat, revealing that beneath it he wore a suit of cinder-gray shade throughout, large heavy seals, of some metal or other that would take a polish, dangling from his fob as his only personal ornament. Shaking the water drops from his low-crowned glazed hat, he said, "I must ask for a few minutes' shelter, comrades, or I shall be wetted to my skin before I get to Casterbridge."

"Make yourself at home, Master," said the shepherd, perhaps a trifle less heartily than on the first occasion. Not that Fennel had the least tinge of niggardliness in his composition; but the room was far from large, spare chairs were not numerous, and damp companions were not altogether desirable at close quarters for the women and girls in their bright-colored gowns.

However, the second comer, after taking off his greatcoat, and hanging his hat on a nail in one of the ceiling-beams as if he had been specially invited to put it there, advanced and sat down at the table. This had been pushed so closely into the chimney corner, to give all available room to the dancers, that its inner edge grazed the elbow of the man who had ensconced himself by the fire; and thus the two strangers were brought into close companionship. They nodded to each other by way of breaking the ice of unacquaintance, and the first stranger handed his neighbor the family mug—a huge vessel of brown ware, having its upper edge worn away like a threshold by the rub of whole generations of thirsty lips that had gone the way of all flesh, and bearing the following inscription burnt upon its rotund side in yellow letters:

THERE IS NO FUN
UNTIL I CUM.

The other man, nothing loth, raised the mug to his lips, and drank on, and on, and on—till a curious blueness overspread the countenance of the shepherd's wife, who had regarded with no little surprise the first stranger's free offer to the second of what did not belong to him to dispense.

"I knew it!" said the toper to the shepherd with much satisfaction. "When I walked up your garden before coming in, and saw the hives all of a row, I said to myself, 'Where

there's bees there's honey, and where there's honey there's mead.¹ But mead of such a truly comfortable sort as this I really didn't expect to meet in my older days." He took yet another pull at the mug, till it assumed an ominous elevation.

"Glad you enjoy it!" said the shepherd warmly.

"It is goodish mead," assented Mrs. Fennel, with an absence of enthusiasm which seemed to say that it was possible to buy praise for one's cellar at too heavy a price. "It is trouble enough to make—and really I hardly think we shall make any more. For honey sells well, and we ourselves can make shift with a drop o' small mead and metheglin¹ for common use from the comb-washings."

"Oh, but you'll never have the heart!" reproachfully cried the stranger in cinder-gray, after taking up the mug a third time and setting it down empty. "I love mead, when 'tis old like this, as I love to go to church o' Sundays, or to relieve the needy any day of the week."

"Ha, ha, ha!" said the man in the chimney corner, who, in spite of the taciturnity induced by the pipe of tobacco, could not or would not refrain from this slight testimony to his comrade's humor.

Now the old mead of those days, brewed of the purest first-year or maiden honey, four pounds to the gallon—with its due complement of white of eggs, cinnamon, ginger, cloves, mace, rosemary, yeast, and processes of working, bottling, and cellaring—tasted remarkably strong; but it did not taste so strong as it actually was. Hence, presently, the stranger in cinder-gray at the table, moved by its creeping influence, unbuttoned his waistcoat, threw himself back in his chair, spread his legs, and made his presence felt in various ways.

"Well, well, as I say," he resumed, "I am going to Casterbridge, and to Casterbridge I must go. I should have been almost there by this time; but the rain drove me into your dwelling, and I'm not sorry for it."

"You don't live in Casterbridge?" said the shepherd.

"Not as yet; though I shortly mean to move there."

"Going to set up in trade, perhaps?"

"No, no," said the shepherd's wife. "It is easy to see that the gentleman is rich, and don't want to work at anything."

The cinder-gray stranger paused, as if to consider whether he would accept that definition of himself. He presently rejected it by answering, "Rich is not quite the word for me, Dame. I do work, and I must work. And even if I only get to Casterbridge by midnight I must begin work there at eight tomorrow morning. Yes, het or wet, blow or snow, famine or sword, my day's work tomorrow must be done."

"Poor man! Then, in spite o' seeming, you be worse off than we," replied the shepherd's wife.

"'Tis the nature of my trade, men and maidens. 'Tis the nature of my trade more than my poverty. . . . But really and truly I must up and off, or I shan't get a lodging in the town." However, the speaker did not move, and directly added, "There's time for one more draught of friendship before I go; and I'd perform it at once if the mug were not dry."

"Here's a mug o' small," said Mrs. Fennel. "Small, we call it, though to be sure 'tis only the first wash o' the combs."

"No," said the stranger, disdainfully. "I won't spoil your first kindness by partaking o' your second."

"Certainly not," broke in Fennel. "We don't increase and multiply every day, and I'll fill the mug again." He went away to the dark place under the stairs where the barrel stood. The shepherdess followed him.

"Why should you do this?" she said, reproachfully, as soon as they were alone. "He's emptied it once, though it held enough for ten people; and now he's not contented wi' the small, but must needs call for more o' the strong! And a stranger unbeknown to any of us. For my part, I don't like the look o' the man at all."

"But he's in the house, my honey; and 'tis a wet night, and a christening. Daze it, what's a cup of mead more or less? There'll be plenty more next bee-burning."

"Very well—this time, then," she answered, looking wistfully at the barrel. "But what is the man's calling, and where is he one of, that he should come in and join us like this?"

¹ a drink made from fermented honey and water.

"I don't know. I'll ask him again."

The catastrophe of having the mug drained dry at one pull by the stranger in cinder-gray was effectually guarded against this time by Mrs. Fennel. She poured out his allowance in a small cup, keeping the large one at a discreet distance from him. When he had tossed off his portion the shepherd renewed his inquiry about the stranger's occupation.

The latter did not immediately reply, and the man in the chimney corner, with sudden demonstrativeness, said, "Anybody may know my trade—I'm a wheelwright."

"A very good trade for these parts," said the shepherd.

"And anybody may know mine—if they've the sense to find it out," said the stranger in cinder-gray.

"You may generally tell what a man is by his claws," observed the hedge-carpenter, looking at his own hands. "My fingers be as full of thorns as an old pincushion is of pins."

The hands of the man in the chimney corner instinctively sought the shade, and he gazed into the fire as he resumed his pipe. The man at the table took up the hedge-carpenter's remark, and added smartly, "True; but the oddity of my trade is that, instead of setting a mark upon me, it sets a mark upon my customers."

No observation being offered by anybody in elucidation of this enigma, the shepherd's wife once more called for a song. The same obstacles presented themselves as at the former time—one had no voice, another had forgotten the first verse. The stranger at the table, whose soul had now risen to a good working temperature, relieved the difficulty by exclaiming that, to start the company, he would sing himself. Thrusting one thumb into the armhole of his waistcoat, he waved the other hand in the air, and, with an extemporizing gaze at the shining sheep-crooks above the mantelpiece, began:

O my trade it is the rarest one,

Simple shepherds all—

My trade is a sight to see;

*For my customers I tie, and take them up on high,
And waft 'em to a far countree!*

The room was silent when he had finished the verse—with one exception, that of the man in the chimney corner, who at the singer's word,

"Chorus!" joined him in a deep bass voice of musical relish:

And waft 'em to a far countree!

Oliver Giles, John Pitcher the dairyman, the parish-clerk, the engaged man of fifty, the row of young women against the wall, seemed lost in thought not of the gayest kind. The shepherd looked meditatively on the ground, the shepherdess gazed keenly at the singer, and with some suspicion; she was doubting whether this stranger were merely singing an old song from recollection, or was composing one there and then for the occasion. All were as perplexed at the obscure revelation as the guests at Belshazzar's Feast, except the man in the chimney corner, who quietly said, "Second verse, stranger," and smoked on.

The singer thoroughly moistened himself from his lips inward, and went on with the next stanza as requested:

My tools are but common ones,

Simple shepherds all—

My tools are no sight to see:

*A little hempen string, and a post whereon to swing,
Are implements enough for me!*

Shepherd Fennel glanced round. There was no longer any doubt that the stranger was answering his question rhythmically. The guests one and all started back with suppressed exclamations. The young woman engaged to the man of fifty fainted halfway, and would have proceeded, but finding him wanting in alacrity for catching her she sat down trembling.

"Oh, he's the ——!" whispered the people in the background, mentioning the name of an ominous public officer. "He's come to do it! 'Tis to be at Casterbridge jail tomorrow—the man for sheep-stealing—the poor clockmaker we heard of, who used to live away at Shottsford and had no work to do—Timothy Summers, whose family were astarving, and so he went out of Shottsford by the highroad, and took a sheep in open daylight, defying the farmer and the farmer's wife and the farmer's lad, and every man jack among 'em. He" (and they nodded toward the stranger of the deadly trade) "is come from up the country to do it because there's not enough to do in his own

county-town, and he's got the place here now
our own county-man's dead; he's going to live
in the same cottage under the prison wall."

The stranger in cinder-gray took no notice
of this whispered string of observations, but
again wetted his lips. Seeing that his friend in
the chimney corner was the only one who
reciprocated his joviality in any way, he held
out his cup toward that appreciative comrade,
who also held out his own. They clinked to-
gether, the eyes of the rest of the room hanging
upon the singer's actions. He parted his lips
for the third verse; but at that moment another
knock was audible upon the door. This time the
knock was faint and hesitating.

The company seemed scared, the shepherd
looked with consternation toward the entrance,
and it was with some effort that he resisted his
alarmed wife's deprecatory glance, and uttered
for the third time the welcoming words,
"Walk in!"

The door was gently opened, and another
man stood upon the mat. He, like those who
had preceded him, was a stranger. This time it
was a short, small personage, of fair com-
plexion, and dressed in a decent suit of dark
clothes.

"Can you tell me the way to ——?" he be-
gan: when, gazing round the room to observe
the nature of the company among whom he
had fallen, his eyes lighted on the stranger in
cinder-gray. It was just at the instant when the
latter, who had thrown his mind into his song
with such a will that he scarcely heeded the
interruption, silenced all whispers and inquiries
by bursting into his third verse:

*Tomorrow is my working day,
Simple shepherds all—
Tomorrow is a working day for me:
For the farmer's sheep is slain, and the lad who did
it ta'en,
And on his soul may God ha' merc-y!*

The stranger in the chimney corner, waving
cups with the singer so heartily that his mead
splashed over on the hearth, repeated in his
bass voice as before:

And on his soul may God ha' merc-y!

All this time the third stranger had been
standing in the doorway. Finding now that he

did not come forward or go on speaking, the
guests particularly regarded him. They noticed
to their surprise that he stood before them the
picture of abject terror—his knees trembling,
his hand shaking so violently that the door-
latch by which he supported himself rattled
audibly: his white lips were parted, and his
eyes fixed on the merry officer of justice in the
middle of the room. A moment more and he
had turned, closed the door, and fled.

"What a man can it be?" said the shepherd.

The rest, between the awfulness of their late
discovery and the odd conduct of this third
visitor, looked as if they knew not what to
think, and said nothing. Instinctively they with-
drew further and further from the grim gentle-
man in their midst, whom some of them seemed
to take for the Prince of Darkness himself, till
they formed a remote circle, an empty space of
floor being left between them and him—

. . . *circulus, cupus centrum diabolus.*²

The room was so silent—though there were
more than twenty people in it—that nothing
could be heard but the patter of the rain
against the window-shutters, accompanied by
the occasional hiss of a stray drop that fell
down the chimney into the fire, and the steady
puffing of the man in the corner, who had now
resumed his pipe of long clay.

The stillness was unexpectedly broken. The
distant sound of a gun reverberated through
the air—apparently from the direction of the
county-town.

"Be jiggered!" cried the stranger who had
sung the song, jumping up.

"What does that mean?" asked several.

"A prisoner escaped from the jail—that's
what it means."

All listened. The sound was repeated, and
none of them spoke but the man in the chim-
ney corner, who said quietly, "I've often been
told that in this county they fire a gun at such
times; but I never heard it till now."

"I wonder if it is *my* man?" murmured the
personage in cinder-gray.

"Surely it is!" said the shepherd involun-
tarily. "And surely we've zeed him! That little
man who looked in at the door by now, and

² circle with the devil in the center.

quivered like a leaf when he zeed ye and heard your song!"

"His teeth chattered, and the breath went out of his body," said the dairyman.

"And his heart seemed to sink within him like a stone," said Oliver Giles.

"And he bolted as if he'd been shot at," said the hedge-carpenter.

"True—his teeth chattered, and his heart seemed to sink; and he bolted as if he'd been shot at," slowly summed up the man in the chimney corner.

"I didn't notice it," remarked the hangman.

"We were all awondering what made him run off in such a fright," faltered one of the women against the wall, "and now 'tis explained!"

The firing of the alarm-gun went on at intervals, low and sullenly, and their suspicions became a certainty. The sinister gentleman in cinder-gray roused himself. "Is there a constable here?" he asked, in thick tones. "If so, let him step forward."

The engaged man of fifty stepped quavering out from the wall, his betrothed beginning to sob on the back of the chair.

"You are a sworn constable?"

"I be, Sir."

"Then pursue the criminal at once, with assistance, and bring him back here. He can't have gone far."

"I will, Sir, I will—when I've got my staff. I'll go home and get it, and come sharp here, and start in a body."

"Staff!—never mind your staff; the man'll be gone!"

"But I can't do nothing without my staff—can I, William, and John, and Charles Jake? No; for there's the king's royal crown apainted on en in yaller and gold, and the lion and the unicorn, so as when I raise en up and hit my prisoner, 'tis made a lawful blow thereby. I wouldn't 'tempt to take up a man without my staff—no, not I. If I hadn't the law to gie me courage, why, instead o' my taking up him he might take up mel"

"Now, I'm a king's man myself, and can give you authority enough for this," said the formidable officer in gray. "Now then, all of ye, be ready. Have ye any lanterns?"

"Yes—have ye any lanterns?—I demand it!" said the constable.

"And the rest of you able-bodied——"

"Able-bodied men—yes—the rest of ye!" said the constable.

"Have you some good stout staves and pitchforks——"

"Staves and pitchforks—in the name o' the law! And take 'em in yer hands and go in quest, and do as we in authority tell ye!"

Thus aroused, the men prepared to give chase. The evidence was, indeed, though circumstantial, so convincing, that but little argument was needed to show the shepherd's guests that after what they had seen it would look very much like connivance if they did not instantly pursue the unhappy third stranger, who could not as yet have gone more than a few hundred yards over such uneven country.

A shepherd is always well provided with lanterns; and, lighting these hastily, and with hurdle-staves in their hands, they poured out of the door, taking a direction along the crest of the hill, away from the town, the rain having fortunately a little abated.

Disturbed by the noise, or possibly by unpleasant dreams of her baptism, the child who had been christened began to cry heart-brokenly in the room overhead. These notes of grief came down through the chinks of the floor to the ears of the women below, who jumped up one by one, and seemed glad of the excuse to ascend and comfort the baby, for the incidents of the last half-hour greatly oppressed them. Thus in the space of two or three minutes the room on the ground-floor was deserted quite.

But it was not for long. Hardly had the sound of footsteps died away when a man returned round the corner of the house from the direction the pursuers had taken. Peeping in at the door, and seeing nobody there, he entered leisurely. It was the stranger of the chimney corner, who had gone out with the rest. The motive of his return was shown by his helping himself to a cut piece of skimmer-cake that lay on a ledge beside where he had sat, and which he had apparently forgotten to take with him. He also poured out half a cup more mead from the quantity that remained, ravenously eating and drinking these as he stood. He had not finished when another figure came in just as quietly—his friend in cinder-gray.

"Oh—you here?" said the latter, smiling. "I

thought you had gone to help in the capture." And this speaker also revealed the object of his return by looking solicitously round for the fascinating mug of old mead.

"And I thought you had gone," said the other, continuing his skimmer-cake with some effort.

"Well, on second thoughts, I felt there were enough without me," said the first confidentially, "and such a night as it is, too. Besides, 'tis the business o' the Government to take care of its criminals—not mine."

"True; so it is. And I felt as you did, that there were enough without me."

"I don't want to break my limbs running over the humps and hollows of this wild country."

"Nor I neither, between you and me."

"These shepherd-people are used to it—simple-minded souls, you know, stirred up to anything in a moment. They'll have him ready for me before the morning, and no trouble to me at all."

"They'll have him, and we shall have saved ourselves all labor in the matter."

"True, true. Well, my way is to Casterbridge; and 'tis as much as my legs will do to take me that far. Going the same way?"

"No, I am sorry to say! I have to get home over there" (he nodded indefinitely to the right), "and I feel as you do, that it is quite enough for my legs to do before bedtime."

The other had by this time finished the mead in the mug, after which, shaking hands heartily at the door, and wishing each other well, they went their several ways.

In the meantime the company of pursuers had reached the end of the hog's-back elevation which dominated this part of the down. They had decided on no particular plan of action; and, finding that the man of the baleful trade was no longer in their company, they seemed quite unable to form any such plan now. They descended in all directions down the hill, and straightway several of the party fell into the snare set by Nature for all misguided midnight rambles over this part of the cretaceous formation. The "lanchets," or flint slopes, which belted the escarpment at intervals of a dozen yards, took the less cautious ones unawares, and losing their footing on the rubbly steep they slid sharply downward, the lanterns rolling from their hands to the bottom, and

there lying on their sides till the horn was scorched through.

When they had again gathered themselves together, the shepherd, as the man who knew the country best, took the lead, and guided them round these treacherous inclines. The lanterns, which seemed rather to dazzle their eyes and warn the fugitive than to assist them in the exploration, were extinguished; due silence was observed; and in this more rational order they plunged into the vale. It was a grassy, briery, moist defile, affording some shelter to any person who had sought it; but the party perambulated it in vain, and ascended on the other side. Here they wandered apart, and after an interval closed together again to report progress. At the second time of closing in they found themselves near a lonely ash, the single tree on this part of the coomb, probably sown there by a passing bird some fifty years before. And here, standing a little to one side of the trunk, as motionless as the trunk itself appeared the man they were in quest of, his outline being well defined against the sky beyond. The band noiselessly drew up and faced him.

"Your money or your life!" said the constable sternly to the still figure.

"No, no," whispered John Pitcher. "'Tisn't our side ought to say that. That's the doctrine of vagabonds like him, and we be on the side of the law."

"Well, well," replied the constable, impatiently; "I must say something, mustn't I? and if you had all the weight o' this undertaking upon your mind, perhaps you'd say the wrong thing, too!—Prisoner at the bar, surrender in the name of the Father—the Crown, I mane!"

The man under the tree seemed now to notice them for the first time, and, giving them no opportunity whatever for exhibiting their courage, he strolled slowly toward them. He was, indeed, the little man, the third stranger; but his trepidation had in a great measure gone.

"Well, travelers," he said, "did I hear you speak to me?"

"You did; you've got to come and be our prisoner at once!" said the constable. "We arrest 'ee on the charge of not biding in Casterbridge jail in a decent proper manner to be hung to

morrow morning. Neighbors, do your duty, and seize the culprit!"

On hearing the charge, the man seemed enlightened, and, saying not another word, resigned himself with preternatural civility to the search-party, who, with their staves in their hands, surrounded him on all sides, and marched him back toward the shepherd's cottage.

It was eleven o'clock by the time they arrived. The light shining from the open door, a sound of men's voices within, proclaimed to them as they approached the house that some new events had arisen in their absence. On entering they discovered the shepherd's living-room to be invaded by two officers from Casterbridge jail, and a well-known magistrate who lived at the nearest county-seat, intelligence of the escape having become generally circulated.

"Gentlemen," said the constable, "I have brought back your man—not without risk and danger; but every one must do his duty! He is inside this circle of able-bodied persons, who have lent me useful aid, considering their ignorance of Crown work.—Men, bring forward your prisoner!" And the third stranger was led to the light.

"Who is this?" said one of the officials.

"The man," said the constable.

"Certainly not," said the turnkey; and the first corroborated his statement.

"But how can it be otherwise?" asked the constable. "Or why was he so terrified at sight of the singing instrument of the law who sat there?" Here he related the strange behavior of the third stranger on entering the house during the hangman's song.

"Can't understand it," said the officer coolly. "All I know is that it is not the condemned man. He's quite a different character from this one; a gauntish fellow, with dark hair and eyes, rather good-looking, and with a musical bass voice that if you heard it once you'd never mistake as long as you lived."

"Why, souls—'twas the man in the chimney corner!"

"Hey—what?" said the magistrate, coming forward after inquiring particulars from the shepherd in the background. "Haven't you got the man after all?"

"Well, Sir," said the constable, "he's the

man we were in search of, that's true; and yet he's not the man we were in search of. For the man we were in search of was not the man we wanted, Sir, if you understand my everyday way; for 'twas the man in the chimney corner!"

"A pretty kettle of fish altogether!" said the magistrate. "You had better start for the other man at once."

The prisoner now spoke for the first time.

The mention of the man in the chimney corner seemed to have moved him as nothing else could do. "Sir," he said, stepping forward to the magistrate, "take no more trouble about me. The time is come when I may as well speak. I have done nothing; my crime is that the condemned man is my brother. Early this afternoon I left home at Shottsford to tramp it all the way to Casterbridge jail to bid him farewell. I was benighted, and called here to rest and ask the way. When I opened the door I saw before me the very man, my brother, that I thought to see in the condemned cell at Casterbridge. He was in this chimney corner, and jammed close to him, so that he could not have got out if he had tried, was the executioner who'd come to take his life, singing a song about it and not knowing that it was his victim who was close by, joining in to save appearances. My brother looked a glance of agony at me, and I know he meant, 'Don't reveal what you see; my life depends on it.' I was so terror-struck that I could hardly stand, and, not knowing what I did, I turned and hurried away."

The narrator's manner and tone had the stamp of truth, and his story made a great impression on all around. "And do you know where your brother is at the present time?" asked the magistrate.

"I do not. I have never seen him since I closed this door."

"I can testify to that, for we've been between ye ever since," said the constable.

"Where does he think to fly to?—what is his occupation?"

"He's a watch-and-clock-maker, Sir."

"A said 'a was a wheelwright—a wicked rogue," said the constable.

"The wheels of clocks and watches he meant, no doubt," said Shepherd Fennel. "I thought his hands were palish for's trade."

"Well, it appears to me that nothing can be

gained by retaining this poor man in custody," said the magistrate; "your business lies with the other, unquestionably."

And so the little man was released off-hand, but he looked nothing the less sad on that account, it being beyond the power of magistrate or constable to raze out the written troubles in his brain, for they concerned another whom he regarded with more solicitude than himself. When this was done, and the man had gone his way, the night was found to be so far advanced that it was deemed useless to renew the search before the next morning.

Next day, accordingly, the quest for the clever sheep-stealer became general and keen, to all appearance at least. But the intended punishment was cruelly disproportioned to the transgression, and the sympathy of a great many country-folk in that district was strongly on the side of the fugitive. Moreover, his marvelous coolness and daring in hob-and-nobbing with the hangman, under the unprecedented circumstances of the shepherd's party, won their admiration. So that it may be questioned if all those who ostensibly made themselves so busy in exploring woods and fields and lanes were quite so thorough when it came to the private examination of their own lofts and out-houses. Stories were afloat of a mysterious figure being occasionally seen in some old overgrown trackway or other, remote from turnpike roads, but when a search was instituted in any of these suspected quarters nobody was found. Thus the days and weeks passed without tidings.

In brief, the bass-voiced man of the chimney corner was never recaptured. Some said that he went across the sea, others that he did not, but buried himself in the depths of a populous city. At any rate, the gentleman in cinder-gray never did his morning's work at Casterbridge, nor met anywhere at all, for business purposes, the genial comrade with whom he had passed an hour of relaxation in the lonely house on the coomb.

The grass has long been green on the graves of Shepherd Fennel and his frugal wife; the guests who made up the christening party have mainly followed their entertainers to the tomb; the baby in whose honor they all had met is a matron in the sere and yellow leaf. But the arrival of the three strangers at the shepherd's that night, and the details connected there-

with, is a story as well-known as ever in the country about Higher Crowstairs.

RUDYARD KIPLING

Possibly the most eagerly read English author of his time was Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936), whose matchless evocations of India in both poetry (1, 342) and fiction bear the unmistakable stamp of high creative talent. He was born in Bombay and, after an English education, lived in India for many years. *Plain Tales from the Hills*, 1888, presented the "soldiers three" who became so famous and was followed by other inventive and stirring stories with similar backgrounds. The animal life of India is prominent in such works as *The Jungle Book*, 1894, and *Just-So Stories*, 1902, in which Kipling's mastery of narrative is equally evident. Kipling's longer fiction is not so successful as his short stories, but even in it he exhibits storytelling qualities of the first rank. Kipling's technical mastery and striking ingenuity outweigh for many readers his avowal of the caste system and of British imperialism.

THE MAN WHO WAS

Let it be clearly understood that the Russian is a delightful person till he tucks his shirt in. As an Oriental he is charming. It is only when he insists upon being treated as the most easterly of Western peoples, instead of the most westerly of Easterns, that he becomes a racial anomaly extremely difficult to handle. The host never knows which side of his nature is going to turn up next.

Dirkovitch was a Russian—a Russian of the Russians, as he said—who appeared to get his bread by serving the czar as an officer in a Cossack regiment, and corresponding for a Russian newspaper with a name that was never twice the same. He was a handsome young Oriental, with a taste for wandering through unexplored portions of the earth, and he arrived in India from nowhere in particular. At least no living man could ascertain whether it was by way of Balkh, Budukhshan, Chitral, Beloochistan, Nepaul, or anywhere else. The Indian government, being in an unusually affable mood, gave orders that he was to be civilly

treated, and shown everything that was to be seen: so he drifted, talking bad English and worse French, from one city to another till he forgathered with her Majesty's White Hussars in the city of Peshawur, which stands at the mouth of that narrow sword-cut in the hills that men call the Khyber Pass. He was undoubtedly an officer, and he was decorated, after the manner of the Russians, with little enameled crosses, and he could talk, and (though this has nothing to do with his merits) he had been given up as a hopeless task or case by the Black Tyrones, who, individually and collectively, with hot whisky and honey, mulled brandy and mixed spirits of all kinds, had striven in all hospitality to make him drunk. And when the Black Tyrones, who are exclusively Irish, fail to disturb the peace of head of a foreigner, that foreigner is certain to be a superior man. This was the argument of the Black Tyrones, but they were ever an unruly and self-opinionated regiment, and they allowed junior subalterns of four years' service to choose their wines. The spirits were always purchased by the colonel and a committee of majors. And a regiment that would so behave may be respected but cannot be loved.

The White Hussars were as conscientious in choosing their wine as in charging the enemy. There was a brandy that had been purchased by a cultured colonel a few years after the battle of Waterloo. It has been maturing ever since, and it was a marvelous brandy at the purchasing. The memory of that liquor would cause men to weep as they lay dying in the teak forests of upper Burmah or the slime of the Irrawaddy. And there was a port which was notable; and there was a champagne of an obscure brand, which always came to mess without any labels, because the White Hussars wished none to know where the source of supply might be found. The officer on whose head the champagne choosing lay, was forbidden the use of tobacco for six weeks previous to sampling.

This particularity of detail is necessary to emphasize the fact that that champagne, that port, and above all, that brandy—the green and yellow and white liqueurs did not count—were placed at the absolute disposition of Dirkovitch, and he enjoyed himself hugely—even more than among the Black Tyrones.

But he remained distressingly European through it all. The White Hussars were—"My dear true friends," "Fellow-soldiers glorious," and "Brothers inseparable." He would unburden himself by the hour on the glorious future that awaited the combined arms of England and Russia when their hearts and their territories should run side by side, and the great mission of civilizing Asia should begin. That was unsatisfactory, because Asia is not going to be civilized after the methods of the West. There is too much Asia, and she is too old. You cannot reform a lady of many lovers, and Asia has been insatiable in her flirtations aforesaid. She will never attend Sunday school, or learn to vote save with swords for tickets.

Dirkovitch knew this as well as any one else, but it suited him to talk special-correspondently and to make himself as genial as he could. Now and then he volunteered a little, a very little, information about his own Sotnia of Cossacks, left apparently to look after themselves somewhere at the back of beyond. He had done rough work in Central Asia, and had seen rather more help-yourself fighting than most men of his years. But he was careful never to betray his superiority, and more than careful to praise on all occasions the appearance, drill, uniform, and organization of her Majesty's White Hussars. And, indeed, they were a regiment to be admired. When Mrs. Durgan, widow of the late Sir John Durgan, arrived in their station, and after a short time had been proposed to by every single man at mess, she put the public sentiment very neatly when she explained that they were all so nice that unless she could marry them all, including the colonel and some majors who were already married, she was not going to content herself with one of them. Wherefore she wedded a little man in a rifle regiment—being by nature contradictory—and the White Hussars were going to wear crape on their arms, but compromised by attending the wedding in full force, and lining the aisle with unutterable reproach. She had jilted them all—from Basset-Holmer, the senior captain, to Little Mildred, the last subaltern, and he could have given her four thousand a year and a title. He was a viscount, and on his arrival the mess had said he had better go into the Guards, because they were' all sons of large grocers and small clothiers in the Hussars,

but Mildred begged very hard to be allowed to stay, and behaved so prettily that he was forgiven, and became a man, which is much more important than being any sort of viscount.

The only persons who did not share the general regard for the White Hussars were a few thousand gentlemen who lived across the border, and answered to the name of Pathan. They had only met the regiment officially, and for something less than twenty minutes, but the interview, which was complicated with many casualties, had filled them with prejudice. They even called the White Hussars "children of the devil," and sons of persons whom it would be perfectly impossible to meet in decent society. Yet they were not above making their aversion fill their money belts. The regiment possessed carbines, beautiful Martini-Henri carbines, that would cob a bullet into an enemy's camp at one thousand yards, and were even handier than the long rifle. Therefore they were coveted all along the border, and since demand inevitably breeds supply, they were supplied at the risk of life and limb for exactly their weight in coined silver—seven and one half pounds of rupees, or sixteen pounds and a few shillings each, reckoning the rupee at par. They were stolen at night by snaky-haired thieves that crawled on their stomachs under the nose of the sentries; they disappeared mysteriously from armracks; and in the hot weather, when all the doors and windows were open, they vanished like puffs of their own smoke. The border people desired them first for their own family vendettas, and then for contingencies. But in the long cold nights of the Northern Indian winter they were stolen most extensively. The traffic of murder was liveliest among the hills at that season, and prices ruled high. The regimental guards were first doubled and then trebled. A trooper does not much care if he loses a weapon—government must make it good—but he deeply resents the loss of his sleep. The regiment grew very angry, and one night-thief who managed to limp away bears the visible marks of their anger upon him to this hour. That incident stopped the burglaries for a time, and the guards were reduced accordingly, and the regiment devoted itself to polo with unexpected results, for it beat by two goals to one that very terrible polo corps the

Lushkar Light Horse, though the latter had four ponies apiece for a short hour's fight, as well as a native officer who played like a lambent flame across the ground.

5 Then they gave a dinner to celebrate the event. The Lushkar team came, and Dirkovitch came, in the fullest full uniform of Cossack officer, which is as full as a dressing-gown, and was introduced to the Lushkars, and opened
10 his eyes as he regarded them. They were lighter men than the Hussars, and they carried themselves with the swing that is the peculiar right of the Punjab frontier force and all irregular horse. Like everything else in the service, it has
15 to be learned; but, unlike many things, it is never forgotten, and remains on the body till death.

The great beam-rooted mess room of the White Hussars was a sight to be remembered.
20 All the mess plate was on the long table—the same table that had served up the bodies of five dead officers in a forgotten fight long and long ago—the dingy, battered standards faced the door of entrance, clumps of winter roses
25 lay between the silver candlesticks, the portraits of eminent officers deceased looked down on their successors from between the heads of sambhur, nilghai, maikhor, and, pride of all the mess, two grinning snow-leopards that had cost
30 Basset-Holmer four months' leave that he might have spent in England instead of on the road to Thibet, and the daily risk of his life on ledge, snowslide, and glassy grass slope.

The servants, in spotless white muslin and
35 the crest of their regiments on the brow of their turbans, waited behind their masters, who were clad in the scarlet and gold of the White Hussars and the cream and silver of the Lushkar Light Horse. Dirkovitch's dull green uniform was the only dark spot at the board, but his big onyx eyes made up for it. He was fraternizing effusively with the captain of the Lushkar team, who was wondering how many of Dirkovitch's Cossacks his own long, lathy
40 down-countrymen could account for in a fair charge. But one does not speak of these things openly.

The talk rose higher and higher, and the regimental band played between the courses,
50 as is the immemorial custom, till all tongues ceased for a moment with the removal of the dinner slips and the First Toast of Obligation,

when the colonel, rising, said, "Mr. Vice, the Queen," and Little Mildred from the bottom of the table answered, "The Queen, God bless her!" and the big spurs clanked as the big men heaved themselves up and drank the Queen, upon whose pay they were falsely supposed to pay their mess bills. That sacrament of the mess never grows old, and never ceases to bring a lump into the throat of the listener wherever he be, by land or by sea. Dirkovitch rose with his "brothers glorious," but he could not understand. No one but an officer can understand what the toast means; and the bulk have more sentiment than comprehension. It all comes to the same in the end, as the enemy said when he was wriggling on a lance point. Immediately after the little silence that follows on the ceremony there entered the native officer who had played for the Lushkar team. He could not of course cut with the alien, but he came in at dessert, all six feet of him, with the blue-and-silver urban atop, and the big black top-boots below. The mess rose joyously as he thrust forward the hilt of his saber, in token of fealty, for the colonel of the White Hussars to touch, and dropped into a vacant chair amid shouts of *Rung ho! Hira Singh!* (which being translated means "Go in and win!"). "Did I whack you over the knee, old man?" "Ressaidar Sahib, what the devil made you play that kicking pig off a pony in the last ten minutes?" "Shabash, Ressaidar Sahib!" Then the voice of the colonel, "The health of Ressaidar Hira Singh!"

After the shouting had died away, Hira Singh rose to reply, for he was the cadet of a royal house, the son of a king's son, and knew what was due on these occasions. Thus he spoke in the vernacular:—

"Colonel Sahib and officers of this regiment, much honor have you done me. This will I remember. We came down from afar to play you; but we were beaten." ("No fault of yours, Ressaidar Sahib. Played on our own ground, y' know. Your ponies were cramped from the railway. Don't apologize.") "Therefore perhaps we will come again if it be so ordained." ("Hear! ear, hear, indeed! Bravo! Hsh!") "Then we will play you afresh" ("Happy to meet you"), "ill there are left no feet upon our ponies. Thus for sport." He dropped one hand on his sword hilt and his eye wandered to Dirkovitch lying back in his chair. "But if by the will of

God there arises any other game which is not the polo game, then be assured, Colonel Sahib and officers, that we shall play it out side by side, though *they*"—again his eye sought Dirkovitch—"though *they*, I say, have fifty ponies to our one horse." And with a deep-mouthed *Rung ho!* that rang like a musket butt on flagstones, he sat down amid shoutings.

Dirkovitch, who had devoted himself steadily to the brandy—the terrible brandy aforementioned—did not understand, nor did the expurgated translations offered to him at all convey the point. Decidedly the native officer's was the speech of the evening, and the clamor might have continued to the dawn had it not been broken by the noise of a shot without that sent every man feeling at his defenseless left side. It is notable that Dirkovitch "reached back," after the American fashion—a gesture that set the captain of the Lushkar team wondering how Cossack officers were armed at mess. Then there was a scuffle, and a yell of pain.

"Carbine stealing again!" said the adjutant, calmly sinking back in his chair. "This comes of reducing the guards. I hope the sentries have killed him."

The feet of armed men pounded on the veranda flags, and it sounded as though something was being dragged.

"Why don't they put him in the cells till the morning?" said the colonel, testily. "See if they've damaged him, sergeant."

The mess-sergeant fled out into the darkness, and returned with two troopers and a corporal, all very much perplexed.

"Caught a man stealin' carbines, sir," said the corporal. "Leastways 'e was crawling toward the barracks, sir, past the main-road sentries; an' the sentry 'e says, sir—"

The limp heap of rags upheld by the three men groaned. Never was seen so destitute and demoralized an Afghan. He was turbanless, shoeless, caked with dirt, and all but dead with rough handling. Hira Singh started slightly at the sound of the man's pain. Dirkovitch took another liqueur glass of brandy.

"What does the sentry say?" said the colonel.

"Sez he speaks English, sir," said the corporal.

"So you brought him into mess instead of

handing him over to the sergeant! If he spoke all the tongues of the Pentecost you've no business—"

Again the bundle groaned and muttered. Little Mildred had risen from his place to inspect. He jumped back as though he had been shot.

"Perhaps it would be better, sir, to send the men away," said he to the colonel, for he was a much-privileged subaltern. He put his arms round the rag-bound horror as he spoke, and dropped him into a chair. It may not have been explained that the littleness of Mildred lay in his being six feet four, and big in proportion. The corporal, seeing that an officer was disposed to look after the capture, and that the colonel's eye was beginning to blaze, promptly removed himself and his men. The mess was left alone with the carbine thief, who laid his head on the table and wept bitterly, hopelessly, and inconsolably, as little children weep.

Hira Singh leaped to his feet with a long-drawn vernacular oath. "Colonel Sahib," said he, "that man is no Afghan, for they weep 'Ai! Ai!' Nor is he of Hindustan, for they weep 'Oh! Ho!' He weeps after the fashion of the white men, who say 'Ow! Ow!'"

"Now where the dickens did you get that knowledge, Hira Singh?" said the captain of the Lushkar team.

"Hear him!" said Hira Singh, simply, pointing at the crumpled figure that wept as though it would never cease.

"He said, 'My God!'" said Little Mildred. "I heard him say it."

The colonel and the mess room looked at the man in silence. It is a horrible thing to hear a man cry. A woman can sob from the top of her palate, or her lips, or anywhere else, but a man cries from his diaphragm, and it rends him to pieces. Also, the exhibition causes the throat of the on-looker to close at the top.

"Poor devill!" said the colonel, coughing tremendously.

"We ought to send him to hospital. He's been man-handled."

Now the adjutant loved his rifles. They were to him as his grandchildren—the men standing in the first place. He grunted rebelliously: "I can understand an Afghan stealing, because he's made that way. But I can't understand his crying. That makes it worse."

The brandy must have affected Dirkovitch, for he lay back in his chair and stared at the ceiling. There was nothing special in the ceiling beyond a shadow as of a huge black coffin. Owing to some peculiarity in the construction of the mess room this shadow was always thrown when the candles were lighted. It never disturbed the digestion of the White Hussars. They were, in fact, rather proud of it.

"Is he going to cry all night?" said the colonel, "or are we supposed to sit up with Little Mildred's guest until he feels better?"

The man in the chair threw up his head and stared at the mess. Outside, the wheels of the first of those bidden to the festivities crunched the roadway.

"Oh, my God!" said the man in the chair, and every soul in the mess rose to his feet. Then the Lushkar captain did a deed for which he ought to have been given the Victoria Cross—distinguished gallantry in a fight against overwhelming curiosity. He picked up his team with his eyes as the hostess picks up the ladies at the opportune moment, and pausing only by the colonel's chair to say, "This isn't *our* affair, you know, sir," led the team into the veranda and the gardens. Hira Singh was the last, and he looked at Dirkovitch as he moved. But Dirkovitch had departed into a brandy paradise of his own. His lips moved without sound, and he was studying the coffin on the ceiling.

"White—white all over," said Basset-Holmer, the adjutant. "What a pernicious renegade he must be! I wonder where he came from?"

The colonel shook the man gently by the arm, and "Who are you?" said he.

There was no answer. The man stared round the mess room and smiled in the colonel's face. Little Mildred, who was always more of a woman than a man till "Boot and saddle" was sounded, repeated the question in a voice that would have drawn confidences from a geyser. The man only smiled. Dirkovitch, at the far end of the table, slid gently from his chair to the floor. No son of Adam, in this present imperfect world, can mix the Hussars' champagne with the Hussars' brandy by five and eight glasses of each without remembering the pit whence he has been digged and descending thither. The band began to play the tune with which the White Hussars, from the date of their formation, preface all their functions.

They would sooner be disbanded than abandon that tune. It is a part of their system. The man straightened himself in his chair and drummed on the table with his fingers.

"I don't see why we should entertain lunatics," said the colonel; "call a guard and send him off to the cells. We'll look into the business in the morning. Give him a glass of wine first, though."

Little Mildred filled a sherry glass with the brandy and thrust it over to the man. He drank, and the tune rose louder, and he straightened himself yet more. Then he put out his long-taloned hands to a piece of plate opposite and fingered it lovingly. There was a mystery connected with that piece of plate in the shape of a spring, which converted what was a seven-branched candlestick, three springs each side and one in the middle, into a sort of wheel-spoke candelabrum. He found the spring, pressed it, and laughed weakly. He rose from his chair and inspected a picture on the wall, then moved on to another picture, the mess watching him without a word. When he came to the mantelpiece he shook his head and seemed distressed. A piece of plate representing a mounted hussar in full uniform caught his eye. He pointed to it, and then to the mantelpiece, with inquiry in his eyes.

"What is it—oh, what is it?" said Little Mildred. Then, as a mother might speak to a child, "That is a horse—yes, a horse."

Very slowly came the answer, in a thick, passionless guttural: "Yes, I—have seen. But—where is *the* horse?"

You could have heard the hearts of the mess beating as the men drew back to give the stranger full room in his wanderings. There was no question of calling the guard.

Again he spoke, very slowly, "Where is *our* horse?"

There is no saying what happened after that. There is but one horse in the White Hussars, and his portrait hangs outside the door of the mess room. He is the piebald drum-horse, the king of the regimental band, that served the regiment for seven-and-thirty years, and in the end was shot for old age. Half the mess tore the thing down from its place and thrust it into the man's hands. He placed it above the mantelpiece; it clattered on the ledge, as his poor hands dropped it, and he staggered toward

the bottom of the table, falling into Mildred's chair. The band began to play the "River of Years" waltz, and the laughter from the gardens came into the tobacco-scented mess room. But

nobody, even the youngest, was thinking of waltzes. They all spoke to one another something after this fashion: "The drum-horse hasn't hung over the mantelpiece since '67." "How does he know?" "Mildred, go and speak to him again." "Colonel, what are you going to do?" "Oh, dry up, and give the poor devil a chance to pull himself together!" "It isn't possible, anyhow. The man's a lunatic."

Little Mildred stood at the colonel's side talking into his ear. "Will you be good enough to take your seats, please, gentlemen?" he said, and the mess dropped into the chairs.

Only Dirkovitch's seat, next to Little Mildred's, was blank, and Little Mildred himself had found Hira Singh's place. The wide-eyed mess sergeant filled the glasses in dead silence. Once more the colonel rose, but his hand shook, and the port spilled on the table as he looked straight at the man in Little Mildred's chair and said, hoarsely, "Mr. Vice, the Queen." There was a little pause, but the man sprang to his feet and answered, without hesitation, "The Queen, God bless her!" and as he emptied the thin glass he snapped the shank between his fingers.

Long and long ago, when the Empress of India was a young woman, and there were no unclean ideals in the land, it was the custom in a few messes to drink the Queen's toast in broken glass, to the huge delight of the mess contractors. The custom is now dead, because there is nothing to break anything for, except now and again the word of a government, and that has been broken already.

"That settles it," said the colonel, with a gasp. "He's not a sergeant. What in the world is he?"

The entire mess echoed the word, and the volley of questions would have scared any man. Small wonder that the ragged, filthy invader could only smile and shake his head.

From under the table, calm and smiling urbanely, rose Dirkovitch, who had been roused from healthful slumber by feet upon his body. By the side of the man he rose, and the man shrieked and groveled at his feet. It was a horrible sight, coming so swiftly upon

the pride and glory of the toast that had brought the strayed wits together.

Dirkovitch made no offer to raise him, but Little Mildred heaved him up in an instant. It is not good that a gentleman who can answer to the Queen's toast should lie at the feet of a subaltern of Cossacks.

The hasty action tore the wretch's upper clothing nearly to the waist, and his body was seamed with dry black scars. There is only one weapon in the world that cuts in parallel lines, and it is neither the cane nor the cat. Dirkovitch saw the marks, and the pupils of his eyes dilated—also, his face changed. He said something that sounded like "Shto ve takete"; and the man, fawning, answered, "Chetyre."

"What's that?" said everybody together.

"His number. That is number four, you know," Dirkovitch spoke very thickly.

"What has a Queen's officer to do with a qualified number?" said the colonel, and there rose an unpleasant growl round the table.

"How can I tell?" said the affable Oriental, with a sweet smile. "He is a—how you have it?—escape—runaway, from over there."

He nodded toward the darkness of the night.

"Speak to him, if he'll answer you, and speak to him gently," said Little Mildred, settling the man in a chair. It seemed most improper to all present that Dirkovitch should sip brandy as he talked in purring, spitting Russian to the creature who answered so feebly and with such evident dread. But since Dirkovitch appeared to understand, no man said a word. They breathed heavily, leaning forward, in the long gaps of the conversation. The next time that they have no engagements on hand the White Hussars intend to go to St. Petersburg and learn Russian.

"He does not know how many years ago," said Dirkovitch, facing the mess, "but he says it was very long ago, in a war. I think that there was an accident. He says he was of this glorious and distinguished regiment in the war."

"The rolls! The rolls! Holmer, get the rolls!" said Little Mildred, and the adjutant dashed off bareheaded to the orderly room where the rolls of the regiment were kept. He returned just in time to hear Dirkovitch conclude, "Therefore I am most sorry to say there was an accident, which would have been reparable if he had

apologized to that our colonel, which he had insulted."

Another growl, which the colonel tried to beat down. The mess was in no mood to weigh 5 insults to Russian colonels just then.

"He does not remember, but I think that there was an accident, and so he was not exchanged among the prisoners, but he was sent to another place—how do you say?—the country. So, he says, he came here. He does not know how he came. Eh? He was at Chepany"—the man caught the word, nodded, and shivered—"at Zhigansk and Irkutsk. I cannot understand how he escaped. He says, too, that he 10 was in the forests for many years, but how many years he has forgotten—that with many things. It was an accident; done because he did not apologize to that our colonel. Ah!"

Instead of echoing Dirkovitch's sigh of regret, it is sad to record that the White Hussars 20 lively exhibited unchristian delight and other emotions, hardly restrained by their sense of hospitality. Holmer flung the frayed and yellow regimental rolls on the table, and the men flung 25 themselves atop of these.

"Steady! Fifty-six—fifty-five—fifty-four," said Holmer. "Here we are. Lieutenant Austin Limmason—*missing*." That was before Sebastopol. What an infernal shame! Insulted one of 30 their colonels, and was quietly shipped off. Thirty years of his life wiped out."

"But he never apologized. Said he'd see him—first," chorused the mess.

"Poor devil! I suppose he never had the chance afterward. How did he come here?" 35 said the colonel.

The dingy heap in the chair could give no answer.

"Do you know who you are?"

40 It laughed weakly.

"Do you know that you are Limmason—Lieutenant Limmason, of the White Hussars?"

Swift as a shot came the answer, in a slightly surprised tone, "Yes, I'm Limmason, of 45 course." The light died out in his eyes, and he collapsed afresh, watching every motion of Dirkovitch with terror. A flight from Siberia may fix a few elementary facts in the mind, but it does not lead to continuity of thought. The man could not explain how, like a homing pigeon, he had found his way to his own old 50 mess again. Of what he had suffered or seen

he knew nothing. He cringed before Dirkovitch as instinctively as he had pressed the spring of the candle-stick, sought the picture of the drum-horse, and answered to the Queen's toast. The rest was a blank that the dreaded Russian tongue could only in part remove. His head bowed on his breast, and he giggled and cowered alternately.

The devil that lived in the brandy prompted Dirkovitch at this extremely inopportune moment to make a speech. He rose, swaying slightly, gripped the table edge, while his eyes glowed like opals, and began:—

"Fellow-soldiers glorious—true friends and hospitable. It was an accident, and deplorable—most deplorable." Here he smiled sweetly all round the mess. "But you will think of this little, little thing. So little, is it not? The czar! Posh! I slap my fingers—I snap my fingers at him. Do I believe in him? No! But the Slav who has done nothing, *him* I believe. Seventy—how much?—millions that have done nothing—not one thing. Napoleon was an episode." He banged a hand on the table. "Hear you, old peoples, we have done nothing in the world—out here. All our work is to do: and it shall be done, old peoples. Get away!" He waved his hand imperiously, and pointed to the man. "You see him. He is not good to see. He was just one little—oh, so little—accident, that no one remembered. Now he is *That*. So will you be, brother-soldiers so brave—so will you be. But you will never come back. You will all go where he has gone, or"—he pointed to the great coffin shadow on the ceiling, and muttering, "Seventy millions—get away, you old people," fell asleep.

"Sweet, and to the point," said Little Mildred. "What's the use of getting wrath? Let's make the poor devil comfortable."

But that was a matter suddenly and swiftly taken from the loving hands of the White Hussars. The lieutenant had returned only to go away again three days later, when the wail of the "Dead March" and the tramp of the squadrons told the wondering station, that saw no gap in the table, an officer of the regiment had resigned his new-found commission.

And Dirkovitch—bland, supple, and always genial—went away too by a night train. Little Mildred and another saw him off, for he was

the guest of the mess, and even had he smitten the colonel with the open hand the law of the mess allowed no relaxation of hospitality.

"Good-by, Dirkovitch, and a pleasant journey," said Little Mildred.

"*Au revoir*, my true friends," said the Russian.

"Indeed! But we thought you were going home?"

"Yes; but I will come again. My friends, is that road shut?" He pointed to where the north star burned over the Khyber Pass.

"By Jove! I forgot. Of course. Happy to meet you, old man, any time you like. Got everything you want,—cheroots, ice, bedding? That's all right. Well, *au revoir*, Dirkovitch."

"Um," said the other man, as the tail-lights of the train grew small. "Of—all—the—unmitigated—"

Little Mildred answered nothing, but watched the north star, and hummed a selection from a recent burlesque that had much delighted the White Hussars. It ran:—

"I'm sorry for Mister Bluebeard,
I'm sorry to cause him pain;
But a terrible spree there's sure to be
When he comes back again."

SINCLAIR LEWIS

Sinclair Lewis (1885—) completed virtually all of his major work prior to 1930, when he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. His great novels (Main Street, 1920; Babbitt, 1922; Arrowsmith, 1925) quickly won eminence for him as a realist and satirist. These indictments of middle-class America, pungent and at times vicious, have been succeeded by fiction in mellowed vein, and Lewis is not now accorded the rank he held in the 1920's. Much of his better work deals with settings and characters familiar to him in youth. "Young Man Axelbrod" is a sensitive character study of a Swede such as Lewis may have encountered in his own native Minnesota, with an additional setting at Yale University, where Lewis was educated. It possesses more tolerance, insight, and genuine sympathy than most of Lewis's fiction.

YOUNG MAN AXELBROD¹

The cottonwood is a tree of a slovenly and plebeian habit. Its woolly wisps turn gray the lawns and engender neighborhood hostilities about our town. Yet it is a mighty tree, a refuge and an inspiration; the sun flickers in its towering foliage, whence the tattoo of locusts enlivens our dusty summer afternoons. From the wheat country out to the sagebrush plains between the buttes and the Yellowstone it is the cottonwood that keeps a little grateful shade for sweating homesteaders.

In Joralemon we call Knute Axelbrod "Old Cottonwood." As a matter of fact, the name was derived not so much from the quality of the man as from the wide grove about his gaunt white house and red barn. He made a comely row of trees on each side of the country road, so that a humble, daily sort of a man, driving beneath them in his lumber wagon, might fancy himself lord of a private avenue.

And at sixty-five Knute was like one of his own cottonwoods, his roots deep in the soil, his trunk weathered by rain and blizzard and baking August noons, his crown spread to the wide horizon of day and the enormous sky of a prairie night.

This immigrant was an American even in speech. Save for a weakness about his *j*'s and *w*'s, he spoke the twangy Yankee English of the land. He was the more American because in his native Scandinavia he had dreamed of America as a land of light. Always through disillusion and weariness he beheld America as the world's nursery for justice, for broad, fair towns, and eager talk; and always he kept a young soul that dared to desire beauty.

As a lad Knute Axelbrod had wished to be a famous scholar, to learn the ease of foreign tongues, the romance of history, to unfold in the graciousness of wise books. When he first came to America he worked in a sawmill all day and studied all evening. He mastered enough book learning to teach district school for two terms; then, when he was only eighteen, a greathearted pity for faded little Lena

Wesselius moved him to marry her. Gay enough, doubtless, was their hike by prairie schooner to new farmlands, but Knute was promptly caught in a net of poverty and family. From eighteen to fifty-eight he was always snatching children away from death or the farm away from mortgages.

He had to be content—and generously content he was—with the secondhand glory of his children's success and, for himself, with pilfered hours of reading—that reading of big, thick, dismal volumes of history and economics which the lone mature learner chooses. Without ever losing his desire for strange cities and the dignity of towers, he stuck to his farm. He acquired a half-section, free from debt, fertile, well-stocked, adorned with a cement silo, a chicken run, a new windmill. He became comfortable, secure, and then he was ready, it seemed, to die, for at sixty-three his work was done, and he was unneeded and alone.

His wife was dead. His sons had scattered afar, one a dentist in Fargo, another a farmer in the Golden Valley. He had turned over his farm to his daughter and son-in-law. They had begged him to live with them, but Knute refused.

"No," he said, "you must learn to stand on your own feet. I will not give you the farm. You pay me four hundred dollars a year rent, and I live on that and watch you from my hill."

On a rise beside the lone cottonwood which he loved best of all his trees Knute built a tarpaper shack, and here he "bached it"; cooked his meals, made his bed, sometimes sat in the sun, read many books from the Joralemon library, and began to feel that he was free of the yoke of citizenship which he had borne all his life.

For hours at a time he sat on a backless kitchen chair before the shack, a wide-shouldered man, white-bearded, motionless; a seer despite his grotesquely baggy trousers, his collarless shirt. He looked across the miles of stubble to the steeple of the Jackrabbit Forks church and meditated upon the uses of life. At first he could not break the rigidity of habit. He rose at five, found work in cleaning his cabin and cultivating his garden, had dinner exactly at twelve, and went to bed by afterglow. But

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little by little he discovered that he could be irregular without being arrested. He stayed abed till seven or even eight. He got a large, deliberate, tortoise-shell cat, and played games with it; let it lap milk upon the table, called it the Princess, and confided to it that he had a "sneaking idee" that men were fools to work so hard. Around this coatless old man, his stained waistcoat flapping about a huge torso, in a shanty of rumpled bed and pine table covered with sheets of food-daubed newspaper, hovered all the passionate aspiration of youth and the dreams of ancient beauty.

He began to take long walks by night. In his necessitous life night had ever been a period of heavy slumber in close rooms. Now he discovered the mystery of the dark; saw the prairies wide-flung and misty beneath the moon, heard the voices of grass and cottonwoods and drowsy birds. He tramped for miles. His boots were dew-soaked, but he did not heed. He stopped upon hillocks, shyly threw wide his arms, and stood worshipping the naked, slumbering land.

These excursions he tried to keep secret, but they were bruited abroad. Neighbors, good, decent fellows with no sense about walking in the dew at night, when they were returning late from town, drunk, lashing their horses and flinging whisky bottles from racing democrat wagons, saw him, and they spread the tidings that Old Cottonwood was "getting nutty since he give up his farm to that son-in-law of his and retired. Seen the old codger wandering around at midnight. Wish I had his chance to sleep. Wouldn't catch me out in the night air."

Any rural community from Todd Center to Seringapatam is resentful of any person who varies from its standard, and is morbidly fascinated by any hint of madness. The countryside began to spy on Knute Axelbrod, to ask him questions, and to stare from the road at his shack. He was sensitively aware of it, and inclined to be surly to inquisitive acquaintances. Doubtless that was the beginning of his great pilgrimage.

As a part of the general wild license of his new life—really, he once roared at that startled cat, the Princess: "By golliess! I ain't going to brush my teeth tonight. All my life I've brushed 'em, and always vanted to skip a time vunce"—

Knute took considerable pleasure in degenerating in his taste in scholarship. He willfully declined to finish *The Conquest of Mexico*, and began to read light novels borrowed from the Joralemon library. So he rediscovered the lands of dancing and light wines, which all his life he had desired. Some economics and history he did read, but every evening he would stretch out in his buffalo-horn chair, his feet on the cot and the Princess in his lap, and invade Zenda or fall in love with Trilby.

Among the novels he chanced upon a highly optimistic story of Yale in which a worthy young man "earned his way through" college, stroked the crew, won Phi Beta Kappa, and had the most entertaining, yet moral, conversations on or adjacent to "the dear old fence."

As a result of this chronicle, at about three o'clock one morning, when Knute Axelbrod was sixty-four years of age, he decided that he would go to college. All his life he had wanted to. Why not do it?

When he awoke he was not so sure about it as when he had gone to sleep. He saw himself as ridiculous, a ponderous, oldish man among clean-limbed youths, like a dusty cottonwood among silver birches. But for months he wrestled and played with that idea of a great pilgrimage to the Mount of Muses; for he really supposed college to be that sort of place. He believed that all college students, except for the wealthy idlers, burned to acquire learning. He pictured Harvard and Yale and Princeton as ancient groves set with marble temples, before which large groups of Grecian youths talked gently about astronomy and good government. In his picture they never cut classes or ate.

With a longing for music and books and graciousness such as the most ambitious boy could never comprehend, this thick-faced farmer dedicated himself to beauty, and defied the unconquerable power of approaching old age. He sent for college catalogues and schoolbooks, and diligently began to prepare himself for college.

He found Latin irregular verbs and the whimsicalities of algebra fiendish. They had nothing to do with actual life as he had lived it. But he mastered them; he studied twelve hours a day, as once he had plodded through eighteen hours a day in the hayfield. With history and English literature he had compara-

tively little trouble; already he knew much of them from his recreative reading. From German neighbors he had picked up enough Plattdeutsch to make German easy. The trick of study began to come back to him from his small school teaching of forty-five years before. He began to believe that he could really put it through. He kept assuring himself that in college, with rare and sympathetic instructors to help him, there would not be this baffling search, this nervous strain.

But the unreality of the things he studied did disillusion him, and he tired of his new game. He kept it up chiefly because all his life he had kept up onerous labor without any taste for it. Toward the autumn of the second year of his eccentric life he no longer believed that he would ever go to college.

Then a busy little grocer stopped him on the street in Joralemon and quizzed him about his studies, to the delight of the informal club which always loafs at the corner of the hotel.

Knute was silent, but dangerously angry. He remembered just in time how he had once laid wrathful hands upon a hired man, and somehow the man's collarbone had been broken. He turned away and walked home, seven miles, still boiling. He picked up the Princess, and, with her mewling on his shoulder, tramped out again to enjoy the sunset.

He stopped at a reedy slough. He gazed at a hopping plover without seeing it. Suddenly he cried:

"I am going to college. It opens next week. I think that I can pass the examinations."

Two days later he had moved the Princess and his sticks of furniture to his son-in-law's house, had bought a new slouch hat, a celluloid collar and a solemn suit of black, had wrestled with God in prayer through all of a star-clad night, and had taken the train for Minneapolis, on the way to New Haven.

While he stared out of the car window Knute was warning himself that the millionaires' sons would make fun of him. Perhaps they would haze him. He bade himself avoid all these sons of Belial and cleave to his own people, those who "earned their way through."

At Chicago he was afraid with a great fear of the lightning flashes that the swift crowds made on his retina, the batteries of ranked motorcars that charged at him. He prayed, and ran for

his train to New York. He came at last to New Haven.

Not with gibing rudeness, but with politely quizzical eyebrows, Yale received him, led him through entrance examinations, which, after sweaty plowing with the pen, he barely passed, and found for him a roommate. The roommate was a large-browed soft white grub named Ray Gribble, who had been teaching school in New England and seemed chiefly to desire college training so that he might make more money as a teacher. Ray Gribble was a hustler; he instantly got work tutoring the awkward son of a steel man, and for board he waited on table.

He was Knute's chief acquaintance. Knute tried to fool himself into thinking he liked the grub, but Ray couldn't keep his damp hands off the old man's soul. He had the skill of a professional exhorter of young men in finding out Knute's motives, and when he discovered that Knute had a hidden desire to sip at gay, polite literature, Ray said in a shocked way:

"Strikes me a man like you, that's getting old, ought to be thinking more about saving your soul than about all these frills. You leave this poetry and stuff to these foreigners and artists, and you stick to Latin and math and the Bible. I tell you, I've taught school, and I've learned by experience."

With Ray Gribble, Knute lived grubbily, an existence of torn comforters and smelly lamp, of lexicons and logarithm tables. No leisurely loafing by fireplaces was theirs. They roomed in West Divinity, where gather the theologues, the lesser sort of law students, a whimsical genius or two, and a horde of unplaced freshmen and "scrub seniors."

Knute was shockingly disappointed, but he stuck to his room because outside of it he was afraid. He was a grotesque figure, and he knew it, a white-pollled giant squeezed into a small seat in a classroom, listening to instructors younger than his own sons. Once he tried to sit on the fence. No one but "ringers" sat on the fence any more, and at the sight of him trying to look athletic and young, two upper-class men snickered, and he sneaked away.

He came to hate Ray Gribble and his voluble companions of the submerged tenth of the class, the hewers of tutorial wood. It is doubtless safer to mock the flag than to question that

best-established tradition of our democracy—that those who “earn their way through” college are necessarily stronger, braver, and more assured of success than the weaklings who talk by the fire. Every college story presents such a moral. But tremblingly the historian submits that Knute discovered that waiting on table did not make lads more heroic than did football or happy loafing. Fine fellows, cheerful and fearless, were many of the boys who “earned their way,” and able to talk to richer classmates without fawning; but just as many of them assumed an abject respectability as the most convenient pose. They were pickers up of unconsidered trifles; they toadied to the classmates whom they tutored; they wriggled before the faculty committee on scholarships; they looked pious at Dwight Hall prayer meetings to make an impression on the serious minded; and they drank one glass of beer at Jake’s to show the light minded that they meant nothing offensive by their piety. In revenge for cringing to the insolent athletes whom they tutored, they would, when safe among their own kind, yammer about the “lack of democracy of college today.” Not that they were so indiscreet as to do anything about it. They lacked the stuff of really rebellious souls. Knute listened to them and marveled. They sounded like young hired men talking behind his barn at harvest time.

This submerged tenth hated the dilettantes of the class even more than they hated the bloods. Against one Gilbert Washburn, a rich esthete with more manner than any freshman ought to have, they raged righteously. They spoke of seriousness and industry till Knute, who might once have desired to know lads like Washburn, felt ashamed of himself as a wicked, wasteful old man.

Humbly though he sought, he found no inspiration and no comradeship. He was the freak of the class, and aside from the submerged tenth, his classmates were afraid of being “queered” by being seen with him.

As he was still powerful, one who could take up a barrel of pork on his knees, he tried to find friendship among the athletes. He sat at Yale Field, watching the football tryouts, and tried to get acquainted with the candidates. They stared at him and answered his questions grudgingly—beefy youths who in their

simple-hearted way showed that they considered him plain crazy.

The place itself began to lose the haze of magic through which he had first seen it. Earth is earth, whether one sees it in Camelot or Joralemon or on the Yale campus—or possibly even in the Harvard yard! The buildings ceased to be temples to Knute; they became structures of brick or stone, filled with young men who lounged at windows and watched him amusedly as he tried to slip by.

The Gargantuan hall of Commons became a tri-daily horror because at the table where he dined were two youths who, having uncommonly penetrating minds, discerned that Knute had a beard, and courageously told the world about it. One of them, named Atchison, was a superior person, very industrious and scholarly, glib in mathematics and manners. He despised Knute’s lack of definite purpose in coming to college. The other was a playboy, a wit and a stealer of street signs, who had a wonderful sense for a subtle jest; and his references to Knute’s beard shook the table with jocund mirth three times a day. So these youths of gentle birth drove the shambling, wistful old man away from Commons, and thereafter he ate at the lunch counter at the Black Cat.

Lacking the stimulus of friendship, it was the harder for Knute to keep up the strain of studying the long assignments. What had been a week’s pleasant reading in his shack was now thrown at him as a day’s task. But he would not have minded the toil if he could have found one as young as himself. They were all so dreadfully old, the money earners, the serious laborers at athletics, the instructors who worried over their lifework of putting marks in class-record books.

Then, on a sore, bruised day, Knute did meet one who was young.

Knute had heard that the professor who was the idol of the college had berated the too-earnest lads in his Browning class, and insisted that they read *Alice in Wonderland*. Knute floundered dustily about in a second-hand bookshop till he found an *Alice*, and he brought it home to read over his lunch of a hot-dog sandwich. Something in the grave absurdity of the book appealed to him, and he was chuckling over it when Ray Gribble came into the room and glanced at the reader.

"Huh!" said Mr. Gribble.

"That's a fine, funny book," said Knute.

"Huh! *Alice in Wonderland!* I've heard of it. Silly nonsense. Why don't you read something really fine, like Shakespeare or *Paradise Lost*?"

"Vell—" said Knute, all he could find to say.

With Ray Gribble's glassy eye on him, he could no longer roll and roar with the book. He wondered if indeed he ought not to be reading Milton's pompous anthropological misconceptions. He went unhappily out to an early history class, ably conducted by Blevins, Ph.D.

Knute admired Blevins, Ph.D. He was so tubbed and eye-glassed and terribly right. But most of Blevins' lambs did not like Blevins. They said he was a "crank." They read newspapers in his class and covertly kicked one another.

In the snug, plastered classroom, his arm leaning heavily on the broad table-arm of his chair, Knute tried not to miss one of Blevins' sardonic proofs that the correct date of the second marriage of Themistocles was two years and seven days later than the date assigned by that illiterate ass, Frutari of Padua. Knute admired young Blevins' performance, and he felt virtuous in application to these hard, unnon-sensical facts.

He became aware that certain lewd fellows of the lesser sort were playing poker just behind him. His prairie-trained ear caught whispers of "Two to dole," and "Raise you two beans." Knute revolved, and frowned upon these mockers of sound learning. As he turned back he was aware that the offenders were chuckling, and continuing their game. He saw that Blevins, Ph.D., perceived that something was wrong; he frowned, but he said nothing. Knute sat in meditation. He saw Blevins as merely a boy. He was sorry for him. He would do the boy a good turn.

When class was over he hung about Blevins' desk till the other students had clattered out. He rumbled:

"Say, Professor, you're a fine fellow. I do something for you. If any of the boys make themselves a nuisance, you yust call on me, and I spank the son of a guns."

Blevins, Ph.D., spoke in a manner of culture and nastiness:

"Thanks so much, Axelbrod, but I don't fancy that will ever be necessary. I am sup-

posed to be a reasonably good disciplinarian. Good day. Oh, one moment. There's something I've been wishing to speak to you about. I do wish you wouldn't try quite so hard to show off whenever I call on you during quizzes. You answer at such needless length, and you smile as though there were something highly amusing about me. I'm quite willing to have you regard me as a humorous figure, privately, but there are certain classroom conventions, you know, certain little conventions."

"Why, Professor!" wailed Knute, "I never make fun of you! I didn't know I smile. If I do, I guess it's yust because I am so glad when my stupid old head gets the lesson good."

"Well, well, that's very gratifying, I'm sure. And if you will be a little more careful—"

Blevins, Ph.D., smiled a toothy, frozen smile, and trotted off to the Graduates' Club, to be witty about old Knute and his way of saying "yust," while in the deserted classroom Knute sat chill, an old man and doomed. Through the windows came the light of Indian summer; clean, boyish cries rose from the campus. But the lover of autumn smoothed his baggy sleeve, stared at the blackboard, and there saw only the gray of October stubble about his distant shack. As he pictured the college watching him, secretly making fun of him and his smile, he was now faint and ashamed, now bull-anxious. He was lonely for his cat, his fine chair of buffalo horns, the sunny doorstep of his shack, and the understanding land. He had been in college for about one month.

Before he left the classroom he stepped behind the instructor's desk and looked at an imaginary class.

"I might have stood there as a prof if I could have come earlier," he said softly to himself.

Calmed by the liquid autumn gold that flowed through the streets, he walked out Whitney Avenue toward the butte-like hill of East Rock. He observed the caress of the light upon the scarped rock, heard the delicate music of leaves, breathed in air pregnant with tales of old New England. He exulted: "Could write poetry now if I yust—if I yust could write poetry!"

He climbed to the top of East Rock, whence he could see the Yale buildings like the towers of Oxford, and see Long Island Sound, and

the white glare of Long Island beyond the water. He marveled that Axelbrod of the cottonwood country was looking across an arm of the Atlantic to New York state. He noticed a freshman on a bench at the edge of the rock, and he became irritated. The freshman was Gilbert Washburn, the snob, the dilettante, of whom Ray Gribble had once said: "That guy is the disgrace of the class. He doesn't go out for anything, high stand or Dwight Hall or anything else. Thinks he's so doggone much better than the rest of the fellows that he doesn't associate with anybody. Thinks he's literary, they say, and yet he doesn't even heel the 'Lit,' like the regular literary fellows! Got no time for a loafing, mooning snob like that."

As Knute stared at the unaware Gil, whose profile was fine in outline against the sky, he was terrifically public-spirited and disapproving and that sort of moral thing. Though Gil was much too well dressed, he seemed moodily discontented.

"What he needs is to vork in a threshing crew and sleep in the hay," grumbled Knute almost in the virtuous manner of Gribble. "Then he vould know when he vas vell off, and not look like he had the earache. Pff!" Gil Washburn rose, trailed toward Knute, glanced at him, sat down on Knute's bench.

"Great view!" he said. His smile was eager. That smile symbolized to Knute all the art of life he had come to college to find. He tumbled out of his moral attitude with ludicrous haste, and every wrinkle of his weathered face creased deep as he answered:

"Yes: I t'ink the Acropolis must be like this here."

"Say, look here, Axelbrod; I've been thinking about you."

"Yas?"

"We ought to know each other. We two are the class scandal. We came here to dream, and these busy little goats like Atchison and Giblets, or whatever your roommate's name is, think we're fools not to go out for marks. You may not agree with me, but I've decided that you and I are precisely alike."

"What makes you t'ink I come here to dream?" bristled Knute.

"Oh, I used to sit near you at Commons and hear you try to quell old Atchison whenever he got busy discussing the reasons for coming

to college. That old, moth-eaten topic! I wonder if Cain and Abel didn't discuss it at the Eden Agricultural College. You know, Abel the mark-grabber, very pious and high stand, and Cain wanting to read poetry."

"Yes," said Knute, "and I guess Prof. Adam say, 'Cain, don't you read this poetry; it won't help you in algebr'y.'"

"Of course. Say, wonder if you'd like to look at this volume of Musset I was sentimental enough to lug up here today. Picked it up when I was abroad last year."

From his pocket Gil drew such a book as Knute had never seen before, a slender volume, in a strange language, bound in hand-tooled crushed levant, an effeminate bibelot over which the prairie farmer gasped with luxurious pleasure. The book almost vanished in his big hands. With a timid forefinger he stroked the levant, ran through the leaves.

"I can't read it, but that's the kind of book I always t'ought there must be some like it," he sighed.

"Listen!" cried Gil. "Ysaÿe is playing up at Hartford tonight. Let's go hear him. We'll trolley up. Tried to get some of the fellows to come, but they thought I was a nut."

What an Ysaÿe was, Knute Axelbrod had no notion; but "Sure!" he boomed.

When they got to Hartford they found that between them they had just enough money to get dinner, hear Ysaÿe from gallery seats, and return only as far as Meriden. At Meriden, Gil suggested:

"Let's walk back to New Haven, then. Can you make it?"

Knute had no knowledge as to whether it was four miles or forty back to the campus, but "Sure!" he said. For the last few months he had been noticing that, despite his bulk, he had to be careful, but tonight he could have flown.

In the music of Ysaÿe, the first real musician he had ever heard, Knute had found all the incredible things of which he had slowly been reading in William Morris and "Idylls of the King." Tall knights he had beheld, and slim princesses in white samite, the misty gates of forlorn towns, and the glory of the chivalry that never was.

They did walk, roaring down the road beneath the October moon, stopping to steal ap-

ples and to exclaim over silvered hills, taking a puerile and very natural joy in chasing a profane dog. It was Gil who talked, and Knute who listened, for the most part; but Knute was lured into tales of the pioneer days, of blizzards, of harvesting, and of the first flame of the green wheat. Regarding the Atchisons and Gribbles of the class both of them were youthfully bitter and supercilious. But they were not bitter long, for they were atavisms tonight. They were wandering minstrels, Gilbert the troubadour with his man-at-arms.

They reached the campus at about five in the morning. Fumbling for words that would express his feeling, Knute stammered:

"Vell, it vas fine. I go to bed now and I dream about—"

"Bed? Rats! Never believe in winding up a party when it's going strong. Too few good parties. Besides, it's only the shank of the evening. Besides, we're hungry. Besides—oh, besides! Wait here a second. I'm going up to my room to get some money, and we'll have some eats. Wait! Please do!"

Knute would have waited all night. He had lived almost seventy years and traveled fifteen hundred miles and endured Ray Gribble to find Gil Washburn.

Policemen wondered to see the celluloid-collared old man and the expensive-looking boy rolling arm in arm down Chapel Street in search of a restaurant suitable to poets. They were all closed.

"The Ghetto will be awake by now," said Gil. "We'll go buy some eats and take 'em up to my room. I've got some tea there."

Knute shouldered through dark streets beside him as naturally as though he had always been a nighthawk, with an aversion to anything as rustic as beds. Down on Oak Street, a place of low shops, smoky lights and alley mouths, they found the slum already astir. Gil contrived to purchase boxed biscuits, cream cheese, chicken loaf, a bottle of cream. While Gil was chaffering, Knute stared out into the street milkily lighted by wavering gas and the first feebleness of coming day; he gazed upon Kosher signs and advertisements in Russian letters, shawled women and bearded rabbis; and as he looked he gathered contentment which he could never lose. He had traveled abroad tonight.

The room of Gil Washburn was all the useless, pleasant things Knute wanted it to be. There was more of Gil's Paris days in it than of his freshmanhood: Persian rugs, a silver tea service, etchings, and books. Knute Axelrod of the tar-paper shack and piggy farmvards gazed in satisfaction. Vast bearded, sunk in an easy chair, he clucked amiably while Gil lighted a fire.

Over supper they spoke of great men and heroic ideals. It was good talk, and not unsipped with lively references to Gribble and Atchison and Blevins, all asleep now in their correct beds. Gil read snatches of Stevenson and Anatole France; then at last he read his own poetry.

It does not matter whether that poetry was good or bad. To Knute it was a miracle to find one who actually wrote it.

The talk grew slow, and they began to yawn. Knute was sensitive to the lowered key of their Indian-summer madness, and he hastily rose. As he said good-by he felt as though he had but to sleep a little while and return to this unending night of romance.

But he came out of the dormitory upon day. It was six-thirty of the morning, with a still, hard light upon red-brick walls.

"I can go to his room plenty times now; I find my friend," Knute said. He held tight the volume of Musset, which Gil had begged him to take.

As he started to walk the few steps to West Divinity, Knute felt very tired. By daylight the adventure seemed more and more incredible.

As he entered the dormitory he sighed heavily:

"Age and youth, I guess they can't team together long." As he mounted the stairs he said: "If I saw the boy again, he would get tired of me. I tell him all I got to say." And as he opened his door, he added: "This is what I come to college for—this one night. I go away before I spoil it."

He wrote a note to Gil, and began to pack his telescope. He did not even wake Ray Gribble, sonorously sleeping in the stale air.

At five that afternoon, on the day coach of a westbound train, an old man sat smiling. A last-ing content was in his eyes, and in his hands a small book in French.

SHERWOOD ANDERSON

Sherwood Anderson (1876-1941) was born in Camden, Ohio, the third child in a large, poverty-stricken, nomadic family. After a brief and sporadic formal education he worked variously as a manual laborer in Chicago and Ohio and served in Cuba during the Spanish-American War. Afterward he managed a paint factory in Elyria, Ohio, did advertising writing in Chicago, where he met the "Chicago group"—Ben Hecht, Sandburg, Dreiser, and others—and turned to creative writing as a lifework. Anderson's native Ohio is the setting for many of his best short stories. But his concern is primarily with character rather than setting. In a peculiarly colloquial style charged with subtle prose rhythms, Anderson deals subjectively with the conflict of inner emotional forces in the lives of his small-town characters. Among his many books are Winesburg, Ohio, 1919; The Triumph of the Egg, 1921; Horses and Men, 1923; A Story Teller's Story, 1924; Tar, a Midwestern Childhood, 1926; Hello, Towns, 1929; Kit Brandon, 1936; Home Town, 1940. "Sophistication" is a sensitive interpretation of a delicate moment in adolescent experience.

SOPHISTICATION¹

It was early evening of a day in the late fall and the Winesburg County Fair had brought crowds of country people into town. The day had been clear and the night came on warm and pleasant. On the Trunion Pike, where the road after it left town stretched away between berry fields now covered with dry brown leaves, the dust from passing wagons arose in clouds. Children, curled into little balls, slept on the straw scattered on wagon beds. Their hair was full of dust and their fingers black and sticky. The dust rolled away over the fields and the departing sun set it ablaze with colors.

In the main street of Winesburg crowds filled the stores and the sidewalks. Night came on, horses whinnied, the clerks in the stores ran madly about, children became lost and cried lustily, an American town worked terribly at the task of amusing itself.

Pushing his way through the crowds in Main Street, young George Willard concealed himself in the stairway leading to Doctor Reefy's office and looked at the people. With feverish eyes he watched the faces drifting past under the store lights. Thoughts kept coming into his head and he did not want to think. He stamped impatiently on the wooden steps and looked sharply about. "Well, is she going to stay with him all day? Have I done all this waiting for nothing?" he muttered.

George Willard, the Ohio village boy, was fast growing into manhood and new thoughts had been coming into his mind. All that day, amid the jam of people at the Fair, he had gone about feeling lonely. He was about to leave Winesburg to go away to some city where he hoped to get work on a city newspaper and he felt grown up. The mood that had taken possession of him was a thing known to men and unknown to boys. He felt old and a little tired. Memories awoke in him. To his mind his new sense of maturity set him apart, made of him a half-tragic figure. He wanted someone to understand the feeling that had taken possession of him after his mother's death.

There is a time in the life of every boy when he for the first time takes the backward view of life. Perhaps that is the moment when he crosses the line into manhood. The boy is walking through the street of his town. He is thinking of the future and of the figure he will cut in the world. Ambitions and regrets awake within him. Suddenly something happens; he stops under a tree and waits as for a voice calling his name. Ghosts of old things creep into his consciousness; the voices outside of himself whisper a message concerning the limitations of life. From being quite sure of himself and his future he becomes not at all sure. If he be an imaginative boy a door is torn open and for the first time he looks out upon the world, seeing, as though they marched in procession before him, the countless figures of men who before his time have come out of nothingness into the world, lived their lives and again disappeared into nothingness. The sadness of sophistication has come to the boy. With a little gasp he sees himself as merely a leaf blown by the wind through the streets of his village. He knows that in spite of all the stout talk of his fellows he must live and die in uncertainty, a

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thing blown by the winds, a thing destined like corn to wilt in the sun. He shivers and looks eagerly about. The eighteen years he has lived seem but a moment, a breathing space in the long march of humanity. Already he hears death calling. With all his heart he wants to come close to some other human, touch someone with his hands, be touched by the hand of another. If he prefers that the other be a woman, that is because he believes that a woman will be gentle, that she will understand. He wants, most of all, understanding.

When the moment of sophistication came to George Willard his mind turned to Helen White, the Winesburg banker's daughter. Always he had been conscious of the girl growing into womanhood as he grew into manhood. Once on a summer night when he was eighteen, he had walked with her on a country road and in her presence had given way to an impulse to boast, to make himself appear big and significant in her eyes. Now he wanted to see her for another purpose. He wanted to tell her of the new impulses that had come to him. He had tried to make her think of him as a man when he knew nothing of manhood and now he wanted to be with her and to try to make her feel the change he believed had taken place in his nature.

As for Helen White, she also had come to a period of change. What George felt, she in her young woman's way felt also. She was no longer a girl and hungered to reach into the grace and beauty of womanhood. She had come home from Cleveland, where she was attending college, to spend a day at the Fair. She also had begun to have memories. During the day she sat in the grandstand with a young man, one of the instructors from the college, who was a guest of her mother's. The young man was of a pedantic turn of mind and she felt at once he would not do for her purpose. At the Fair she was glad to be seen in his company as he was well dressed and a stranger. She knew that the fact of his presence would create an impression. During the day she was happy, but when night came on she began to grow restless. She wanted to drive the instructor away, to get out of his presence. While they sat together in the grandstand and while the eyes of former schoolmates were upon them, she paid so much attention to her escort that he grew interested.

"A scholar needs money. I should marry a woman with money," he mused.

Helen White was thinking of George Willard even as he wandered gloomily through the crowds thinking of her. She remembered the summer evening when they had walked together and wanted to walk with him again. She thought that the months she had spent in the city, the going to theaters and the seeing of great crowds wandering in lighted thoroughfares, had changed her profoundly. She wanted him to feel and be conscious of the change in her nature.

The summer evening together that had left its mark on the memory of both the young man and woman had, when looked at quite sensibly, been rather stupidly spent. They had walked out of town along a country road. Then they had stopped by a fence near a field of young corn and George had taken off his coat and let it hang on his arm. "Well, I've stayed here in Winesburg—yes—I've not yet gone away but I'm growing up," he had said. "I've been reading books and I've been thinking. I'm going to try to amount to something in life."

"Well," he explained, "that isn't the point. Perhaps I'd better quit talking."

The confused boy put his hand on the girl's arm. His voice trembled. The two started to walk back along the road toward town. In his desperation George boasted, "I'm going to be a big man, the biggest that ever lived here in Winesburg," he declared. "I want you to do something, I don't know what. Perhaps it is none of my business. I want you to try to be different from other women. You see the point. It's none of my business I tell you. I want you to be a beautiful woman. You see what I want."

The boy's voice failed and in silence the two came back into town and went along the street to Helen White's house. At the gate he tried to say something impressive. Speeches he had thought out came into his head, but they seemed utterly pointless. "I thought—I used to think—I had it in my mind you would marry Seth Richmond. Now I know you won't," was all he could find to say as she went through the gate and toward the door of her house.

On the warm fall evening as he stood in the stairway and looked at the crowd drifting through Main Street, George thought of the

talk beside the field of young corn and was ashamed of the figure he had made of himself. In the street the people surged up and down like cattle confined in a pen. Buggies and wagons almost filled the narrow thoroughfare. A band played and small boys raced along the sidewalk, diving between the legs of men. Young men with shining red faces walked awkwardly about with girls on their arms. In a room above one of the stores, where a dance was to be held, the fiddlers tuned their instruments. The broken sounds floated down through an open window and out across the murmur of voices and the loud blare of the horns of the band. The medley of sounds got on young Willard's nerves. Everywhere, on all sides, the sense of crowding, moving life closed in about him. He wanted to run away by himself and think. "If she wants to stay with that fellow she may. Why should I care? What difference does it make to me?" he growled and went along Main Street and through Hern's grocery into a side street.

George felt so utterly lonely and dejected that he wanted to weep but pride made him walk rapidly along, swinging his arms. He came to Westley Moyer's livery barn and stopped in the shadows to listen to a group of men who talked of a race Westley's stallion, Tony Tip, had won at the Fair during the afternoon. A crowd had gathered in front of the barn and before the crowd walked Westley, prancing up and down and boasting. He held a whip in his hand and kept tapping the ground. Little puffs of dust arose in the lamp-light. "Hell, quit your talking," Westley exclaimed. "I wasn't afraid, I knew I had 'em beat all the time. I wasn't afraid."

Ordinarily George Willard would have been intensely interested in the boasting of Moyer, the horseman. Now it made him angry. He turned and hurried away along the street. "Old windbag," he sputtered. "Why does he want to be bragging? Why don't he shut up?"

George went into a vacant lot and as he hurried along, fell over a pile of rubbish. A nail protruding from an empty barrel tore his trousers. He sat down on the ground and swore. With a pin he mended the torn place and then arose and went on. "I'll go to Helen White's house, that's what I'll do. I'll walk right in. I'll

say that I want to see her. I'll walk right in and sit down, that's what I'll do," he declared, climbing over a fence and beginning to run.

5 On the veranda of Banker White's house Helen was restless and distraught. The instructor sat between the mother and daughter. His talk wearied the girl. Although he had also been raised in an Ohio town, the instructor began to put on the airs of the city. He wanted to appear cosmopolitan. "I like the chance you have given me to study the background out of which most of our girls come," he declared. "It was good of you, Mrs. White, to have me down for the day." He turned to Helen and laughed. "Your life is still bound up with the life of this town?" he asked. "There are people here in whom you are interested?" To the girl his voice sounded pompous and heavy.

20 Helen arose and went into the house. At the door leading to a garden at the back she stopped and stood listening. Her mother began to talk. "There is no one here fit to associate with a girl of Helen's breeding," she said.

25 Helen ran down a flight of stairs at the back of the house and into the garden. In the darkness she stopped and stood trembling. It seemed to her that the world was full of meaningless people saying words. Afire with eagerness she ran through a garden gate and turning a corner by the banker's barn, went into a little side street. "George! Where are you, George?" she cried, filled with nervous excitement. She stopped running, and leaned against a tree to laugh hysterically. Along the dark little street came George Willard, still saying words. "I'm going to walk right into her house. I'll go right in and sit down," he declared as he came up to her. He stopped and stared stupidly. "Come on," he said and took hold of her hand. With hanging heads they walked away along the street under the trees. Dry leaves rustled under foot. Now that he had found her George wondered what he had better do and say.

At the upper end of the fair ground, in Winesburg, there is a half decayed old grandstand. It has never been painted and the boards are all warped out of shape. The fair ground stands on top of a low hill rising out

of the valley of Wine Creek and from the grandstand one can see at night, over a corn-field, the lights of the town reflected against the sky.

George and Helen climbed the hill to the fair ground, coming by the path past Water-works Pond. The feeling of loneliness and isolation that had come to the young man in the crowded streets of his town was both broken and intensified by the presence of Helen. What he felt was reflected in her.

In youth there are always two forces fighting in people. The warm unthinking little animal struggles against the thing that reflects and remembers, and the older, the more sophisticated thing had possession of George Willard. Sensing his mood, Helen walked beside him filled with respect. When they got to the grandstand they climbed up under the roof and sat down on one of the long bench-like seats.

There is something memorable in the experience to be had by going into a fair ground that stands at the edge of a Middle Western town on a night after the annual fair has been held. The sensation is one never to be forgotten. On all sides are ghosts, not of the dead, but of living people. Here, during the day just passed, have come the people pouring in from the town and the country around. Farmers with their wives and children and all the people from the hundreds of little frame houses have gathered within these board walls. Young girls have laughed and men with beards have talked of the affairs of their lives. The place has been filled to overflowing with life. It has itched and squirmed with life and now it is night and the life has all gone away. The silence is almost terrifying. One conceals oneself standing silently beside the trunk of a tree and what there is of a reflective tendency in his nature is intensified. One shudders at the thought of the meaninglessness of life while at the same instant, and if the people of the town are his people, one loves life so intensely that tears come into the eyes.

In the darkness under the roof of the grandstand, George Willard sat beside Helen White and felt very keenly his own insignificance in the scheme of existence. Now that he had come out of town where the presence of the people stirring about, busy with a multitude of affairs,

had been so irritating, the irritation was all gone. The presence of Helen renewed and refreshed him. It was as though her woman's hand was assisting him to make some minute readjustment of the machinery of his life. He began to think of the people in the town where he had always lived with something like reverence. He had reverence for Helen. He wanted to love and to be loved by her, but he did not want at the moment to be confused by her womanhood. In the darkness he took hold of her hand and when she crept close put a hand on her shoulder. A wind began to blow and he shivered. With all his strength he tried to hold and to understand the mood that had come upon him. In that high place in the darkness the two oddly sensitive human atoms held each other tightly and waited. In the mind of each was the same thought. "I have come to this lonely place and here is this other" was the substance of the thing felt.

In Winesburg the crowded day had run itself out into the long night of the late fall. Farm horses jogged away along lonely country roads pulling their portion of weary people. Clerks began to bring samples of goods in off the sidewalks and lock the doors of stores. In the Opera House a crowd had gathered to see a show and farther down Main Street the fiddlers, their instruments tuned, sweated and worked to keep the feet of youth flying over a dance floor.

In the darkness in the grandstand Helen White and George Willard remained silent. Now and then the spell that held them was broken and they turned and tried in the dim light to see into each other's eyes. They kissed but that impulse did not last. At the upper end of the fair ground a half dozen men worked over horses that had raced during the afternoon. The men had built a fire and were heating kettles of water. Only their legs could be seen as they passed back and forth in the light. When the wind blew the little flames of the fire danced crazily about.

George and Helen arose and walked away into the darkness. They went along a path past a field of corn that had not yet been cut. The wind whispered among the dry corn blades. For a moment during the walk back into town the spell that held them was broken. When

they had come to the crest of Waterworks Hill they stopped by a tree and George again put his hands on the girl's shoulders. She embraced him eagerly and then again they drew quickly back from that impulse. They stopped kissing and stood a little apart. Mutual respect grew big in them. They were both embarrassed and to relieve their embarrassment dropped into the animalism of youth. They laughed and began to pull and haul at each other. In some way chastened and purified by the mood they had been in they became, not man and woman, not boy and girl, but excited little animals.

It was so they went down the hill. In the darkness they played like two splendid young things in a young world. Once, running swiftly forward, Helen tripped George and he fell. He squirmed and shouted. Shaking with laughter, he rolled down the hill. Helen ran after him. For just a moment she stopped in the darkness. There is no way of knowing what woman's thoughts went through her mind but, when the bottom of the hill was reached and she came up to the boy, she took his arm and walked beside him in dignified silence. For some reason they could not have explained they had both got from their silent evening together the thing needed. Man or boy, woman or girl, they had for a moment taken hold of the thing that makes the mature life of men and women in the modern world possible.

WILBUR DANIEL STEELE

Wilbur Daniel Steele (1886-) has been four times winner of the O. Henry Memorial award. Born in Greensboro, North Carolina, he was educated in Berlin, Germany, the University of Denver, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and the Académie Julian of Paris. He has spent much of his adult life abroad. Although Steele has worked variously as naval correspondent, artist, playwright, and novelist, he is known chiefly as a short-story writer. His mastery of atmosphere, plot, and especially of characterization is evident in his best-known novels and story volumes: Storm, 1914; Land's End, 1918; The Man Who Saw Through Heaven, 1927; Tower of Sand, 1929; Best Stories, 1946. "Footfalls," notable for Steele's use of sensory detail, is a brilliant story of revenge and the love of a father for his son.

FOOTFALLS¹

This is not an easy story; not a road for tender or for casual feet. Better the meadows. Let me warn you, it is as hard as that old man's soul and as sunless as his eyes. It has its inception in catastrophe, and its end in an act of almost incredible violence; between them it tells barely how one long blind can become also deaf and dumb.

He lived in one of those old Puritan sea towns where the strain has come down austere and moribund, so that his act would not be quite unbelievable. Except that the town is no longer Puritan and Yankee. It has been betrayed; it has become an outpost of the Portuguese islands.

This man, this blind cobbler himself, was a Portuguese from St. Michael, in the Western Islands, and his name was Boaz Negro.

He was happy. An unquenchable exuberance lived in him. When he arose in the morning he made vast, as it were uncontrollable, gestures with his stout arms. He came into his shop singing. His voice, strong and deep as the chest from which it emanated, rolled out through the doorway and along the street, and the fishermen, done with their morning work and lounging and smoking along the wharfs, said, "Boaz is to work already." Then they came up to sit in the shop.

In that town a cobbler's shop is a club. One sees the interior always dimly thronged. They sit on the benches watching the artisan at his work for hours, and they talk about everything in the world. A cobbler is known by the company he keeps.

Boaz Negro kept young company. He would have nothing to do with the old. On his own head the gray hairs set thickly.

He had a grown son. But the benches in his shop were for the lusty and valiant young, men who could spend the night drinking, and then at three o'clock in the morning turn out in the rain and dark to pull at the weirs, sing songs, buffet one another among the slippery fish in the boat's bottom, and make loud jokes about the fundamental things, love and birth and death. Harkening to their boasts and strong

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prophecies his breast heaved and his heart beat faster. He was a large, full-blooded fellow, fashioned for exploits; the flame in his darkness burned higher even to hear of them.

It is scarcely conceivable how Boaz Negro could have come through this much of his life still possessed of that unquenchable and priceless exuberance; how he would sing in the dawn; how, simply listening to the recital of deeds in gale or brawl, he could easily forget himself a blind man, tied to a shop and a last; easily make himself a lusty young fellow breast-
ing the sunlit and adventurous tide of life.

He had had a wife, whom he had loved. Fate, which had scourged him with the initial scourge of blindness, had seen fit to take his Angelina away. He had had four sons. Three, one after another, had been removed, leaving only Manuel, the youngest. Recovering slowly, with agony, from each of these recurrent blows, his unquenchable exuberance had lived. And there was another thing quite as extraordinary. He had never done anything but work, and that sort of thing may kill the flame where an abrupt catastrophe fails. Work in the dark. Work, work, work! And accompanied by priva-
tion; an almost miserly scale of personal economy. Yes, indeed, he had "skinned his fingers," especially in the earlier years. When it tells most.

How he had worked! Not alone in the day-time, but also sometimes, when orders were heavy, far into the night. It was strange for one, passing along that deserted street at midnight, to hear issuing from the black shop of Boaz Negro the rhythmical tap-tap-tap of hammer on wooden peg.

Nor was that sound all: no man in town could get far past that shop in his nocturnal wandering unobserved. No more than a dozen footfalls, and from the darkness Boaz's voice rolled forth, fraternal, stentorian, "Good night, Antone!" "Good night to you, Caleb Snow!"

To Boaz Negro it was still broad day.

Now, because of this, he was what might be called a substantial man. He owned his place, his shop, opening on the sidewalk, and behind it the dwelling-house with trellised galleries upstairs and down.

And there was always something for his son, a "piece for the pocket," a dollar, five, even a ten-dollar bill if he had "got to have it."

Manuel was "a good boy." Boaz not only said this; he felt that he was assured of it in his understanding, to the infinite peace of his heart.

It was curious that he should be ignorant only of the one nearest to him. Not because he was physically blind. Be certain he knew more of other men and of other men's sons than they or their neighbors did. More, that is to say, of their hearts, their understandings, their idiosyncrasies, and their ultimate weight in the balance-pan of eternity.

His simple explanation of Manuel was that Manuel "wasn't too stout." To others he said this, and to himself. Manuel was not indeed too robust. How should he be vigorous when he never did anything to make him so? He never worked. Why should he work, when existence was provided for, and when there was always that "piece for the pocket"? Even a ten-dollar bill on a Saturday night! No, Manuel "wasn't too stout."

In the shop they let it go at that. The missteps and frailties of everyone else in the world were canvassed there with the most shameless publicity. But Boaz Negro was a blind man, and in a sense their host. Those reckless, strong young fellows respected and loved him. It was allowed to stand at that. Manuel was "a good boy." Which did not prevent them, by the way, from joining later in the general condemnation of that father's laxity—"the ruination of the boy!"

"He should have put him to work, that's what."

"He should have said to Manuel, 'Look here, if you want a dollar, go earn it first.'"

As a matter of fact, only one man ever gave Boaz the advice direct. That was Campbell Wood. And Wood never sat in that shop.

In every small town there is one young man who is spoken of as "rising." As often as not he is not a native, but "from away."

In this town Campbell Wood was that man.

He had come from another part of the state to take a place in the bank. He lived in the upper story of Boaz Negro's house, the ground floor now doing for Boaz and the meager remnant of his family. The old woman who came in to tidy up for the cobbler looked after Wood's rooms as well.

Dealing with Wood, one had first of all the

sense of his incorruptibility. A little ruthless perhaps, as if one could imagine him, in defense of his integrity, cutting off his friend, cutting off his own hand, cutting off the very stream flowing out from the wellsprings of human kindness. An exaggeration, perhaps.

He was by long odds the most eligible young man in town; good looking in a spare, ruddy, sandy-haired Scottish fashion; important, incorruptible, "rising." But he took good care of his heart. Precisely that; like a sharp-eyed duenna to his own heart. One felt that here was the man, if ever was the man, who held his destiny in his own hand. Failing, of course, some quite gratuitous and unforeseeable catastrophe.

Not that he was not human, or even incapable of laughter or passion. He was, in a way, immensely accessible. He never clapped one on the shoulder; on the other hand, he never failed to speak. Not even to Boaz.

Returning from the bank in the afternoon, he had always a word for the cobbler. Passing out again to supper at his boarding-place, he had another, about the weather, the prospects of rain. And if Boaz were at work in the dark when he returned from an evening at the Board of Trade, there was a "Good night, Mr. Negrol"

On Boaz's part, his attitude toward his lodger was curious and paradoxical. He did not pretend to anything less than reverence for the young man's position; precisely on account of that position he was conscious toward Wood of a vague distrust. This was because he was an uneducated fellow.

To the uneducated the idea of large finance is as uncomfortable as the idea of the law. It must be said for Boaz that, responsive to Wood's unfailing civility, he fought against this sensation of dim and somehow shameful distrust.

Nevertheless his whole parental soul was in arms that evening, when, returning from the bank and finding the shop empty of loungers, Wood paused a moment to propose the bit of advice already referred to.

"Haven't you ever thought of having Manuel learn the trade?"

A suspicion, a kind of premonition, lighted the fires of defense.

"Shoemaking," said Boaz, "is good enough for a blind man."

"Oh, I don't know. At least it's better than doing nothing at all."

Boaz's hammer was still. He sat silent, monumental. Outwardly. For once his unfailing response had failed him, "Manuel ain't too stout, you know." Perhaps it had become suddenly inadequate.

He hated Wood; he despised Wood; more than ever before, a hundredfold more, quite abruptly, he distrusted Wood.

How could a man say such things as Wood had said? And where Manuel himself might hear!

Where Manuel *had* heard! Boaz's other emotions—hatred and contempt and distrust—were overshadowed. Sitting in darkness, no sound had come to his ears, no footfall, no infinitesimal creaking of a floor-plank. Yet by some sixth uncanny sense of the blind he was aware that Manuel was standing in the dusk of the entry joining the shop to the house.

Boaz made a Herculean effort. The voice came out of his throat, harsh, bitter, and loud enough to have carried ten times the distance to his son's ears.

"Manuel is a good boy!"

"Yes—h'm—yes—I suppose so."

Wood shifted his weight. He seemed uncomfortable.

"Well, I'll be running along, I—ugh! Heavens!"

Something was happening. Boaz heard exclamations, breathings, the rustle of sleeve-cloth in large, frantic, and futile graspings—all without understanding. Immediately there was an impact on the floor, and with it the unmistakable clink of metal. Boaz even heard that the metal was minted, and that the coins were gold. He understood. A coin-sack, gripped not quite carefully enough for a moment under the other's overcoat, had shifted, slipped, escaped, and fallen.

And Manuel had heard!

It was a dreadful moment for Boaz, dreadful in its native sense, as full of dread. Why? It was a moment of horrid revelation, ruthless clarification. His son, his link with the departed Angelina, that "good boy"—Manuel, standing in the shadow of the entry, visible alone to the blind, had heard the clink of falling gold, and—and Boaz wished that he *had not*!

There, amazing, disconcerting, destroying, stood the sudden fact.

Sitting as impassive and monumental as ever, his strong, bleached hands at rest on his work, round drops of sweat came out on Boaz's forehead. He scarcely took the sense of what Wood was saying. Only fragments.

"Government money, understand—for the breakwater workings—huge—too many people know here, everywhere—don't trust the safe—tin safe—'Noah's Ark'—give you my word—Heavens, no!"

It boiled down to this—the money, more money than was good for that antiquated "Noah's Ark" at the bank—and whose contemplated sojourn there overnight was public to too many minds—in short, Wood was not only incorruptible, he was canny. To what one of those minds, now, would it occur that he should take away that money bodily, under casual cover of his coat, to his own lodgings behind the cobbler-shop of Boaz Negro? For this one, this important night!

He was sorry the coin-sack had slipped, because he did not like to have the responsibility of secret sharer cast upon anyone, even upon Boaz, even by accident. On the other hand, how tremendously fortunate that it had been Boaz and not another. So far as that went, Wood had no more anxiety now than before. One incorruptible knows another.

"I'd trust you, Mr. Negro" (that was one of the fragments which came and stuck in the cobbler's brain), "as far as I would myself. As long as it's only you. I'm just going up here and throw it under the bed. Oh, yes, certainly."

Boaz ate no supper. For the first time in his life food was dry in his gullet. Even under those other successive crushing blows of Fate the full and generous habit of his functionings had carried on unabated; he had always eaten what was set before him. Tonight, over his untouched plate, he watched Manuel with his sightless eyes, keeping track of his every mouthful, word, intonation, breath. What profit he expected to extract from this catlike surveillance it is impossible to say.

When they arose from the supper table Boaz made another Herculean effort. "Manuel, you're a good boy!"

The formula had a quality of appeal, of despair, and of command.

"Manuel, you should be short of money, maybe. Look, what's this? A tennet? Well, there's a piece for the pocket; go and enjoy yourself."

He would have been frightened had Manuel, upsetting tradition, declined the offering. With the morbid contrariness of the human imagination, the boy's avid grasping gave him no comfort.

He went out into the shop, where it was already dark, drew to him his last, his tools, mallets, cutters, pegs, leather. And having prepared to work, he remained idle. He found himself listening.

It has been observed that the large phenomena of sunlight and darkness were nothing to Boaz Negro. A busy night was broad day. Yet there was a difference; he knew it with the blind man's eyes, the ears.

Day was a vast confusion, or rather a wide fabric, of sounds, great and little sounds all woven together, voices, footfalls, wheels, far-off whistles and foghorns, flies buzzing in the sun. Night was another thing. Still there were voices and footfalls, but rarer, emerging from the large, pure body of silence as definite, surprising, and yet familiar entities.

Tonight there was an easterly wind, coming off the water and carrying the sound of waves. So far as other fugitive sounds were concerned it was the same as silence. The wind made little difference to the ears. It nullified, from one direction at least, the other two visual processes of the blind, the sense of touch and the sense of smell. It blew away from the shop, toward the living-house.

As has been said, Boaz found himself listening, scrutinizing with an extraordinary attention, this immense background of sound. He heard footfalls. The story of that night was written, for him, in footfalls.

He heard them moving about the house, the lower floor, prowling here, there, halting for long spaces, advancing, retreating softly on the planks. About this aimless, interminable perambulation there was something to twist the nerves, something led and at the same time driven like a succession of frail and indecisive charges.

Boaz lifted himself from his chair. All his impulse called him to make a stir, join battle, cast in the breach the reinforcement of his

presence, authority, good will. He sank back again; his hands fell down. The curious impotence of the spectator held him.

He heard footfalls, too, on the upper floor, a little fainter, borne to the inner rather than the outer ear, along the solid causeway of partitions and floor, the legs of his chair, the bony framework of his body. Very faint indeed. Sinking back easily into the background of the wind. They, too, came and went, this room, that, to the passage, the stairhead, and away. About them, too, there was the same quality of being led and at the same time of being driven.

Time went by. In his darkness it seemed to Boaz that hours must have passed. He heard voices. Together with the footfalls, that abrupt, brief, and (in view of Wood's position) astounding interchange of sentences made up his history of the night. Wood must have opened the door at the head of the stair; by the sound of his voice he would be standing there, peering below perhaps; perhaps listening.

"What's wrong down there?" he called. "Why don't you go to bed?"

After a moment, came Manuel's voice, "Ain't sleepy."

"Neither am I. Look here, do you like to play cards?"

"What kind? Euchre! I like euchre all right. Or pitch."

"Well, what would you say to coming up and having a game of euchre then, Manuel? If you can't sleep?"

"That'd be all right."

The lower footfalls ascended to join the footfalls on the upper floor. There was the sound of a door closing.

Boaz sat still. In the gloom he might have been taken for a piece of furniture, of machinery, an extraordinary lay figure, perhaps, for the trying on of the boots he made. He seemed scarcely to breathe, only the sweat starting from his brow giving him an aspect of life.

He ought to have run, and leaped up that inner stair and pounded with his fists on that door. He seemed unable to move. At rare intervals feet passed on the sidewalk outside, just at his elbow, so to say, and yet somehow, tonight, immeasurably far away. Beyond the orbit of the moon. He heard Rugg, the police-

man, noting the silence of the shop, muttering, "Boaz is to bed tonight," as he passed.

The wind increased. It poured against the shop with its deep, continuous sound of a river. Submerged in its body, Boaz caught the note of the town bell striking midnight.

Once more, after a long time, he heard footfalls. He heard them coming around the corner of the shop from the house, footfalls half swallowed by the wind, passing discreetly, without haste, retreating, merging step by step with the huge, incessant background of the wind.

Boaz's muscles tightened all over him. He had the impulse to start up, to fling open the door, shout into the night, "What are you doing? Stop there! Say! What are you doing and where are you going?"

And as before, the curious impotence of the spectator held him motionless. He had not stirred in his chair. And those footfalls, upon which hinged, as it were, that momentous decade of his life, were gone.

There was nothing to listen for now. Yet he continued to listen. Once or twice, half arousing himself, he drew toward him his unfinished work. And then relapsed into immobility.

As has been said, the wind, making little difference to the ears, made all the difference in the world with the sense of feeling and the sense of smell. From the one important direction of the house. That is how it could come about that Boaz Negro could sit, waiting and listening to nothing in the shop and remain ignorant of disaster until the alarm had gone away and come back again, pounding, shouting, clanging.

"Fire!" he heard them bawling in the street. "Fire! Fire!"

Only slowly did he understand that the fire was in his own house.

There is nothing stiller in the world than the skeleton of a house in the dawn after a fire. It is as if everything living, positive, violent, had been completely drained in the one flaming act of violence, leaving nothing but negation till the end of time. It is worse than a tomb. A monstrous stillness! Even the footfalls of the searchers cannot disturb it, for they are separate and superficial. In its presence they are almost frivolous.

Half an hour after dawn the searchers found

the body, if what was left from that consuming ordeal might be called a body. The discovery came as a shock. It seemed incredible that the occupant of that house, no cripple or invalid but an able man in the prime of youth, should not have awakened and made good his escape. It was the upper floor which had caught; the stairs had stood to the last. It was beyond calculation. Even if he had been asleep!

And he had not been asleep. This second and infinitely more appalling discovery began to be known. Slowly. By a hint, a breath of rumor here; there an allusion, half taken back. The man, whose incinerated body still lay curled in its bed of cinders, had been dressed at the moment of disaster; even to the watch, the cuff-buttons, the studs, the very scarf-pin. Fully clothed to the last detail, precisely as those who had dealings at the bank might have seen Campbell Wood any week-day morning for the past eight months. A man does not sleep with his clothes on. The skull of the man had been broken, as if with a blunt instrument of iron. On the charred lacework of the floor lay the leg of an old andiron with which Boaz Negro and his Angelina had set up housekeeping in that new house.

It needed only Mr. Asa Whitelaw, coming up the street from that gaping "Noah's Ark" at the bank, to round out the scandalous circle of circumstance.

"Where is Manuel?"

Boaz Negro still sat in his shop, impassive, monumental, his thick, hairy arms resting on the arms of his chair. The tools and materials of his work remained scattered about him, as his irresolute gathering of the night before had left them. Into his eyes no change could come. He had lost his house, the visible monument of all those years of "skinning his fingers." It would seem that he had lost his son. And he had lost something incalculably precious—that hitherto unquenchable exuberance of the man.

"Where is Manuel?"

When he spoke his voice was unaccented and stale, like the voice of a man already dead.

"Yes, where is Manuel?"

He had answered them with their own question.

"When did you last see him?"

Neither he nor they seemed to take note of that profound irony.

"At supper."

"Tell us, Boaz, you knew about this money?"

The cobbler nodded his head.

"And did Manuel?"

He might have taken sanctuary in a legal doubt. How did he know what Manuel knew? Precisely! As before, he nodded his head.

"After supper, Boaz, you were in the shop? But you heard something?"

He went on to tell them what he had heard: the footfalls, below and above, the extraordinary conversation which had broken for a moment the silence of the inner hall. The account was bare, the phrases monosyllabic. He reported only what had been registered on the sensitive tympanums of his ears, to the last whisper of footfalls stealing past the dark wall of the shop. Of all the formless tangle of thoughts, suspicions, interpretations, and the special and personal knowledge given to the blind which moved in his brain, he said nothing.

He shut his lips there. He felt himself on the defensive. Just as he distrusted the higher ramifications of finance (his house had gone down uninsured), so before the rites and processes of that inscrutable creature, the Law, he felt himself menaced by the invisible and the unknown, helpless, oppressed; in an abject sense, skeptical.

"Keep clear of the Law!" they had told him in his youth. The monster his imagination had summoned up then still stood beside him in his age.

Having exhausted his monosyllabic and superficial evidence, they could move him no further. He became deaf and dumb. He sat before them, an image cast in some immensely heavy stuff, inanimate. His lack of visible emotion impressed them. Remembering his exuberance, it was only the stranger to see him unmoving and unmoved. Only once did they catch sight of something beyond. As they were preparing to leave he opened his mouth. What he said was like a swan song to the years of his exuberant happiness. Even now there was no color of expression in his words, which sounded mechanical.

"Now I have lost everything. My house. My last son. Even my honor. You would not think I would like to live. But I go to live. I go to work. That *cachorra*, one day he shall come

back again, in the dark night, to have a look. I shall go to show you all. That *cachorra*!"

(And from that time on, it was noted, he never referred to the fugitive by any other name than *cachorra*, which is a kind of dog. "That *cachorra*!" As if he had forfeited the relationship not only of the family, but of the very genus, the very race! "That *cachorra*!")

He pronounced this resolution without passion. When they assured him that the culprit would come back again indeed, much sooner than he expected, "with a rope around his neck," he shook his head slowly.

"No, you shall not catch that *cachorra* now. But one day—"

There was something about its very colorlessness which made it sound oracular. It was at least prophetic. They searched, laid their traps, proceeded with all their placards, descriptions, rewards, clues, trails. But on Manuel Negro they never laid their hands.

Months passed and became years. Boaz Negro did not rebuild his house. He might have done so, out of his earnings, for upon himself he spent scarcely anything, reverting to his old habit of an almost miserly economy. Yet perhaps it would have been harder after all. For his earnings were less and less. In that town a cobbler who sits in an empty shop is apt to want for trade. Folk take their boots to mend where they take their bodies to rest and their minds to be edified.

No longer did the walls of Boaz's shop resound to the boastful recollections of young men. Boaz had changed. He had become not only different, but opposite. A metaphor will do best. The spirit of Boaz Negro had been a meadowed hillside giving upon the open sea, the sun, the warm, wild winds from beyond the blue horizon. And covered with flowers, always hungry and thirsty for the sun and the fabulous wind and bright showers of rain. It had become an entrenched camp, lying silent, sullen, verdureless, under a gray sky. He stood solitary against the world. His approaches were closed. He was blind, and he was also deaf and dumb.

Against that, what can young fellows do who wish for nothing but to rest themselves and talk about their friends and enemies? They had come and they had tried. They had raised their voices even higher than before. Their boasts

had grown louder, more presumptuous, more preposterous, until, before the cold separation of that unmoving and as if contemptuous presence in the cobbler's chair, they burst of their own air, like toy balloons. And they went and left Boaz alone.

There was another thing which served, if not to keep them away, at least not to entice them back. That was the aspect of the place. It was not cheerful. It invited no one. In its way that fire-bitten ruin grew to be almost as great a scandal as the act itself had been. It was plainly an eyesore. A valuable property, on the town's main thoroughfare—and an eyesore! The neighboring owners protested.

Their protestations might as well have gone against a stone wall. That man was deaf and dumb. He had become, in a way, a kind of vegetable, for the quality of a vegetable is that, while it is endowed with life, it remains fixed in one spot. For years Boaz was scarcely seen to move foot out of that shop that was left him, a small square, blistered promontory on the shores of ruin.

He must indeed have carried out some rudimentary sort of domestic program under the debris at the rear (he certainly did not sleep or eat in the shop). One or two lower rooms were left fairly intact. The outward aspect of the place was formless; it grew to be no more than a mound in time; the charred timbers, one or two still standing, lean and naked against the sky, lost their blackness and faded to a silvery gray. It would have seemed strange, had they not grown accustomed to the thought, to imagine that blind man, like a mole, or some slow slug, turning himself mysteriously in the bowels of that gray mound—that time-silvered "eyesore."

When they saw him, however, he was in the shop. They opened the door to take in their work (when other cobblers turned them off), and they saw him seated in his chair in the half darkness, his whole person, legs, torso, neck, head, as motionless as the vegetable of which we have spoken—only his hands and his bare arms endowed with visible life. The gloom had bleached the skin to the color of damp ivory, and against the background of his immobility they moved with a certain amazing monstrosity, interminably. No, they were never still. One wondered what they could be

at. Surely he could not have had enough work now to keep those insatiable hands so mon-
strously in motion. Even far into the night.
Tap-tap-tap! Blows continuous and powerful.
On what? On nothing? On the bare iron last?
And for what purpose? To what conceivable
end?

Well, one could imagine those arms, grow-
ing paler, also growing thicker and more for-
midable with that unceasing labor; the muscles
feeding themselves omnivorously on their own
waste, the cords toughening, the bone-tissues
revitalizing themselves without end. One could
imagine the whole aspiration of that mute and
motionless man pouring itself out into those
pallid arms, and the arms taking it up with a
kind of blind greed. Storing it up. Against a
day!

"That *cachorra*! One day—"

What were the thoughts of the man? What
moved within that motionless cranium covered
with long hair? Who can say? Behind every-
thing, of course, stood that bitterness against
the world—the blind world—blinder than he
would ever be. And against "that *cachorra*."
But this was no longer a thought; it was the
man.

Just as all muscular aspiration flowed into his
arms, so all the energies of his senses turned to
his ears. The man had become, you might say,
two arms and two ears. Can you imagine a
man listening, intently, through the waking
hours of nine years?

Listening to footfalls. Marking with a special
emphasis of concentration the beginning, rise,
full passage, falling away, and dying of all the
footfalls. By day, by night, winter and summer
and winter again. Unraveling the skein of foot-
falls passing up and down the street!

For three years he wondered when they
would come. For the next three years he won-
dered if they would ever come. It was during
the last three that a doubt began to trouble
him. It gnawed at his huge moral strength.
Like a hidden seepage of water, it undermined
(in anticipation) his terrible resolution. It was
a sign perhaps of age, a slipping away of the
reckless infallibility of youth.

Supposing, after all, that his ears should fail
him. Supposing they were capable of being
tricked, without his being able to know it.
Supposing that that *cachorra* should come and

go, and he, Boaz, living in some vast delusion,
some unrealized distortion of memory, should
let him pass unknown. Supposing precisely
this thing had already happened!

Or the other way around. What if he should
hear the footfalls coming, even into the very
shop itself? What if he should be as sure of
them as of his own soul? What, then, if he
should strike? And what then, if it were not that
cachorra after all? How many tens and hun-
dreds of millions of people were there in the
world? Was it possible for them all to have
footfalls distinct and different?

Then they would take him and hang him.
And that *cachorra* might then come and go at
his own will, undisturbed.

As he sat there sometimes the sweat rolled
down his nose, cold as rain.

Supposing!

Sometimes, quite suddenly, in broad day, in
the booming silence of the night, he would
start. Not outwardly. But beneath the pale
integument of his skin all his muscles tightened
and his nerves sang. His breathing stopped. It
seemed almost as if his heart stopped.

Was that it? Were those the feet, there,
emerging faintly from the distance? Yes, there
was something about them. Yes! Memory was
in travail. Yes, yes, yes! No! How could he be
sure? Ice ran down into his empty eyes. The
footfalls were already passing. They were gone,
swallowed up already by time and space. Had
that been that *cachorra*?

Nothing in his life had been so hard to meet
as this insidious drain of distrust in his own
powers; this sense of a traitor within the walls.
His iron-gray hair had turned white. It was
always this now, from the beginning of the
day to the end of the night: how was he to
know? How was he to be inevitably, unshak-
ably, sure?

Curiously, after all this purgatory of doubts,
he did know them. For a moment at least,
when he had heard them, he was unshakably
sure.

It was on an evening of the winter holidays,
the Portuguese festival of *Menin' Jesus*. Christ
was born again in a hundred mangers on a
hundred tiny altars; there was cake and wine;
songs went shouting by to the accompaniment
of mandolins and tramping feet. The wind
blew cold under a clear sky. In all the houses

there were lights; even in Boaz Negro's shop a lamp was lit just now, for a man had been in for a pair of boots which Boaz had patched. The man had gone out again. Boaz was thinking of blowing out the light. It meant nothing to him.

He leaned forward, judging the position of the lamp-chimney by the heat on his face, and puffed out his cheeks to blow. Then his cheeks collapsed suddenly, and he sat back again.

It was not odd that he had failed to hear the footfalls until they were actually within the door. A crowd of merry-makers was passing just then; their songs and tramping almost shook the shop.

Boaz sat back. Beneath his passive exterior his nerves thrummed; his muscles had grown as hard as wood. Yes! Yes! But no! He had heard nothing; no more than a single step, a single foot-pressure on the planks within the door. Dear God! He could not tell!

Going through the pain of an enormous effort, he opened his lips.

"What can I do for you?"

"Well, I—I don't know. To tell the truth—"

The voice was unfamiliar, but it might be assumed. Boaz held himself. His face remained blank, interrogating, slightly helpless.

"I am a little deaf," he said. "Come nearer."

The footfalls came halfway across the intervening floor, and there appeared to hesitate. The voice, too, had a note of uncertainty.

"I was just looking around. I have a pair of—well, you mend shoes?"

Boaz nodded his head. It was not a response to the words, for they meant nothing. What he had heard was the footfalls on the floor.

Now he was sure. As has been said, for a moment at least after he had heard them he was unshakably sure. The congestion of his muscles had passed. He was at peace.

The voice became audible once more. Before the massive preoccupation of the blind man it became still less certain of itself.

"Well, I haven't got the shoes with me. I was—just looking around."

It was amazing to Boaz, this miraculous sensation of peace.

"Wait!" Then, bending his head as if listening to the winter wind, "It's cold tonight. You've left the door open. But wait!" Leaning

down, his hand fell on a rope's end hanging by the chair. The gesture was one continuous undeviating movement of the hand. No hesitation. No groping. How many hundreds how many thousands of times, had his hand schooled itself in that gesture!

A single strong pull. With a little *bang* the front door had swung to and latched itself. Not only the front door. The other door, leading to the rear, had closed too and latched itself with a little *bang*. And leaning forward from his chair, Boaz blew out the light.

There was not a sound in the shop. Outside, feet continued to go by, ringing on the frozen road; voices were lifted; the wind hustled about the corners of the wooden shell with a continuous, shrill note of whistling. All of this outside, as on another planet. Within the blackness of the shop the complete silence persisted.

Boaz listened. Sitting on the edge of his chair, half crouching, his head, with its long, unkempt, white hair bent slightly to one side, he concentrated upon this chambered silence the full powers of his senses. He hardly breathed. The other person in that room could not be breathing at all, it seemed.

No, there was not a breath, not the stirring of a sole on wood, not the infinitesimal rustle of any fabric. It was as if in this utter stoppage of sound, even the blood had ceased to flow in the veins and arteries of that man, who was like a rat caught in a trap.

It was appalling even to Boaz; even to the cat. Listening became more than a labor. He began to have to fight against a growing impulse to shout out loud, to leap, sprawl forward without aim in that unstirred darkness—do something. Sweat rolled down from behind his ears, into his shirt-collar. He gripped the chair-arms. To keep quiet he sank his teeth into his lower lip. He would not! He would not!

And of a sudden he heard before him, in the center of the room, an outburst of breath, an outrush from lungs in the extremity of pain, thick, laborious, fearful. A coughing up of dammed air.

Pushing himself from the arms of the chair, Boaz leaped.

His fingers, passing swiftly through the air, closed on something. It was a sheaf of hair, bristly and thick. It was a man's beard.

On the road outside, up and down the street for a hundred yards, merrymaking people turned to look at one another. With an abrupt cessation of laughter, of speech. Inquiringly. Even with an unconscious dilation of the pupils of their eyes.

"What was that?"

There had been a scream. There could be no doubt of that. A single, long-drawn note. Immensely high-pitched. Not as if it were human.

"God's sake! What was that? Where'd it come from?"

Those nearest said it came from the cobbler-shop of Boaz Negro.

They went and tried the door. It was closed; even locked, as if for the night. There was no light behind the window-shade. But Boaz would not have a light. They beat on the door. No answer.

But from where, then, had that prolonged, as if animal, note come?

They ran about, penetrating into the side lanes, interrogating, prying. Coming back at last, inevitably, to the neighborhood of Boaz Negro's shop.

The body lay on the floor at Boaz's feet, where it had tumbled down slowly after a moment from the spasmodic embrace of his arms; those ivory-colored arms which had beaten so long upon the bare iron surface of a last. Blows continuous and powerful. It seemed incredible. They were so weak now. They could not have lifted the hammer now.

But that beard! That bristly, thick, square beard of a stranger!

His hands remembered it. Standing with his shoulders fallen forward and his weak arms hanging down, Boaz began to shiver. The whole thing was incredible. What was on the floor there, upheld in the vast gulf of darkness, he could not see. Neither could he hear it; smell it. Nor (if he did not move his foot) could he feel it. What he did not hear, smell, or touch did not exist. It was not there. Incredible!

But that beard! All the accumulated doubts of those years fell down upon him. After all, the thing he had been so fearful of in his weak imaginings had happened. He had killed a stranger. He, Boaz Negro, had murdered an innocent man!

And all on account of that beard. His deep panic made him lightheaded. He began to confuse cause and effect. If it were not for that beard, it would have been that *cachorra*.

On this basis he began to reason with a crazy directness. And to act. He went and pried open the door into the entry. From a shelf he took down his razor. A big, heavy-heeled strop. His hands began to hurry. And the mug, half full of soap. And water. It would have to be cold water. But after all, he thought (lightheadedly), at this time of night—

Outside, they were at the shop again. The crowd's habit is to forget a thing quickly, once it is out of sight and hearing. But there had been something about that solitary cry which continued to bother them, even in memory. Where had it been? Where had it come from? And those who had stood nearest the cobbler-shop were heard again. They were certain now, dead certain. They could swear!

In the end they broke down the door.

If Boaz heard them he gave no sign. An absorption as complete as it was monstrous wrapped him. Kneeling in the glare of the lantern they had brought, as impervious as his own shadow sprawling behind him, he continued to shave the dead man on the floor.

No one touched him. Their minds and imaginations were arrested by the gigantic proportions of the act. The unfathomable presumption of the act. As throwing murder in their faces to the tune of a jig in a barbershop. It is a fact that none of them so much as thought of touching him. No less than all of them, together with all other men, shorn of their imaginations—that is to say, the expressionless and imperturbable creature of the Law—would be sufficient to touch that ghastly man.

On the other hand, they could not leave him alone. They could not go away. They watched. They saw the damp, lather-soaked beard of that victimized stranger falling away, stroke by stroke of the flashing, heavy razor. The dead denuded by the blind!

It was seen that Boaz was about to speak. It was something important he was about to utter; something, one would say, fatal. The words would not come all at once. They swelled his cheeks out. His razor was arrested. Lifting his face, he encircled the watchers with a gaze at once of imploration and of command. As if he

could see them. As if he could read his answer in the expressions of their faces.

"Tell me one thing now. Is it that *cachorra*?"

For the first time those men in the room made sounds. They shuffled their feet. It was as if an uncontrollable impulse to ejaculation, laughter, derision, forbidden by the presence of death, had gone down into their boot-soles.

"Manuel?" one of them said. "You mean Manuel?"

Boaz laid the razor down on the floor beside its work. He got up from his knees slowly, as if his joints hurt. He sat down in his chair, rested his hands on the arms, and once more encircled the company with his sightless gaze.

"Not Manuel. Manuel was a good boy. But tell me now, is it that *cachorra*?"

Here was something out of their calculations; something for them, mentally, to chew on. Mystification is a good thing sometimes. It gives the brain a fillip, stirs memory, puts the gears of imagination in mesh. One man, an old, tobacco-chewing fellow, began to stare harder at the face on the floor. Something moved in his intellect.

"No, but look here now, by God—"

He had even stopped chewing. But he was forestalled by another.

"Say now, if it don't look like that fellow Wood, himself. The bank fellow—that was burned—remember? Himself."

"That *cachorra* was not burned. Not that Wood. You darned fool!"

Boaz spoke from his chair. They hardly knew his voice, emerging from its long silence; it was so didactic and arid.

"That *cachorra* was not burned. It was my boy that was burned. It was that *cachorra* called my boy upstairs. That *cachorra* killed my boy. That *cachorra* put his clothes on my boy, and he set my house on fire. I knew that all the time. Because when I heard those feet come out of my house and go away, I knew they were the feet of that *cachorra* from the bank. I did not know where he was going to. Something said to me—you better ask him where he is going to. But then I said, you are foolish. He had the money from the bank. I did not know. And then my house was on fire. No, it was not my boy that went away; it was that *cachorra* all the time. You darned fools! Did you think I was waiting for my own boy?

"Now I show you all," he said at the end. "And now I can get hanged."

No one ever touched Boaz Negro for that murder. For murder it was in the eye and letter of the Law. The Law in a small town is sometimes a curious creature; it is sometimes blind only in one eye.

Their minds and imaginations in that town were arrested by the romantic proportions of the act. Simply, no one took it up. I believe the man, Wood, was understood to have died of heart failure.

When they asked Boaz why he had not told what he knew as to the identity of that fugitive in the night, he seemed to find it hard to say exactly. How could a man of no education define for them his own but half-denied misgivings about the Law, his sense of oppression, constraint and awe, of being on the defensive, even, in an abject way, his skepticism? About his wanting, come what might, to "keep clear of the Law?"

He did say this, "You would have laughed at me."

And this, "If I told folk it was Wood went away, then I say he would not dare come back again."

That was the last. Very shortly he began to refuse to talk about the thing at all. The act was completed. Like the creature of fable, it had consumed itself. Out of that old man's consciousness it had departed. Amazingly. Like a dream dreamed out.

Slowly at first, in a makeshift, piece-at-a-time, poor man's way, Boaz commenced to rebuild his house. That "eyesore" vanished.

And slowly at first, like the miracle of a green shoot pressing out from the dead earth, that priceless and unquenchable exuberance of the man was seen returning. Unquenchable, after all.

KATHERINE MANSFIELD

The work of Katherine Mansfield (1890–1923) is not voluminous but it has received wide public and critical recognition. Her stories and books (Bliss, 1920; The Garden Party, 1922; The Dove's Nest, 1923, especially) are characterized by an acute feeling for words and a compelling interest in the creation of mood and

atmosphere. "A Cup of Tea," like most of her stories, contains little action but is a detailed character study: Rosemary Fell is moved like a puppet by the threads of her dominant character traits. And here, too, as elsewhere, Miss Mansfield is relentless and pitiless in unfolding and revealing the character of a person reverting to type under pressure of circumstances.

A CUP OF TEA¹

Rosemary Fell was not exactly beautiful. No, you couldn't have called her beautiful. Pretty? Well, if you took her to pieces. . . . But why be so cruel as to take any one to pieces? She was young, brilliant, extremely modern, exquisitely well dressed, amazingly well read in the newest of the new books, and her parties were the most delicious mixture of the really important people and . . . artists—quaint creatures, discoveries of hers, some of them too terrifying for words, but others quite presentable and amusing.

Rosemary had been married two years. She had a duck of a boy. No, not Peter—Michael. And her husband absolutely adored her. They were rich, really rich, not just comfortably well off, which is odious and stuffy and sounds like one's grandparents. But if Rosemary wanted to shop she would go to Paris as you and I would go to Bond Street. If she wanted to buy flowers, the car pulled up at that perfect shop in Regent Street, and Rosemary inside the shop just gazed in her dazzled, rather exotic way, and said: "I want those and those and those. Give me four bunches of those. And that jar of roses. Yes, I'll have all the roses in the jar. No, no lilac. I hate lilac. It's got no shape." The attendant bowed and put the lilac out of sight, as though this was only too true; lilac was dreadfully shapeless. "Give me those stumpy little tulips. Those red and white ones." And she was followed to the car by a thin shopgirl staggering under an immense white paper armful that looked like a baby in long clothes. . . .

One winter afternoon she had been buying something in a little antique shop in Curzon Street. It was a shop she liked. For one thing, one usually had it to oneself. And then the man

who kept it was ridiculously fond of serving her. He beamed whenever she came in. He clasped his hands; he was so gratified that he could scarcely speak. Flattery, of course. All the same, there was something . . .

"You see, madam," he would explain in his low respectful tones, "I love my things. I would rather not part with them than sell them to some one who does not appreciate them, who has not that fine feeling which is so rare. . . ." And, breathing deeply, he unrolled a tiny square of blue velvet and pressed it on the glass counter with his pale finger-tips.

Today it was a little box. He had been keeping it for her. He had shown it to nobody as yet. An exquisite little enamel box with a glaze so fine it looked as though it had been baked in cream. On the lid a minute creature stood under a flowery tree, and a more minute creature still had her arms around his neck. Her hat, really no bigger than a geranium petal, hung from a branch; it had green ribbons. And there was a pink cloud like a watchful cherub floating above their heads. Rosemary took her hands out of her long gloves. She always took off her gloves to examine such things. Yes, she liked it very much. She loved it; it was a great duck. She must have it. And, turning the creamy box, opening and shutting it, she couldn't help noticing how charming her hands were against the blue velvet. The shopman, in some dim cavern of his mind, may have dared to think so too. For he took a pencil, leant over the counter, and his pale bloodless fingers crept timidly towards those rosy, flashing ones, as he murmured gently: "If I may venture to point out to madam, the flowers on the little lady's bodice."

"Charming!" Rosemary admired the flowers. But what was the price? For a moment the shopman did not seem to hear. Then a murmur reached her. "Twenty-eight guineas, madam."

"Twenty-eight guineas." Rosemary gave no sign. She laid the little box down; she buttoned her gloves again. Twenty-eight guineas. Even if one is rich. . . . She looked vague. She stared at a plump tea-kettle like a plump hen above the shopman's head, and her voice was dreamy as she answered: "Well, keep it for me—will you? I'll . . ."

But the shopman had already bowed as though keeping it for her was all any human

¹ Reprinted from *The Dove's Nest* by Katherine Mansfield, by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. Copyright, 1923, by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

being could ask. He would be willing, of course, to keep it for her for ever.

The discreet door shut with a click. She was outside on the step, gazing at the winter afternoon. Rain was falling, and with the rain it seemed the dark came too, spinning down like ashes. There was a cold bitter taste in the air, and the new-lighted lamps looked sad. Sad were the lights in the houses opposite. Dimly they burned as if regretting something. And people hurried by, hidden under their hateful umbrellas. Rosemary felt a strange pang. She pressed her muff to her breast; she wished she had the little box, too, to cling to. Of course, the car was there. She'd only to cross the pavement. But still she waited. There are moments, horrible moments in life, when one emerges from shelter and looks out, and it's awful. One oughtn't to give way to them. One ought to go home and have an extra-special tea. But at the very instant of thinking that, a young girl, thin, dark, shadowy—where had she come from?—was standing at Rosemary's elbow and a voice like a sigh, almost like a sob, breathed: "Madam, may I speak to you a moment?"

"Speak to me?" Rosemary turned. She saw a little battered creature with enormous eyes, some one quite young, no older than herself, who clutched at her coat-collar with reddened hands, and shivered as though she had just come out of the water.

"M-madam," stammered the voice. "Would you let me have the price of a cup of tea?"

"A cup of tea?" There was something simple, sincere in that voice; it wasn't in the least the voice of a beggar. "Then have you no money at all?" asked Rosemary.

"None, madam," came the answer.

"How extraordinary!" Rosemary peered through the dusk, and the girl gazed back at her. How more than extraordinary! And suddenly it seemed to Rosemary such an adventure. It was like something out of a novel by Dostoevsky, this meeting in the dusk. Supposing she took the girl home? Supposing she did do one of those things she was always reading about or seeing on the stage, what would happen? It would be thrilling. And she heard herself saying afterwards to the amazement of her friends: "I simply took her home with me," as she stepped forward and said to that dim person beside her: "Come home to tea with me."

The girl drew back startled. She even stopped shivering for a moment. Rosemary put out a hand and touched her arm. "I mean it," she said, smiling. And she felt how simple and kind her smile was. "Why won't you? Do. Come home with me now in my car and have tea."

"You—you don't mean it, madam," said the girl, and there was pain in her voice.

"But I do," cried Rosemary. "I want you to. To please me. Come along."

The girl put her fingers to her lips and her eyes devoured Rosemary. "You're—you're not taking me to the police station?" she stammered.

"The police station!" Rosemary laughed out. "Why should I be so cruel? No, I only want to make you warm and to hear—anything you care to tell me."

Hungry people are easily led. The footman held the door of the car open, and a moment later they were skimming through the dusk.

"There!" said Rosemary. She had a feeling of triumph as she slipped her hand through the velvet strap. She could have said, "Now I've got you," as she gazed at the little captive she had netted. But of course she meant it kindly. Oh, more than kindly. She was going to prove to this girl that—wonderful things did happen in life, that—fairy godmothers were real, that—rich people had hearts, and that women *were* sisters. She turned impulsively, saying: "Don't be frightened. After all, why shouldn't you come back with me? We're both women. If I'm the more fortunate, you ought to expect . . ."

But happily at that moment, for she didn't know how the sentence was going to end, the car stopped. The bell was rung, the door opened, and with a charming, protecting, almost embracing movement, Rosemary drew the other into the hall. Warmth, softness, light, a sweet scent, all those things so familiar to her she never even thought about them, she watched that other receive. It was fascinating. She was like the little rich girl in her nursery with all the cupboards to open, all the boxes to unpack.

"Come, come upstairs," said Rosemary, longing to begin to be generous. "Come up to my room." And, besides, she wanted to spare this poor little thing from being stared at by the servants; she decided as they mounted the stairs she would not even ring for Jeanne, but

take off her things by herself. The great thing was to be natural!

And "There!" cried Rosemary again, as they reached her beautiful big bedroom with the curtains drawn, the fire leaping on her wonderful lacquer furniture, her gold cushions and the primrose and blue rugs.

The girl stood just inside the door; she seemed dazed. But Rosemary didn't mind that.

"Come and sit down," she cried, dragging her big chair up to the fire, "in this comfy chair. Come and get warm. You look so dreadfully cold."

"I daren't, madam," said the girl, and she edged backwards.

"Oh, please,"—Rosemary ran forward—"you mustn't be frightened, you mustn't, really. Sit down, and when I've taken off my things we shall go into the next room and have tea and be cozy. Why are you afraid?" And gently she half pushed the thin figure into its deep cradle.

But there was no answer. The girl stayed just as she had been put, with her hands by her sides and her mouth slightly open. To be quite sincere, she looked rather stupid. But Rosemary wouldn't acknowledge it. She leant over her, saying: "Won't you take off your hat? Your pretty hair is all wet. And one is so much more comfortable without a hat, isn't one?"

There was a whisper that sounded like, "Very good, madam," and the crushed hat was taken off.

"Let me help you off with your coat, too," said Rosemary.

The girl stood up. But she held on to the chair with one hand and let Rosemary pull. It was quite an effort. The other scarcely helped her at all. She seemed to stagger like a child, and the thought came and went through Rosemary's mind, that if people wanted helping they must respond a little, just a little, otherwise it became very difficult indeed. And what was she to do with the coat now? She left it on the floor, and the hat too. She was just going to take a cigarette off the mantelpiece when the girl said quickly, but so lightly and strangely: "I'm very sorry, madam, but I'm going to faint. I shall go off, madam, if I don't have something."

"Good heavens, how thoughtless I am!" Rosemary rushed to the bell.

"Tea! Tea at once! And some brandy immediately!"

The maid was gone again, but the girl almost cried out: "No, I don't want no brandy. I never drink brandy. It's a cup of tea I want, madam." And she burst into tears.

It was a terrible and fascinating moment. Rosemary knelt beside her chair.

"Don't cry, poor little thing," she said. "Don't cry." And she gave the other her lace handkerchief. She really was touched beyond words. She put her arm round those thin, birdlike shoulders.

Now at last the other forgot to be shy, forgot everything except that they were both women, and gasped out: "I can't go on no longer like this. I can't bear it. I shall do away with myself. I can't bear no more."

"You shan't have to. I'll look after you. Don't cry any more. Don't you see what a good thing it was that you met me? We'll have tea and you'll tell me everything. And I shall arrange something. I promise. Do stop crying. It's so exhausting. Please!"

The other did stop just in time for Rosemary to get up before the tea came. She had the table placed between them. She plied the poor little creature with everything, all the sandwiches, all the bread and butter, and every time her cup was empty she filled it with tea, cream and sugar. People always said sugar was so nourishing. As for herself she didn't eat; she smoked and looked away tactfully so that the other should not be shy.

And really the effect of that slight meal was marvelous. When the tea-table was carried away a new being, a light, frail creature with tangled hair, dark lips, deep, lighted eyes, lay back in the big chair in a kind of sweet languor, looking at the blaze. Rosemary lit a fresh cigarette; it was time to begin.

"And when did you have your last meal?" she asked softly.

But at that moment the door-handle turned. "Rosemary, may I come in?" It was Philip. "Of course."

He came in. "Oh, I'm so sorry," he said, and stopped and stared.

"It's quite all right," said Rosemary, smiling.

"This is my friend, Miss—"

"Smith, madam," said the languid figure, who was strangely still and unafraid.

"Smith," said Rosemary. "We are going to have a little talk."

"Oh, yes," said Philip. "Quite," and his eye caught sight of the coat and hat on the floor. He came over to the fire and turned his back to it. "It's a beastly afternoon," he said curiously, still looking at that listless figure, looking at its hands and boots, and then at Rosemary again.

"Yes, isn't it?" said Rosemary enthusiastically. "Vile."

Philip smiled his charming smile. "As a matter of fact," said he, "I wanted you to come into the library for a moment. Would you? Will Miss Smith excuse us?"

The big eyes were raised to him, but Rosemary answered for her. "Of course she will." And they went out of the room together.

"I say," said Philip, when they were alone. "Explain. Who is she? What does it all mean?"

Rosemary, laughing, leaned against the door and said: "I picked her up in Curzon Street. Really. She's a real pick-up. She asked me for the price of a cup of tea, and I brought her home with me."

"But what on earth are you going to do with her?" cried Philip.

"Be nice to her," said Rosemary quickly. "Be frightfully nice to her. Look after her. I don't know how. We haven't talked yet. But show her—treat her—make her feel—"

"My darling girl," said Philip, "you're quite mad, you know. It simply can't be done."

"I knew you'd say that," retorted Rosemary. "Why not? I want to. Isn't that a reason? And besides, one's always reading about these things. I decided—"

"But," said Philip slowly, and he cut the end of a cigar, "she's so astonishingly pretty."

"Pretty?" Rosemary was so surprised that she blushed. "Do you think so? I—I hadn't thought about it."

"Good Lord!" Philip struck a match. "She's absolutely lovely. Look again, my child. I was bowled over when I came into your room just now. However . . . I think you're making a ghastly mistake. Sorry, darling, if I'm crude and all that. But let me know if Miss Smith is going to dine with us in time for me to look up *The Milliner's Gazette*."

"You absurd creature!" said Rosemary, and she went out of the library, but not back to

her bedroom. She went to her writing-room and sat down at her desk. Pretty! Absolutely lovely! Bowled over! Her heart beat like a heavy bell. Pretty! Lovely! She drew her check book towards her. But no, checks would be of no use, of course. She opened a drawer and took out five pound notes, looked at them, put two back, and holding the three squeezed in her hand, she went back to her bedroom.

Half an hour later Philip was still in the library, when Rosemary came in.

"I only wanted to tell you," said she, and she leaned against the door again and looked at him with her dazzled exotic gaze, "Miss Smith won't dine with us tonight."

Philip put down the paper. "Oh, what's happened? Previous engagement?"

Rosemary came over and sat down on his knee. "She insisted on going," said she, "so I gave the poor little thing a present of money. I couldn't keep her against her will, could I?" she added softly.

Rosemary had just done her hair, darkened her eyes a little, and put on her pearls. She put up her hands and touched Philip's cheeks.

"Do you like me?" said she, and her tone, sweet, husky, troubled him.

"I like you awfully," he said, and he held her tighter. "Kiss me."

There was a pause.

Then Rosemary said dreamily, "I saw a fascinating little box today. It cost twenty-eight guineas. May I have it?"

Philip jumped her on his knee. "You may, little wasteful one," said he.

But that was not really what Rosemary wanted to say.

"Philip," she whispered, and she pressed his head against her bosom, "am I pretty?"

EDWARD MORGAN FORSTER

Edward Morgan Forster (1879—) is one of England's most accomplished writers of fiction and criticism. His work seems dispassionate and frequently detached, possibly a mirror of his own shy and diffident personality. In *Aspects of the Novel*, 1927, he has set forth his credo as an artist, and most notably in *A Room with a View*, 1908, *Howard's End*, 1910, and *The Collected Tales of E. M. Forster*, 1947, he has

revealed the clear, quiet temper of his mind. In these and in "The Celestial Omnibus" is an unworldly quality at variance with the vigorous presentation of incompatibility of East and West revealed in A Passage to India, 1924.

THE CELESTIAL OMNIBUS¹

I

The boy who resided at Agathox Lodge, 28, Buckingham Park Road, Surbiton, had often been puzzled by the old sign-post that stood almost opposite. He asked his mother about it, and she replied that it was a joke, and not a very nice one, which had been made many 15 years back by some naughty young men, and that the police ought to remove it. For there were two strange things about this sign-post: firstly, it pointed up a blank alley, and, secondly, it had painted on it, in faded characters, the words, "To Heaven."

"What kind of young men were they?" he asked.

"I think your father told me that one of them wrote verses, and was expelled from the University and came to grief in other ways. Still, it was a long time ago. You must ask your father about it. He will say the same as I do, that it was put up as a joke."

"So it doesn't mean anything at all?"

She sent him up-stairs to put on his best things, for the Bonses were coming to tea, and he was to hand the cake-stand.

It struck him, as he wrenched on his tightening trousers, that he might do worse than ask 35 Mr. Bons about the sign-post. His father, though very kind, always laughed at him—shrieked with laughter whenever he or any other child asked a question or spoke. But Mr. Bons was serious as well as kind. He had a 40 beautiful house and lent one books, he was a churchwarden, and a candidate for the County Council; he had donated to the Free Library enormously, he presided over the Literary Society, and had Members of Parliament to stop 45 with him—in short, he was probably the wisest person alive.

Yet even Mr. Bons could only say that the sign-post was a joke—the joke of a person named Shelley.

¹ Reprinted from *The Collected Tales of E. M. Forster*, by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

"Of course!" cried the mother; "I told you so, dear. That was the name."

"Had you never heard of Shelley?" asked Mr. Bons.

5 "No," said the boy, and hung his head.

"But is there no Shelley in the house?"

"Why, yes!" exclaimed the lady, in much agitation. "Dear Mr. Bons, we aren't such Philistines as that. Two at the least. One a wedding present, and the other, smaller print, in one of the spare rooms."

"I believe we have seven Shelleys," said Mr. Bons, with a slow smile. Then he brushed the cake crumbs off his stomach, and, together 15 with his daughter, rose to go.

The boy, obeying a wink from his mother, saw them all the way to the garden gate, and when they had gone he did not at once return to the house, but gazed for a little up and 20 down Buckingham Park Road.

His parents lived at the right end of it. After No. 39 the quality of the houses dropped very suddenly, and 64 had not even a separate servants' entrance. But at the present moment the whole road looked rather pretty, for the sun had just set in splendour, and the inequalities of rent were drowned in a saffron afterglow. Small birds twittered, and the breadwinners' train shrieked musically down through the cutting—that wonderful cutting which has drawn 30 to itself the whole beauty out of Surbiton, and clad itself, like any Alpine valley, with the glory of the fir and the silver birch and the primrose. It was this cutting that had first stirred desires within the boy—desires for 35 something just a little different, he knew not what, desires that would return whenever things were sunlit, as they were this evening, running up and down inside him, up and down, up and down, till he would feel quite unusual 40 all over, and as likely as not would want to cry. This evening he was even sillier, for he slipped across the road towards the sign-post and began to run up the blank alley.

45 The alley runs between high walls—the walls of the gardens of "Ivanhoe" and "Belle Vista" respectively. It smells a little all the way, and is scarcely twenty yards long, including the turn at the end. So not unnaturally the boy soon came to a standstill. "I'd like to kick 50 that Shelley," he exclaimed, and glanced idly at a piece of paper which was pasted on the

wall. Rather an odd piece of paper, and he read it carefully before he turned back. This is what he read:

S. AND C. R. C. C.

Alteration in Service.

Owing to lack of patronage the Company are regretfully compelled to suspend the hourly service, and to retain only the

Sunrise and Sunset Omnibuses,

which will run as usual. It is to be hoped that the public will patronize an arrangement which is intended for their convenience. As an extra inducement, the Company will, for the first time, now issue

Return Tickets!

(available one day only), which may be obtained of the driver. Passengers are again reminded that *no tickets are issued at the other end*, and that no complaints in this connection will receive consideration from the Company. Nor will the Company be responsible for any negligence or stupidity on the part of Passengers, nor for Hailstorms, Lightning, Loss of Tickets, nor for any Act of God.

For the Direction.

Now he had never seen this notice before, nor could he imagine where the omnibus went to. S. of course was for Surbiton, and R. C. C. meant Road Car Company. But what was the meaning of the other C.? Coombe and Malden, perhaps, or possibly "City." Yet it could not hope to compete with the South-Western. The whole thing, the boy reflected, was run on hopelessly unbusiness-like lines. Why no tickets from the other end? And what an hour to start! Then he realized that unless the notice was a hoax, an omnibus must have been starting just as he was wishing the Borses good-bye. He peered at the ground through the gathering dusk, and there he saw what might or might not be the marks of wheels. Yet nothing had come out of the alley. And he had never seen an omnibus at any time in the Buckingham Park Road. No: it must be a hoax, like the sign-posts, like the fairy tales, like the dreams upon which he would wake suddenly in the night. And with a sigh he stepped from the alley—right into the arms of his father.

Oh, how his father laughed! "Poor, poor Popsey!" he cried. "Diddums! Diddums! Diddums!"

think he'd walky-palky up to Evvinkl!" And his mother, also convulsed with laughter, appeared on the steps of Agathox Lodge. "Don't, Bob!" she gasped. "Don't be so naughty! Oh, you'll kill me! Oh, leave the boy alone!"

But all that evening the joke was kept up. The father implored to be taken too. Was it a very tiring walk? Need one wipe one's shoes on the door-mat? And the boy went to bed feeling faint and sore, and thankful for only one thing—that he had not said a word about the omnibus. It was a hoax, yet through his dreams it grew more and more real, and the streets of Surbiton, through which he saw it driving, seemed instead to become hoaxes and shadows. And very early in the morning he woke with a cry, for he had had a glimpse of its destination.

He struck a match, and its light fell not only on his watch but also on his calendar, so that he knew it to be half-an-hour to sunrise. It was pitch dark, for the fog had come down from London in the night, and all Surbiton was wrapped in its embraces. Yet he sprang out and dressed himself, for he was determined to settle once for all which was real: the omnibus or the streets. "I shall be a fool one way or the other," he thought, "until I know." Soon he was shivering in the road under the gas lamp that guarded the entrance to the alley.

To enter the alley itself required some courage. Not only was it horribly dark, but he now realized that it was an impossible terminus for an omnibus. If it had not been for a policeman, whom he heard approaching through the fog, he would never have made the attempt. The next moment he had made the attempt and failed. Nothing. Nothing but a blank alley and a very silly boy gaping at its dirty floor. It was a hoax. "I'll tell papa and mamma," he decided. "I deserve it. I deserve that they should know. I am too silly to be alive." And he went back to the gate of Agathox Lodge.

There he remembered that his watch was fast. The sun was not risen; it would not rise for two minutes. "Give the bus every chance," he thought cynically, and returned into the alley.

But the omnibus was there.

2

It had two horses, whose sides were still smoking from their journey, and its two great

lamps shone through the fog against the alley's walls, changing their cobwebs and moss into tissues of fairyland. The driver was huddled up in a cape. He faced the blank wall, and how he had managed to drive in so neatly and so silently was one of the many things that the boy never discovered. Nor could he imagine how ever he would drive out.

"Please," his voice quavered through the foul brown air, "please, is that an omnibus?"

"Omnibus est," said the driver, without turning round. There was a moment's silence. The policeman passed, coughing, by the entrance of the alley. The boy crouched in the shadow, for he did not want to be found out. He was pretty sure, too, that it was a Pirate; nothing else, he reasoned, would go from such odd places and at such odd hours.

"About when do you start?" He tried to sound nonchalant.

"At sunrise."

"How far do you go?"

"The whole way."

"And can I have a return ticket which will bring me all the way back?"

"You can."

"Do you know, I half think I'll come." The driver made no answer. The sun must have risen, for he unhitched the brake. And scarcely had the boy jumped in before the omnibus was off.

How? Did it turn? There was no room. Did it go forward? There was a blank wall. Yet it was moving—moving at a stately pace through the fog, which had turned from brown to yellow. The thought of warm bed and warmer breakfast made the boy feel faint. He wished he had not come. His parents would not have approved. He would have gone back to them if the weather had not made it impossible. The solitude was terrible; he was the only passenger. And the omnibus, though well-built, was cold and somewhat musty. He drew his coat round him, and in so doing chanced to feel his pocket. It was empty. He had forgotten his purse.

"Stop!" he shouted. "Stop!" And then, being of a polite disposition, he glanced up at the painted notice-board so that he might call the driver by name. "Mr. Browne! stop; O, do please stop!"

Mr. Browne did not stop, but he opened a

little window and looked in at the boy. His face was a surprise, so kind it was and modest.

"Mr. Browne, I've left my purse behind. I've not got a penny. I can't pay for the ticket. Will you take my watch, please? I am in the most awful hole."

"Tickets on this line," said the driver, "whether single or return, can be purchased by coinage from no terrene mint. And a chronometer, though it had solaced the vigils of Charlemagne, or measured the slumbers of Laura, can acquire by no mutation the double-eake that charms the fangless Cerberus of Heaven!" So saying, he handed in the necessary ticket, and, while the boy said "Thank you," continued: "Titular pretensions, I know it well, are vanity. Yet they merit no censure when uttered on a laughing lip, and in an homonymous world are in some sort useful, since they do serve to distinguish one Jack from his fellow. Remember me, therefore, as Sir Thomas Browne."

"Are you a Sir? Oh, sorry!" He had heard of these gentlemen drivers. "It is good of you about the ticket. But if you go on at this rate, however does your bus pay?"

"It does not pay. It was not intended to pay. Many are the faults of my equipage; it is compounded too curiously of foreign woods; its cushions tickle erudition rather than promote repose; and my horses are nourished not on the evergreen pastures of the moment, but on the dried bents and clovers of Latinity. But that it pays!—that error at all events was never intended and never attained."

"Sorry again," said the boy rather hopelessly. Sir Thomas looked sad, fearing that, even for a moment, he had been the cause of sadness. He invited the boy to come up and sit beside him on the box, and together they journeyed on through the fog, which was now changing from yellow to white. There were no houses by the road; so it must be either Putney Heath or Wimbledon Common.

"Have you been a driver always?"

"I was a physician once."

"But why did you stop? Weren't you good?"

"As a healer of bodies I had scant success, and several score of my patients preceded me. But as a healer of the spirit I have succeeded beyond my hopes and my desserts. For though my draughts were not better nor subtler than those of other men, yet, by reason of the cun-

ning goblets wherein I offered them, the queasy soul was oftentimes tempted to sip and be refreshed."

"The queasy soul," he murmured; "if the sun sets with trees in front of it, and you suddenly come strange all over, is that a queasy soul?"

"Have you felt that?"

"Why yes."

After a pause he told the boy a little, a very little, about the journey's end. But they did not chatter much, for the boy, when he liked a person, would as soon sit silent in his company as speak, and this, he discovered, was also the mind of Sir Thomas Browne and of many others with whom he was to be acquainted. He heard, however, about the young man Shelley, who was now quite a famous person, with a carriage of his own, and about some of the other drivers who are in the service of the Company. Meanwhile the light grew stronger, though the fog did not disperse. It was now more like mist than fog, and at times would travel quickly across them, as if it was part of a cloud. They had been ascending, too, in a most puzzling way; for over two hours the horses had been pulling against the collar, and even if it were Richmond Hill they ought to have been at the top long ago. Perhaps it was Epsom, or even the North Downs; yet the air seemed keener than that which blows on either. And as to the name of their destination, Sir Thomas Browne was silent.

Crash!

"Thunder, by Jove!" said the boy, "and not so far off either. Listen to the echoes! It's more like mountains."

He thought, not very vividly, of his father and mother. He saw them sitting down to sausages and listening to the storm. He saw his own empty place. Then there would be questions, alarms, theories, jokes, consolations. They would expect him back at lunch. To lunch he would not come, nor to tea, but he would be in for dinner, and so his day's truancy would be over. If he had had his purse he would have bought them presents—not that he should have known what to get them.

Crash!

The peal and the lightning came together. The cloud quivered as if it were alive, and torn streamers of mist rushed past. "Are you afraid?" asked Sir Thomas Browne.

"What is there to be afraid of? Is it much farther?"

The horses of the omnibus stopped just as a ball of fire burst up and exploded with a ringing noise that was deafening but clear, like the noise of a blacksmith's forge. All the cloud was shattered.

"Oh, listen, Sir Thomas Browne! No, I mean look; we shall get a view at last. No, I mean listen; that sounds like a rainbow!"

The noise had died into the faintest murmur, beneath which another murmur grew, spreading stealthily, steadily, in a curve that widened but did not vary. And in widening curves a rainbow was spreading from the horses' feet into the dissolving mists.

"But how beautiful! What colours! Where will it stop? It is more like the rainbows you can tread on. More like dreams."

The colour and the sound grew together. The rainbow spanned an enormous gulf. Clouds rushed under it and were pierced by it, and still it grew, reaching forward, conquering the darkness, until it touched something that seemed more solid than a cloud.

The boy stood up. "What is that out there?" he called. "What does it rest on, out at that other end?"

In the morning sunshine a precipice shone forth beyond the gulf. A precipice—or was it a castle? The horses moved. They set their feet upon the rainbow.

"Oh, look!" the boy shouted. "Oh, listen! Those caves—or are they gateways? Oh, look between those cliffs at those ledges. I see people! I see trees!"

"Look also below," whispered Sir Thomas. "Neglect not the diviner Acheron."

The boy looked below, past the flames of the rainbow that licked against their wheels. The gulf also had cleared, and in its depths there flowed an everlasting river. One sunbeam entered and struck a green pool, and as they passed over he saw three maidens rise to the surface of the pool, singing, and playing with something that glistened like a ring.

"You down in the water—" he called.

They answered, "You up on the bridge—" There was a burst of music. "You up on the bridge, good luck to you. Truth in the depth, truth on the height."

"You down in the water, what are you doing?"

Sir Thomas Browne replied: "They sport in the manciari possession of their gold"; and the omnibus arrived.

3

The boy was in disgrace. He sat locked up in the nursery of Agathox Lodge, learning poetry for a punishment. His father had said, "My boy! I can pardon anything but untruthfulness," and had caned him, saying at each stroke, "There is *no omnibus, no driver, no bridge, no mountain*; you are a *truant, a gutter snipe, a liar*." His father could be very stern at times. His mother had begged him to say he was sorry. But he could not say that. It was the greatest day of his life, in spite of the caning and the poetry at the end of it.

He had returned punctually at sunset—driven not by Sir Thomas Browne, but by a maiden lady who was full of quiet fun. They had talked of omnibuses and also of barouche landaus. How far away her gentle voice seemed now! Yet it was scarcely three hours since he had left her up the alley.

His mother called through the door. "Dear, you are to come down and to bring your poetry with you."

He came down, and found that Mr. Bons was in the smoking-room with his father. It had been a dinner party.

"Here is the great traveller!" said his father grimly. "Here is the young gentleman who drives in an omnibus over rainbows, while young ladies sing to him." Pleased with his wit, he laughed.

"After all," said Mr. Bons, smiling, "there is something a little like it in Wagner. It is odd how, in quite illiterate minds, you will find glimmers of Artistic Truth. The case interests me. Let me plead for the culprit. We have all romanced in our time, haven't we?"

"Hear how kind Mr. Bons is," said his mother, while his father said, "Very well. Let him say his Poem, and that will do. He is going away to my sister on Tuesday, and *she* will cure him of this alley-sloping." (Laughter.) "Say your Poem."

The boy began. "Standing aloof in giant ignorance."

His father laughed again—roared. "One for you, my son! 'Standing aloof in giant ignorance!' I never knew these poets talked sense.

Just describes you. Here, Bons, you go in for poetry. Put him through it, will you, while I fetch up the whisky?"

"Yes, give me the Keats," said Mr. Bons. "Let 5 him say his Keats to me."

So for a few moments the wise man and the ignorant boy were left alone in the smoking-room.

"Standing aloof in giant ignorance, of thee 10 I dream and of the Cyclades, as one who sits ashore and longs perchance to visit—"

"Quite right. To visit what?"

"To visit dolphin coral in deep seas," said the boy, and burst into tears.

15 "Come, come! why do you cry?"

"Because—because all these words that only rhymed before, now that I've come back they're me."

Mr. Bons laid the Keats down. The case was 20 more interesting than he had expected. "You?" he exclaimed. "This sonnet, *you*?"

"Yes—and look further on: 'Aye, on the shores of darkness there is light, and precipices show untrodden green.' It is so, sir. All these 25 things are true."

"I never doubted it," said Mr. Bons, with closed eyes.

"You—then you believe me? You believe in the omnibus and the driver and the storm and 30 that return ticket I got for nothing and—"

"Tut, tut! No more of your yarns, my boy. I meant that I never doubted the essential truth of Poetry. Some day, when you have read more, you will understand what I mean."

35 "But Mr. Bons, it *is* so. There *is* light upon the shores of darkness. I have seen it coming. Light and a wind."

"Nonsense," said Mr. Bons.

"If I had stopped! They tempted me. They 40 told me to give up my ticket—for you cannot come back if you lose your ticket. They called from the river for it, and indeed I was tempted, for I have never been so happy as among those precipices. But I thought of my mother and father, and that I must fetch them. Yet they 45 will not come, though the road starts opposite our house. It has all happened as the people up there warned me, and Mr. Bons has disbelieved me like every one else. I have been caned. I shall never see that mountain again."

"What's that about me?" said Mr. Bons, sitting up in his chair very suddenly.

"I told them about you, and how clever you were, and how many books you had, and they said, 'Mr. Bons will certainly disbelieve you.'"

"Stuff and nonsense, my young friend. You grow impertinent. I—well—I will settle the matter. Not a word to your father. I will cure you. To-morrow evening I will myself call here to take you for a walk, and at sunset we will go up this alley opposite and hunt for your omnibus, you silly little boy."

His face grew serious, for the boy was not disconcerted, but leapt about the room singing, "Joy! joy! I told them you would believe me. We will drive together over the rainbow. I told them that you would come." After all, could there be anything in the story? Wagner? Keats? Shelley? Sir Thomas Browne? Certainly the case was interesting.

And on the morrow evening, though it was pouring with rain, Mr. Bons did not omit to call at Agathox Lodge.

The boy was ready, bubbling with excitement, and skipping about in a way that rather vexed the President of the Literary Society. They took a turn down Buckingham Park Road, and then—having seen that no one was watching them—slipped up the alley. Naturally enough (for the sun was setting) they ran straight against the omnibus.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Mr. Bons. "Good gracious heavens!"

It was not the omnibus in which the boy had driven first, nor yet that in which he had returned. There were three horses—black, gray, and white, the gray being the finest. The driver, who turned round at the mention of goodness and of heaven, was a sallow man with terrifying jaws and sunken eyes. Mr. Bons, on seeing him, gave a cry as if of recognition, and began to tremble violently.

The boy jumped in.

"Is it possible?" cried Mr. Bons. "Is the impossible possible?"

"Sir; come in, sir. It is such a fine omnibus. Oh, here is his name—Dan someone."

Mr. Bons sprang in too. A blast of wind immediately slammed the omnibus door, and the shock jerked down all the omnibus blinds, which were very weak on their springs.

"Dan . . . Show me. Good gracious heavens! we're moving."

"Hooray!" said the boy.

Mr. Bons became flustered. He had not intended to be kidnapped. He could not find the door-handle, nor push up the blinds. The omnibus was quite dark, and by the time he had struck a match, night had come on outside also. They were moving rapidly.

"A strange, a memorable adventure," he said, surveying the interior of the omnibus, which was large, roomy, and constructed with extreme regularity, every part exactly answering to every other part. Over the door (the handle of which was outside) was written, "Lasciate ogni baldanza voi che entrate"—at least, that was what was written, but Mr. Bons said that it was Lashy arty something, and that baldanza was a mistake for speranza. His voice sounded as if he was in church. Meanwhile, the boy called to the cadaverous driver for two return tickets. They were handed in without a word. Mr. Bons covered his face with his hand and again trembled. "Do you know who that is!" he whispered, when the little window had shut upon them. "It is the impossible."

"Well, I don't like him as much as Sir Thomas Browne, though I shouldn't be surprised if he had even more in him."

"More in him?" He stamped irritably. "By accident you have made the greatest discovery of the century, and all you can say is that there is more in this man. Do you remember those vellum books in my library, stamped with red lilies? This—sit still, I bring you stupendous news!—*this is the man who wrote them.*"

The boy sat quite still. "I wonder if we shall see Mrs. Camp?" he asked, after a civil pause. "Mrs.—?"

"Mrs. Camp and Mrs. Harris. I like Mrs. Harris. I came upon them quite suddenly. Mrs. Camp's bandboxes have moved over the rainbow so badly. All the bottoms have fallen out, and two of the pippins off her bedstead tumbled into the stream."

"Out there sits the man who wrote my vellum books!" thundered Mr. Bons, "and you talk to me of Dickens and of Mrs. Camp?"

"I know Mrs. Camp so well," he apologized. "I could not help being glad to see her. I recognized her voice. She was telling Mrs. Harris about Mrs. Prig."

"Did you spend the whole day in her elevating company?"

"Oh, no. I raced. I met a man who took me

out beyond to a race-course. You run, and there are dolphins out at sea."

"Indeed. Do you remember the man's name?"

"Achilles. No; he was later. Tom Jones."

Mr. Bons sighed heavily. "Well, my lad, you have made a miserable mess of it. Think of a cultured person with your opportunities! A cultured person would have known all these characters and known what to have said to each. He would not have wasted his time with a Mrs. Camp or a Tom Jones. The creations of Homer, of Shakespeare, and of him who drives us now, would alone have contented him. He would not have raced. He would have asked intelligent questions."

"But, Mr. Bons," said the boy humbly, "you will be a cultured person. I told them so."

"True, true, and I beg you not to disgrace me when we arrive. No gossiping. No running. Keep close to my side, and never speak to these Immortals unless they speak to you. Yes, and give me the return tickets. You will be losing them."

The boy surrendered the tickets, but felt a little sore. After all, he had found the way to this place. It was hard first to be disbelieved and then to be lectured. Meanwhile, the rain had stopped, and moonlight crept into the omnibus through the cracks in the blinds.

"But how is there to be a rainbow?" cried the boy.

"You distract me," snapped Mr. Bons. "I wish to meditate on beauty. I wish to goodness I was with a reverent and sympathetic person."

The lad bit his lip. He made a hundred good resolutions. He would imitate Mr. Bons all the visit. He would not laugh, or run, or sing, or do any of the vulgar things that must have disgusted his new friends last time. He would be very careful to pronounce their names properly, and to remember who knew whom. Achilles did not know Tom Jones—at least, so Mr. Bons said. The Duchess of Malfi was older than Mrs. Camp—at least, so Mr. Bons said. He would be self-conscious, reticent, and prim. He would never say he liked any one. Yet, when the blind flew up at a chance touch of his head, all these good resolutions went to the winds, for the omnibus had reached the summit of a moonlit hill, and there was the chasm, and there, across it, stood the old precipices, dreaming, with their

feet in the everlasting river. He exclaimed, "The mountain! Listen to the new tune in the water! Look at the camp fires in the ravines," and Mr. Bons, after a hasty glance, retorted, "Water? Camp fires? Ridiculous rubbish. Hold your tongue. There is nothing at all."

Yet, under his eyes, a rainbow formed, compounded not of sunlight and storm, but of moonlight and the spray of the river. The three horses put their feet upon it. He thought it the finest rainbow he had seen, but did not dare to say so, since Mr. Bons said that nothing was there. He leant out—the window had opened—and sang the tune that rose from the sleeping waters.

"The prelude to Rhinegold?" said Mr. Bons suddenly. "Who taught you these *leit motifs*?" He, too, looked out of the window. Then he behaved very oddly. He gave a choking cry, and fell back on to the omnibus floor. He writhed and kicked. His face was green.

"Does the bridge make you dizzy?" the boy asked.

"Dizzy!" gasped Mr. Bons. "I want to go back. Tell the driver."

But the driver shook his head.

"We are nearly there," said the boy. "They are asleep. Shall I call? They will be so pleased to see you, for I have prepared them."

Mr. Bons moaned. They moved over the lunar rainbow, which ever and ever broke away behind their wheels. How still the night was! Who would be sentry at the Gate?

"I am coming," he shouted, again forgetting the hundred resolutions. "I am returning—I, the boy."

"The boy is returning," cried a voice to other voices, who repeated, "The boy is returning."

"I am bringing Mr. Bons with me."

Silence.

"I should have said Mr. Bons is bringing me with him."

Profound silence.

"Who stands sentry?"

"Achilles."

And on the rocky causeway, close to the springing of the rainbow bridge, he saw a young man who carried a wonderful shield.

"Mr. Bons, it is Achilles, armed."

"I want to go back," said Mr. Bons.

The last fragment of the rainbow melted, the wheels sang upon the living rock, the door of

the omnibus burst open. Out leapt the boy—he could not resist—and sprang to meet the warrior, who, stooping suddenly, caught him on his shield.

"Achilles!" he cried, "let me get down, for I am ignorant and vulgar, and I must wait for that Mr. Bons of whom I told you yesterday."

But Achilles raised him aloft. He crouched on the wonderful shield, on heroes and burning cities, on vineyards graven in gold, on every dear passion, every joy, on the entire image of the Mountain that he had discovered, encircled, like it, with an everlasting stream. "No, no," he protested, "I am not worthy. It is Mr. Bons who must be up here."

But Mr. Bons was whimpering, and Achilles trumpeted and cried, "Stand upright upon my shield!"

"Sir, I did not mean to stand! Something made me stand. Sir, why do you delay? Here is only the great Achilles, whom you knew."

Mr. Bons screamed, "I see no one. I see nothing. I want to go back." Then he cried to the driver, "Save me! Let me stop in your chariot. I have honoured you. I have quoted you. I have bound you in vellum. Take me back to my world."

The driver replied, "I am the means and not the end. I am the food and not the life. Stand by yourself, as that boy has stood. I cannot save you. For poetry is a spirit; and they that would worship it must worship in spirit and in truth."

Mr. Bons—he could not resist—crawled out of the beautiful omnibus. His face appeared, gaping horribly. His hands followed, one gripping the step, the other beating the air. Now his shoulders emerged, his chest, his stomach. With a shriek of "I see London," he fell—fell against the hard, moonlit rock, fell into it as if it were water, fell through it, vanished, and was seen by the boy no more.

"Where have you fallen to, Mr. Bons? Here is a procession arriving to honour you with music and torches. Here come the men and women whose names you know. The mountain is awake, the river is awake, over the race-course the sea is awaking those dolphins, and it is all for you. They want you—"

There was the touch of fresh leaves on his forehead. Someone had crowned him.

TEΛΟΣ²

From the *Kingston Gazette*, *Surbiton Times*, and *Raynes Park Observer*

The body of Mr. Septimus Bons has been found in a shockingly mutilated condition in the vicinity of the Bermondsey gas-works. The deceased's pockets contained a sovereign-purse, a silver cigar-case, a bijou pronouncing dictionary, and a couple of omnibus tickets. The unfortunate gentleman had apparently been hurled from a considerable height. Foul play is suspected, and a thorough investigation is pending by the authorities.

WILLIAM FAULKNER

William Faulkner (1897–) writes from the background of his native Mississippi, where he has lived most of his life. Well known for his preoccupation with cruelty and psychological perversion, Faulkner sometimes abandons meaning and purpose for sheer horror. The main body of his fiction treats the degradation of the Old South; his style is indirect and often highly experimental. Noteworthy among his novels are *The Sound and the Fury*, 1929; *Sanctuary*, 1931; *Light in August*, 1932; *Pylon*, 1935; *Absalom, Absalom!*, 1936; *The Wild Palms*, 1939. His short stories, which reveal similar concern with nightmarish subjects and subtle construction, are collected in four main volumes: *These 13*, 1931; *Doctor Martino and Other Stories*, 1934; *The Unvanquished*, 1938; and *Go Down, Moses*, 1942. "A Rose for Emily" contains as a minor theme the decline of the "aristocracy." It is a superb example of Faulkner's subtlety in the fitting together of details to point up an atmosphere of mystery and decadence.

A ROSE FOR EMILY¹

1

When Miss Emily Grierson died, our whole town went to her funeral: the men through a

² The End. Cf. Dante's last speech above: "I am the means and not the end." E. M. F.

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sort of respectful affection for a fallen monument, the women mostly out of curiosity to see the inside of her house, which no one save an old man-servant—a combined gardener and cook—had seen in at least ten years.

It was a big, squarish frame house that had once been white, decorated with cupolas and spires and scrolled balconies in the heavily lightsome style of the Seventies, set on what had once been our most select street. But garages and cotton gins had encroached and obliterated even the august names of that neighborhood; only Miss Emily's house was left, lifting its stubborn and coquettish decay above the cotton wagons and the gasoline pumps—an eyesore among eyesores. And now Miss Emily had gone to join the representatives of those august names where they lay in the cedar-bemused cemetery among the ranked and anonymous graves of Union and Confederate soldiers who fell at the battle of Jefferson.

Alive, Miss Emily had been a tradition, a duty, and a care; a sort of hereditary obligation upon the town, dating from that day in 1894 when Colonel Sartoris, the mayor—he who fathered the edict that no Negro woman should appear on the streets without an apron—remitted her taxes, the dispensation dating from the death of her father on into perpetuity. Not that Miss Emily would have accepted charity. Colonel Sartoris invented an involved tale to the effect that Miss Emily's father had loaned money to the town, which the town, as a matter of business, preferred this way of repaying. Only a man of Colonel Sartoris' generation and thought could have invented it, and only a woman could have believed it.

When the next generation, with its more modern ideas, became mayors and aldermen, this arrangement created some little dissatisfaction. On the first of the year they mailed her a tax notice. February came, and there was no reply. They wrote her a formal letter, asking her to call at the sheriff's office at her convenience. A week later the mayor wrote her himself, offering to call or to send his car for her, and received in reply a note on paper of an archaic shape, in a thin, flowing calligraphy in faded ink, to the effect that she no longer went out at all. The tax notice was also enclosed, without comment.

They called a special meeting of the Board

of Aldermen. A deputation waited upon her, knocked at the door through which no visitor had passed since she ceased giving china-painting lessons eight or ten years earlier. They were admitted by the old Negro into a dim hall from which a stairway mounted into still more shadow. It smelled of dust and disuse—a close, dank smell. The Negro led them into the parlor. It was furnished in heavy, leather-covered furniture. When the Negro opened the blinds of one window, they could see that the leather was cracked, and when they sat down, a faint dust rose sluggishly about their thighs, spinning with slow motes in the single sun-ray. On a tarnished gilt easel before the fireplace stood a crayon portrait of Miss Emily's father.

They rose when she entered—a small, fat woman in black, with a thin gold chain descending to her waist and vanishing into her belt, leaning on an ebony cane with a tarnished gold head. Her skeleton was small and spare; perhaps that was why what would have been merely plumpness in another was obesity in her. She looked bloated, like a body long submerged in motionless water, and of that pallid hue. Her eyes, lost in the fatty ridges of her face, looked like two small pieces of coal pressed into a lump of dough as they moved from one face to another while the visitors stated their errand.

She did not ask them to sit. She just stood in the door and listened quietly until the spokesman came to a stumbling halt. Then they could hear the invisible watch ticking at the end of the gold chain.

Her voice was dry and cold. "I have no taxes in Jefferson. Colonel Sartoris explained it to me. Perhaps one of you can gain access to the city records and satisfy yourselves."

"But we have. We are the city authorities, Miss Emily. Didn't you get a notice from the sheriff, signed by him?"

"I received a paper, yes," Miss Emily said. "Perhaps he considers himself the sheriff . . . I have no taxes in Jefferson."

"But there is nothing on the books to show that, you see. We must go by the—"

"See Colonel Sartoris. I have no taxes in Jefferson."

"But, Miss Emily—"

"See Colonel Sartoris." (Colonel Sartoris had been dead almost ten years.) "I have no taxes

in Jefferson. Tobel!" The Negro appeared. "Show these gentlemen out."

2

So she vanquished them, horse and foot, just as she had vanquished their fathers thirty years before about the smell. That was two years after her father's death and a short time after her sweetheart—the one we believed would marry her—had deserted her. After her father's death she went out very little; after her sweetheart went away, people hardly saw her at all. A few of the ladies had the temerity to call, but were not received, and the only sign of life about the place was the Negro man—a young man then—going in and out with a market basket.

"Just as if a man—any man—could keep a kitchen properly," the ladies said; so they were not surprised when the smell developed. It was another link between the gross, teeming world and the high and mighty Griersons.

A neighbor, a woman, complained to the mayor, Judge Stevens, eighty years old.

"But what will you have me do about it, madam?" he said.

"Why, send her word to stop it," the woman said. "Isn't there a law?"

"I'm sure that won't be necessary," Judge Stevens said. "It's probably just a snake or a rat that nigger of hers killed in the yard. I'll speak to him about it."

The next day he received two more complaints, one from a man who came in diffident deprecation. "We really must do something about it, Judge. I'd be the last one in the world to bother Miss Emily, but we've got to do something." That night the Board of Aldermen met—three gravbeards and one younger man, a member of the rising generation.

"It's simple enough," he said. "Send her word to have her place cleaned up. Give her a certain time to do it in, and if she don't . . ."

"Dammit, sir," Judge Stevens said, "will you accuse a lady to her face of smelling bad?"

So the next night, after midnight, four men crossed Miss Emily's lawn and slunk about the house like burglars, sniffing along the base of the brickwork and at the cellar openings while one of them performed a regular sowing motion with his hand out of a sack slung from

his shoulder. They broke open the cellar door and sprinkled lime there, and in all the outbuildings. As they recrossed the lawn, a window that had been dark was lighted and Miss Emily sat in it, the light behind her, and her upright torso motionless as that of an idol. They crept quietly across the lawn and into the shadow of the locusts that lined the street. After a week or two the smell went away.

That was when people had begun to feel really sorry for her. People in our town, remembering how Old Lady Wyatt, her great-aunt, had gone completely crazy at last, believed that the Griersons held themselves a little too high for what they really were. None of the young men was quite good enough to Miss Emily and such. We had long thought of them as a tableau: Miss Emily a slender figure in white in the background, her father a spraddled silhouette in the foreground, his back to her and clutching a horse-whip, the two of them framed by the back-flung front door. So when she got to be thirty and was still single, we were not pleased exactly, but vindicated; even with insanity in the family she wouldn't have turned down all of her chances if they had really materialized.

When her father died, it got about that the house was all that was left to her; and in a way, people were glad. At last they could pity Miss Emily. Being left alone, and a pauper, she had become humanized. Now she too would know the old thrill and the old despair of a penny more or less.

The day after his death all the ladies prepared to call at the house and offer condolence and aid, as is our custom. Miss Emily met them at the door, dressed as usual and with no trace of grief on her face. She told them that her father was not dead. She did that for three days, with the ministers calling on her, and the doctors, trying to persuade her to let them dispose of the body. Just as they were about to resort to law and force, she broke down, and they buried her father quickly.

We did not say she was crazy then. We believed she had to do that. We remembered all the young men her father had driven away, and we knew that with nothing left, she would have to cling to that which had robbed her, as people will.

She was sick for a long time. When we saw her again, her hair was cut short, making her look like a girl, with a vague resemblance to those angels in colored church windows—sort of tragic and serene.

The town had just let the contracts for paving the sidewalks, and in the summer after her father's death they began the work. The construction company came with niggers and mules and machinery, and a foreman named Homer Barron, a Yankee—a big, dark, ready man, with a big voice and eyes lighter than his face. The little boys would follow in groups to hear him cuss the niggers, and the niggers singing in time to the rise and fall of picks. Pretty soon he knew everybody in town. Whenever you heard a lot of laughing anywhere about the square, Homer Barron would be in the center of the group. Presently we began to see him and Miss Emily on Sunday afternoons driving in the yellow-wheeled buggy and the matched team of bays from the livery stable.

At first we were glad that Miss Emily would have an interest, because the ladies all said, "Of course a Grierson would not think seriously of a Northerner, a day laborer." But there were still others, older people, who said that even grief could not cause a real lady to forget *noblesse oblige*—without calling it *noblesse oblige*. They just said, "Poor Emily. Her kinsfolk should come to her." She had some kin in Alabama; but years ago her father had fallen out with them over the state of Old Lady Wyatt, the crazy woman, and there was no communication between the two families. They had not even been represented at the funeral.

And as soon as the old people said, "Poor Emily," the whispering began. "Do you suppose it's really so?" they said to one another. "Of course it is. What else could . . ." This behind their hands; rustling of craned silk and satin behind jalousies closed upon the sun of Sunday afternoon as the thin, swift clop-clop-clop of the matched team passed: "Poor Emily."

She carried her head high enough—even when we believed that she was fallen. It was as if she demanded more than ever the recognition of her dignity as the last Grierson; as if

it had wanted that touch of earthiness to reaffirm her imperviousness. Like when she bought the rat poison, the arsenic. That was over a year after they had begun to say "Poor Emily," and while the two female cousins were visiting her.

"I want some poison," she said to the druggist. She was over thirty then, still a slight woman, though thinner than usual, with cold, haughty black eyes in a face the flesh of which was strained across the temples and about the eye-sockets as you imagine a lighthouse-keeper's face ought to look. "I want some poison," she said.

"Yes, Miss Emily. What kind? For rats and such? I'd recom—"

"I want the best you have. I don't care what kind."

The druggist named several. "They'll kill anything up to an elephant. But what you want is—"

"Arsenic," Miss Emily said. "Is that a good one?"

"Is . . . arsenic? Yes, ma'am. But what you want—"

"I want arsenic."

The druggist looked down at her. She looked back at him, erect, her face like a strained flag. "Why, of course," the druggist said. "If that's what you want. But the law requires you to tell what you are going to use it for."

Miss Emily just stared at him, her head tilted back in order to look him eye for eye, until he looked away and went and got the arsenic and wrapped it up. The Negro delivery boy brought her the package; the druggist didn't come back. When she opened the package at home there was written on the box, under the skull and bones: "For rats."

So the next day we all said, "She will kill herself"; and we said it would be the best thing. When she had first begun to be seen with Homer Barron, we had said, "She will marry him." Then we said, "She will persuade him yet," because Homer himself had remarked—he liked men, and it was known that he drank with the younger men in the Elks' Club—that he was not a marrying man. Later we said "Poor Emily" behind the jalousies as they

passed on Sunday afternoon in the glittering buggy, Miss Emily with her head high and Homer Barron with his hat cocked and a cigar in his teeth, reins and whip in a yellow glove.

Then some of the ladies began to say that it was a disgrace to the town and a bad example to the young people. The men did not want to interfere, but at last the ladies forced the Baptist minister—Miss Emily's people were Episcopal—to call upon her. He would never divulge what happened during that interview, but he refused to go back again. The next Sunday they again drove about the streets, and the following day the minister's wife wrote to Miss Emily's relations in Alabama.

So she had blood-kin under her roof again and we sat back to watch developments. At first nothing happened. Then we were sure that they were to be married. We learned that Miss Emily had been to the jeweler's and ordered a man's toilet set in silver, with the letters H. B. on each piece. Two days later we learned that she had bought a complete outfit of men's clothing, including a nightshirt, and we said, "They are married." We were really glad. We were glad because the two female cousins were even more Grierson than Miss Emily had ever been.

So we were not surprised when Homer Barron—the streets had been finished some time since—was gone. We were a little disappointed that there was not a public blowing-off, but we believed that he had gone on to prepare for Miss Emily's coming, or to give her a chance to get rid of the cousins. (By that time it was a cabal, and we were all Miss Emily's allies to help circumvent the cousins.) Sure enough, after another week they departed. And, as we had expected all along, within three days Homer Barron was back in town. A neighbor saw the Negro man admit him at the kitchen door at dusk one evening.

And that was the last we saw of Homer Barron. And of Miss Emily for some time. The Negro man went in and out with the market basket, but the front door remained closed. Now and then we would see her at a window for a moment, as the men did that night when they sprinkled the lime, but for almost six months she did not appear on the streets. Then we knew that this was to be expected too; as

if that quality of her father which had thwarted her woman's life so many times had been too virulent and too furious to die.

When we next saw Miss Emily, she had grown fat and her hair was turning gray. During the next few years it grew grayer and grayer until it attained an even pepper-and-salt iron-gray, when it ceased turning. Up to the day of her death at seventy-four it was still that vigorous iron-gray, like the hair of an active man.

From that time on her front door remained closed, save for a period of six or seven years, when she was about forty, during which she gave lessons in china-painting. She fitted up a studio in one of the down-stairs rooms, where the daughters and granddaughters of Colonel Sartoris' contemporaries were sent to her with the same regularity and in the same spirit that they were sent to church on Sundays with a twenty-five-cent piece for the collection plate. Meanwhile her taxes had been remitted.

Then the newer generation became the backbone and the spirit of the town, and the painting pupils grew up and fell away and did not send their children to her with boxes of color and tedious brushes and pictures cut from the ladies' magazines. The front door closed upon the last one and remained closed for good. When the town got free postal delivery, Miss Emily alone refused to let them fasten the metal numbers above her door and attach a mailbox to it. She would not listen to them.

Daily, monthly, yearly we watched the Negro grow grayer and more stooped, going in and out with the market basket. Each December we sent her a tax notice, which would be returned by the post office a week later, unclaimed. Now and then we would see her in one of the downstairs windows—she had evidently shut up the top floor of the house—like the carved torso of an idol in a niche, looking or not looking at us, we could never tell which. Thus she passed from generation to generation—dear, inescapable, impervious, tranquil, and perverse.

And so she died. Fell ill in the house filled with dust and shadows, with only a doddering Negro man to wait on her. We did not even know she was sick; we had long since given up trying to get any information from the Negro. He talked to no one, probably not even to

her, for his voice had grown harsh and rusty, as if from disuse.

She died in one of the downstairs rooms, in a heavy walnut bed with a curtain, her gray head propped on a pillow yellow and moldy with age and lack of sunlight.

5

The Negro met the first of the ladies at the front door and let them in, with their hushed, sibilant voices and their quick, curious glances, and then he disappeared. He walked right through the house and out the back and was not seen again.

The two female cousins came at once. They held the funeral on the second day, with the town coming to look at Miss Emily beneath a mass of bought flowers, with the crayon face of her father musing profoundly above the bier and the ladies sibilant and macabre; and the very old men—some in their brushed Confederate uniforms—on the porch and the lawn, talking of Miss Emily as if she had been a contemporary of theirs, believing that they had danced with her and courted her perhaps, confusing time with its mathematical progression, as the old do, to whom all the past is not a diminishing road but, instead, a huge meadow which no winter ever quite touches, divided from them now by the narrow bottle-neck of the most recent decade of years.

Already we knew that there was one room in that region above stairs which no one had seen in forty years, and which would have to be forced. They waited until Miss Emily was decently in the ground before they opened it.

The violence of breaking down the door seemed to fill this room with pervading dust. A thin, acrid pall as of the tomb seemed to lie everywhere upon this room decked and furnished as for a bridal: upon the valance curtains of faded rose color, upon the rose-shaded lights, upon the dressing table, upon the delicate array of crystal and the man's toilet things backed with tarnished silver, silver so tarnished that the monogram was obscured. Among them lay a collar and tie, as if they had just been removed, which, lifted, left upon the surface a pale crescent in the dust. Upon a chair hung the suit, carefully folded; beneath it the two mute shoes and the discarded socks.

The man himself lay in the bed.

For a long while we just stood there, looking down at the profound and fleshless grin. The body had apparently once lain in the attitude of an embrace, but now the long sleep that outlasts love, that conquers even the grimace of love, had cuckolded him. What was left of him, rotted beneath what was left of the nightshirt, had become inextricable from the bed in which he lay; and upon him and upon the pillow beside him lay that even coating of the patient and biding dust.

Then we noticed that in the second pillow was the indentation of a head. One of us lifted something from it, and leaning forward, that faint and invisible dust dry and acrid in the nostrils, we saw a long strand of iron-gray hair.

ERNEST HEMINGWAY

Ernest Hemingway (1898–), "the fictional laureate of the 'lost generation,'" spent his early years in his native Oak Park, Illinois, became a reporter on the Kansas City Star, and began writing fiction after serving on the Italian front in World War I. Much of his writing emphasizes the somewhat studied disillusionment of the American expatriates among whom he lived in Paris during the postwar period. Typical of "lost generation" attitudes is his preoccupation with the macabre, with suffering, death, and loss of values in his first two novels, The Sun Also Rises, 1926, and A Farewell to Arms, 1929. Later novels, To Have and Have Not, 1937, and For Whom the Bell Tolls, 1940, show a more positive faith in values and organized society. Characteristic of Hemingway's effort to achieve simplicity and naturalness is the bare, clipped dialogue of his famous short story, "The Killers" (also a motion picture). "In Another Country," an ironic and bitter commentary on the aftermath of war, is written less directly than most of Hemingway's stories and develops a more profound thesis.

IN ANOTHER COUNTRY¹

In the fall the war was always there, but we did not go to it any more. It was cold in the

¹ Reprinted from *Men Without Women* by Ernest Hemingway; copyright 1927 by Charles Scribner's Sons; used by permission of the publishers.

fall in Milan and the dark came very early. Then the electric lights came on, and it was pleasant along the streets looking in the windows. There was much game hanging outside the shops, and the snow powdered in the fur of the foxes and the wind blew their tails. The deer hung stiff and heavy and empty, and small birds blew in the wind and the wind turned their feathers. It was a cold fall and the wind came down from the mountains.

We were all at the hospital every afternoon, and there were different ways of walking across the town through the dusk to the hospital. Two of the ways were alongside canals, but they were long. Always, though, you crossed a bridge across a canal to enter the hospital. There was a choice of three bridges. On one of them a woman sold roasted chestnuts. It was warm, standing in front of her charcoal fire, and the chestnuts were warm afterward in your pocket. The hospital was very old and very beautiful, and you entered through a gate and walked across a courtyard and out a gate on the other side. There were usually funerals starting from the courtyard. Beyond the old hospital were the new brick pavilions, and there we met every afternoon and were all very polite and interested in what was the matter, and sat in the machines that were to make so much difference.

The doctor came up to the machine where I was sitting and said: "What did you like best to do before the war? Did you practice a sport?"

I said: "Yes, football."

"Good," he said. "You will be able to play football again better than ever."

My knee did not bend and the leg dropped straight from the knee to the ankle without a calf, and the machine was to bend the knee and make it move as in riding a tricycle. But it did not bend yet, and instead the machine lurched when it came to the bending part. The doctor said: "That will all pass. You are a fortunate young man. You will play football again like a champion."

In the next machine was a major who had a little hand like a baby's. He winked at me when the doctor examined his hand, which was between two leather straps that bounced up and down and flapped the stiff fingers, and said: "And will I too play football, captain-doctor?"

He had been a very great fencer, and before the war the greatest fencer in Italy.

The doctor went to his office in the back room and brought a photograph which showed a hand that had been withered almost as small as the major's, before it had taken a machine course, and after was a little larger. The major held the photograph with his good hand and looked at it very carefully. "A wound?" he asked.

"An industrial accident," the doctor said.

"Very interesting, very interesting," the major said, and handed it back to the doctor.

"You have confidence?"

"No," said the major.

There were three boys who came each day who were about the same age I was. They were all three from Milan, and one of them was to be a lawyer, and one was to be a painter, and one had intended to be a soldier, and after we were finished with the machines, sometimes we walked back together to the Café Cova, which was next door to the Scala. We walked the short way through the communist quarter because we were four together. The people hated us because we were officers, and from a wine-shop some one called out, "A basso gli ufficiali!" as we passed. Another boy who walked with us sometimes and made us five wore a black silk handkerchief across his face because he had no nose then and his face was to be rebuilt. He had gone out to the front from the military academy and been wounded within an hour after he had gone into the front line for the first time. They rebuilt his face, but he came from a very old family and they could never get the nose exactly right. He went to South America and worked in a bank. But this was a long time ago, and then we did not any of us know how it was going to be afterward. We only knew then that there was always the war, but that we were not going to it any more.

We all had the same medals, except the boy with the black silk bandage across his face, and he had not been at the front long enough to get any medals. The tall boy with a very pale face who was to be a lawyer had been a lieutenant of Arditi and had three medals of the sort we each had only one of. He had lived a very long time with death and was a little

¹ "Down with the officers!"

detached. We were all a little detached, and there was nothing that held us together except that we met every afternoon at the hospital. Although, as we walked to the Cova through the tough part of town, walking in the dark, with light and singing coming out of the wine-shops, and sometimes having to walk into the street when the men and women would crowd together on the sidewalk so that we would have had to jostle them to get by, we felt held together by there being something that had happened that they, the people who disliked us, did not understand.

We ourselves all understood the Cova, where it was rich and warm and not too brightly lighted, and noisy and smoky at certain hours, and there were always girls at the tables and the illustrated papers on a rack on the wall. The girls at the Cova were very patriotic, and I found that the most patriotic people in Italy were the café girls—and I believe they are still patriotic.

The boys at first were very polite about my medals and asked me what I had done to get them. I showed them the papers, which were written in a very beautiful language and full of *fratellanza*³ and *abnegazione*,⁴ but which really said, with the adjectives removed, that I had been given the medals because I was an American. After that their manner changed a little toward me, although I was their friend against outsiders. I was a friend, but I was never really one of them after they had read the citations, because it had been different with them and they had done very different things to get their medals. I had been wounded, it was true; but we all knew that being wounded, after all, was really an accident. I was never ashamed of the ribbons, though, and sometimes, after the cocktail hour, I would imagine myself having done all the things they had done to get their medals; but walking home at night through the empty streets with the cold wind and all the shops closed, trying to keep near the street lights, I knew that I would never have done such things, and I was very much afraid to die, and often lay in bed at night by myself, afraid to die and wondering how I would be when I went back to the front again.

The three with the medals were like hunting-

hawks; and I was not a hawk, although I might seem a hawk to those who have never hunted, they, the three, knew better and so we drifted apart. But I stayed good friends with the boy who had been wounded his first day at the front, because he would never know now how he would have turned out; so he could never be accepted either, and I liked him because I thought perhaps he would not have turned out to be a hawk either.

The major, who had been the great fencer, did not believe in bravery, and spent much time while we sat in the machines correcting my grammar. He had complimented me on how I spoke Italian, and we talked together very easily. One day I had said that Italian seemed such an easy language to me that I could not take a great interest in it; everything was so easy to say. "Ah, yes," the major said. "Why, then, do you not take up the use of grammar?" So we took up the use of grammar, and soon Italian was such a different language that I was afraid to talk to him until I had the grammar straight in my mind.

The major came very regularly to the hospital. I do not think he ever missed a day, although I am sure he did not believe in the machines. There was a time when none of us believed in the machines, and one day the major said it was all nonsense. The machines were new then and it was we who were to prove them. It was an idiotic idea, he said, "a theory, like another." I had not learned my grammar, and he said I was a stupid impossible disgrace, and he was a fool to have bothered with me. He was a small man and he sat straight up in his chair with his right hand thrust into the machine and looked straight ahead at the wall while the straps thumped up and down with his fingers in them.

"What will you do when the war is over if it is over?" he asked me. "Speak grammatically!"

"I will go to the States."

"Are you married?"

"No, but I hope to be."

"The more of a fool you are," he said. He seemed very angry. "A man must not marry."

"Why, Signor Maggiore?"

"Don't call me 'Signor Maggiore.'"

"Why must not a man marry?"

"He cannot marry. He cannot marry," he

³ brotherhood.

⁴ sacrifice.

said angrily. "If he is to lose everything, he should not place himself in a position to lose that. He should not place himself in a position to lose. He should find things he cannot lose."

He spoke very angrily and bitterly, and looked straight ahead while he talked.

"But why should he necessarily lose it?"

"He'll lose it," the major said. He was looking at the wall. Then he looked down at the machine and jerked his little hand out from between the straps and slapped it hard against his thigh. "He'll lose it," he almost shouted. "Don't argue with me!" Then he called to the attendant who ran the machines. "Come and turn this damned thing off."

He went back into the other room for the light treatment and the massage. Then I heard him ask the doctor if he might use his telephone and he shut the door. When he came back into the room, I was sitting in another machine. He was wearing his cape and had his cap on, and he came directly toward my machine and put his arm on my shoulder.

"I am so sorry," he said, and patted me on the shoulder with his good hand. "I would not be rude. My wife has just died. You must forgive me."

"Oh—" I said, feeling sick for him. "I am so sorry."

He stood there biting his lower lip. "It is very difficult," he said. "I cannot resign myself."

He looked straight past me and out through the window. Then he began to cry. "I am utterly unable to resign myself," he said and choked. And then crying, his head up looking at nothing, carrying himself straight and soldierly, with tears on both his cheeks and biting his lips, he walked past the machines and out the door.

The doctor told me that the major's wife, who was very young and whom he had not married until he was definitely invalidated out of the war, had died of pneumonia. She had been sick only a few days. No one expected her to die. The major did not come to the hospital for three days. Then he came at the usual hour, wearing a black band on the sleeve of his uniform. When he came back, there were large framed photographs around the wall, of all sorts of wounds before and after they had been cured by the machines. In front of the machine the major used were three photographs of

hands like his that were completely restored. I do not know where the doctor got them. I always understood we were the first to use the machines. The photographs did not make much difference to the major because he only looked out of the window.

PAUL GREEN

Paul Green (1894—) is primarily known as a dramatist. Among his notable plays are *In Abraham's Bosom*, 1927; *Johnny Johnson*, 1936; and *Native Son*, 1941 (co-author); he has been connected with the *Carolina Playmakers at the University of North Carolina* for many years. As youth and adult he has closely studied Negro life, temperament, and moods, and most of his best work concerns these matters. A dramatist's keen ear and Southerner's intimate knowledge of Negro dialect notably affect the dialogue of "*Fine Wagon*." The story is an acute and moving study in frustration and defeat.

FINE WAGON¹

The great forest rang as if with the clamor of iron bells from the belfries of the trees. Standing on the bank of the deep inky creek, Bobo strained with all his might at his fishing pole. Down in the depths somewhere a catfish big as a hog was hung on his hook and gradually pulling him in. Lower and lower bent the pole, and inch by inch his bare feet slid in the slick mud. He felt himself jerked headlong toward the sickish black water, when suddenly there came a voice calling and a soft breath blowing in his ear. The great forest wheeled and turned over, rushed toward him, by him. The bells were silent, and in the flash of an eye the stream was gone and so were the fishing pole and the fish.

"Wake up, Sonny, wake up—it's already day," and he felt a gentle hand diddling with his shoulder. Who . . . What? . . . Mammy . . . But he must sleep—sleep a little more. And that fish—that great big fish!

"Wake up, Sonny, yo' pa's done fed the mules."

¹ From *Salvation on a String* by Paul Green, Harper & Brothers. Copyright, 1934, by Paul Green.

He grunted and squirmed about under the quilts and sat up. Rubbing his fists in his eyes, he blinked at the little brown woman who stood by the bed, holding a wiggling lamp in her hand.

"Please, Mammy— Please'm—" And then his eyelids drooped shut, he gaped, and sank back slowly on the bed. Sweet sleepiness engulfed him instantly. Once more the edge of the great forest came moving toward him like a cool delicious shadow and once more he heard the lofty booming of the bells.

"Huh, so adder all yo' proud bragging you done forgot you's gwine with yo' pappy?" the voice said.

He heard the words afar off. They meant nothing to him, they were empty sounds. But only for a moment, for then remembrance flooded into his mind and he sat quickly up. Today was the day and he was about to forget it. A quick little rush of joy tickled somewhere in his chest behind his breastbone. He hopped out of bed as if a red fire coal had been dropped in his drawers. Cramming his shirttail down in his trousers, he followed his mother into the kitchen. He hesitated before the basin of waiting chilly water, and then roaching up his shoulders soused his face down in his dipping cupped hands. "Whoo—oo—oo," he chattered. Already Mammy was at the stove taking the frying fatback out of the pan. And now heavy brogan shoes came clomp-clomping along the porch, and Pappy entered—a tall, grave black man.

"Mawning, Bobo."

"Mawning, Pappy," he answered, his scrubbed face coming out of the ragged bundle of towel.

"You done got that sleepy out'n them eyes—unh?"

"Yessuh, I'se all loud awake."

"That's a boy."

"When's we gwine, Pappy?"

"Now, now not too big a swivet. We got to swallow a bit of grub fust." And Pappy sat down to the table with his hat on. Mammy hurried the cornbread from the stove and put it in front of him.

"Come on, Bobo," she said, but Bobo had already dived under her arm and onto his bench. She stood still at the end of the table with the dishcloth in her hand ready to get the

coffeepot while Pappy bent his head over. "Make us thankful—" he mumbled. "Amen," Bobo whispered to himself.

Nobody in the world could cook like Mammy. How good that fatback tasted, and the molasses and the bread. And then—what's that?—as she came and set a cup of steaming coffee by his plate.

"Seeing how cold it is and you gwine off to work same lak a man," she said.

His eyes were brimming with thanks as he poured his saucer full of the dark stuff—dark as the water in that creek. Then he blew on it with a great oof the way Pappy did to cool it.

"Warm you up inside?" his father asked.

"It do that," he answered, gulping it down with the noise of a small horse drinking water.

He gobbled his bread and meat, trying to keep up with Pappy, and in a few minutes breakfast was over. Mammy took Pappy's extra old coat from the wall and brought it to him.

"It'll be mighty cold riding out on that wagon," she said as she slipped it on him.

"Come on," said Pappy, and they hurried out of the house toward the barn. There in the gray morning light the wagon stood with its long tongue hanging out. It wasn't new like a white folks' wagon, but it was mighty nice just the same. He and Pappy had worked on it hard the day before, spiking up the loose spokes and driving wedges under the tires to tighten them for the heavy loads they'd have to haul. And with the new pine-board seat laid across the body, it stood waiting to ride. Pappy had bought the wagon on credit at a sale a few days before for eight dollars. It would come in handy hauling stuff for the professors up in town, and in a week or two they would make enough to pay for it. After that they'd keep on hauling. Pappy had needed a wagon. When he came home a few weeks before, bringing old blind Mary to match with the other mule Suke, he had sat his mind on something to hitch both of them to. He had traded a dog and gun and two or three dollars for old Mary, and it'd take a lot of hauling to get the money together to pay for the wagon. But shucks, Pappy was stepping on in the world, he was smart. Didn't Mammy say so yesterday at supper—that they weren't nobody smart like him? And she had kissed Pappy, feeling fine about how things were going.

Last night Pappy had said, "Honey, I got me a job right off the bat. 'Fessor Johnson up there at town met me on the street today and said he had some wood to haul down where he's gonna build his chillun's swimming pool and could I haul it. 'Could I do it?' Says, 'Can't nobody do it better.' Says, 'I got me a fine wagon and a first-class team.' That's the way it goes in this world. You get ready for the job and the job gets ready for you. Says, 'I got a boy Bobo growing lak a weed, and all muscling up. Me and him both'll be back heah, suh, tomorrow.'"

These things ran through Bobo's mind as he padded barefooted along toward the barn, trying to keep up with his father's long stride.

"Yessuh, put me at a stick of wood and I'll tote my end," he said out loud.

"Huh, what's that?" Pappy asked, looking down at him but never slackening his pace.

"I mean—mean I'se gwine sho' work hard."

And Pappy looked out toward the morning star, laughed a great laugh, and patted his shoulder.

"How much that man gwine pay me, Pappy?" he inquired as they slid open the stable door.

"I bet a whole ten cents; that's what you'd better charge him."

Ten cents! And there'd be other ten centses—nearly every day there would, for they would be so good at hauling and all the 'fessors would be asking them to do jobs. Ten cents a day! His little skinny hand slid down into his pocket as if he already expected to find a piece of hard round money there. And once more, as had happened several times during the last day and night, the bright picture of a new fishing hook and a line gleamed for an instant in his mind. But he was cunning; he would not mention that yet. But he knew where they could be got. Uptown in the hardware store—all with red corks and plenty of lead sinkers.

"You try yo' stuff at bridling Suke," Pappy said. "This new mule kinder cantankerous."

And pridefully Bobo opened the door and went in with the bridle in his hand. Old Suke stood with her head down as if expecting him and, slick as that old Syrian peddler, he put the bridle on her and led her from the stall. Then the business of harnessing and getting the

bellyband and the hamestring tight. It didn't matter if Pappy did come round and retie the hamestring when he'd just managed to pull it together, for the hames were fitting snug in the collar, and Pappy said that was doing fine as silk.

"Them's stout hamestrings too," said Pappy. "Joe Ed let me cut 'em from that bull hide o' his."

"I bet they'll hold—hold near 'bout a lion," Bobo spoke up.

"Or a' elevint," said Pappy.

"Or a steam engine," Bobo chuckled.

"Yeh, they'll hold—hold till the cows come home, and that britchin', that's a real piece of scrimptious handiwork," and Pappy surveyed the old ragged strips of bed ticking he had sewed together to help finish off the harness.

By this time the wide light of dawn had spread upward from the east across the sky, and Bobo wasn't afraid at all as he went into the loft and threw down two bundles of fodder for the mules' dinner. And now Mammy came out of the house, bringing lunch wrapped up in a paper for her two men folks. So it was that everything was ready at last and not a bit too soon, for the smiling face of the sun was peeping up over the edge of the world.

"You all be smart," Mammy called out as they climbed up into the wagon and sat down on the seat side by side. Pappy thudded his rope whip through the air with a great flourish, and off they went.

"We'll be home right around sundown," he shouted back, "and me'n Bobo wants us a real bait of that side meat all fried and ready!"

"We'll be home at sundown!" Bobo shouted likewise, sticking his hand up out of his father's old coat sleeve in a little crooked gesture, half a wave and half a salute. He had seen the white boys stick their hands up like that at the college campus. And Mammy waved back at him, standing there by the gate with the new sun shining in her face.

They drove on down the dead-weeded lane and soon came into the highroad. To the right and to the left stretched the white frosty fields, and in the distance the church spires of the white man's town stuck up above the wooded hill. The steel wagon tires made little gritty sounds as they drove along.

"Don't this wagon run good, Bobo?"

"It sho' do, Pappy."

"It orter—I was up and give it a good greasing whilst you was snoozing."

"You'da woke me up I'da been there and help you."

"Them tiahhs cries a little, but they's tight as a drum, ain't they?"

"Tight as Dick's hatband. We sho' put the fixing on 'em."

"Yeh, didn't we?"

"Git up there, Suke—you, Mary," Bobo chirped in his manful way. They were now mounting the hill, the air was sharp and biting, and Bobo had to clamp his jaws tight, his teeth were chattering so. But he'd never let Pappy know. They rode on in silence awhile. Bobo could see from Pappy's thoughtful face he was thinking of something. Maybe planning out the big work ahead and he didn't want to talk. A gang of robins flew across over his head going north. He watched them till they were little jumping eye specks low in the sky. It would turn warm soon—today, tomorrow. It always turned warm after a heavy frost like this one. The robins knew—they were smart like people.

Soon they were rolling along the asphalt streets of the town. Every shop was closed, every house deserted. It was too early for the white folks to be up. They were different from colored folks who had to be out to get a soon start. Already some of the women cooks were on their way to work—their arms in front of them, their elbows gripped in the palm of each hand. It was cold and they walked in a hurry. Their shoes made a clock-clock on the hard sidewalks.

"Ain't everything quiet—lak somebody asleep?" Bobo half whispered.

"Yeh," Pappy replied, "sleep. That's what's the matter with people, Bobo. They all sleep too much. Now look at you and me—we's up and doing."

"That's right," Bobo agreed soberly, and Pappy continued with feeling in his voice, "By the time other folks start to work we done done half a day. That's what gets a man ahead. He that rises 'fore the sun is the man what gets the most work done."

And now they were passing by the gray granite building that was the great bank where the white men went in and out during the day, hauling in their money and putting it away.

Bushels and bushels of yellow dollars and white dollars and bales of greenbacks they kept stored away there. That was where all the money came from to buy the things that people 5 needed. And to the left there was the hardware store where they kept all kinds of blades, and knives and hooks—fishhooks. Well, when spring came . . . Next down there by the drugstore was the blue-and-white sign of the 10 telegraph office shut up and asleep. In a few hours it would be open, and folks would go in there and write things on a slip of paper, and a man would tap on a little handle, and them taps would be words that went out along wires and 'way to New York and maybe across the 15 world through a pipe under the sea. Lord, Lord, weren't people smart!—Smart. He was smart too.

Bobo had always been frightened by the 20 big buildings and goings-on when he had come uptown to buy five cents' worth of snuff or ten cents' worth of fatback for Mammy and Pappy. But this morning he looked at the houses and stores with unafraid eyes. He felt more at home 25 among them today. He was a workingman now, and nobody ever bothered a workingman—not even big boys that liked to pick on you and throw your cap up and lodge it in a tree. He had something to do now, work for the white 30 folks, and that made everything right. The white folks wouldn't allow no foolishness with any of their help.

In a few minutes they had gone through the village to the outer edge and came where a 35 little alley turned off from the main street and down a hill.

"Is we 'bout got there, Pappy?"

"Yeh, right down yonder is where 'fessor lives." And he pulled the heads of the mules 40 into the alley. "He's got a lot of wood cut 'way below his house and he wants it hauled up to put in his cellar."

"Looks like a sort of rough place down there," Bobo said, straining his eyes ahead of 45 him.

"Sho', but we's the men to get that wood out'n there, ain't we, Bobo?"

"Is that," Bobo spoke up strongly and briskly.

"And he's gwine pay us a dollar a cawd to move it. He said he had ten or twelve cawds down there."

"How much is a cawd, Pappy?"

And now they were turning off to the left down a little rock path that skirted around and away from the professor's house. What a house that was, all white and pretty shining there among the bare trees. And how many chimneys did it have, and the windows with green blinds! Bobo almost caught his breath—there on the porch sat a big red bicycle. That must belong to one of the chillun, but he didn't mind how many bicycles the chillun had 'cause some of these days—that too maybe—not a new one—no—no—just an old one.

"Well, a cawd of wood is a pile 'bout ten feet long and as high as yo' head and you get a dollar for moving it," said Pappy. "Yeh, ten or twelve of 'em. I bet we near 'bout will move six or eight of them cawds today, and that's six or eight dollars."

"Look out there, Pappy!"

"Sho," his father gravely replied as he pulled on the plowline reins and stopped the mules, for the wagon was going down the hill and almost pushing the collars up over their heads. "I better tighten up them britchin' strops a little bit." And holding to the lines, he climbed down and scotched the wheel with a rock. In a few minutes he had tightened the straps of bed ticking and was ready to go.

"Does you think you mought drive some?"
"Lemme," Bobo answered eagerly.

Handing over the reins, Pappy got behind the wagon and held it back as the mules moved down the hill. What a strong man Pappy was there pulling on the coupling pole like as if it had been the wagon's tail, and the mules had to push a little bit against the collars now that Pappy was holding back so sharp.

They finally got safely down to the little wooded hollow where the firewood was piled in great heaps, and they did no damage at all more than tearing off a patch of bark from a sugar-maple tree with the wagon hub. After much backing and sliding the rear end of the wagon round, they got set near a pile of wood and began to load it. It was a fine mixture of oak and pine cut in the proper lengths for the professor's fireplace, and Bobo liked to work at it, it looked so nice. He heaved piece after piece up into the open body, trying to match his father. Talk about being smart—huh, with a few days of this stuff he'd put a muscle on his

arm like a big rat running under his skin.

"All right," Pappy called, "try the end of that thing." And Bobo took hold of the big black log of solid hickory all ready to show his strength.

5 Just then they heard a heavy voice calling down from the house above and, looking up, Bobo saw a man wearing some kind of a gown standing by the porch railing, his hair all rumpled.

10 "Who's that?" he asked, letting go of the log and stopping still as a post.

"S-sh, that's 'fessor," Pappy said.

"Hey, what you doing down there!" the professor shouted. And Pappy even as far away as he was pulled off his hat quickly and bowed respectfully.

"Mawning, 'Fessor," he answered in a low voice and smiled same as if 'fessor was right in front of him.

20 "Mawning, suh," Bobo whispered, pulling off his hat likewise.

"For goodness sakes! You make enough racket to wake up the neighborhood," said the figure on the porch.

25 "Yessuh," Pappy began and then fumbled a bit for his words. "We thought we'd get an early start, suh."

"Well, you have that; it's just seven o'clock."

"Yessuh," and Pappy bowed again.

30 "Well, go on and be as quiet as possible. Haul the wood round to the cellar door. I'll come out a little later."

"Yessuh," said Pappy again, still holding his hat in his hand.

35 The figure on the porch looked round at the world, yawned and retired into the house. Pappy and Bobo waited a moment and then went on with their loading, but this time slow and careful, laying each piece of wood gently in the wagon as if they were packing eggs.

40 "Why do he do that?" Bobo at last softly inquired.

"Who you mean do what?" his father asked in a low stern voice.

45 "The man up there in that big house—'Fessor."

Something seemed to be bothering Pappy, for he laid down his piece of wood and looked at Bobo. "Why you ax that?"

50 "He kept looking around at the earf and up at the sky. It ain't going to snow, is it?"

"Oh," said Pappy, as if he had been thinking

of something else. And then he turned back to loading the wood again, and Bobo turned back also. But they decided to leave the big hickory log until the next load.

"Must be some kinder big man, ain't he." Bobo said presently, "living in that big house with all these woods around?"

"He's a 'fessor—teaches boys and gals—that's what 'fessor means." Pappy was silent a bit and then went on as if to himself, "He a mighty big man. I heard some folks say he a big man." Now Pappy looked carefully about him.

"Huh?" said Bobo.

"Do what?" and Pappy seized a piece of oak and lifted it aloft.

"Yeh, do what, Pappy?"

"Don't ax so many questions. 'Fessor wants his wood hauled, he gwine pay for it, and we gwine haul it. He a big man, he stands mighty high. I hear 'em say he writes books and makes money enough—enough to burn." And surveying the pile of wood on the wagon, he added, "Looks like we 'bout got a load."

"What do he write about, Pappy?"

"Huh?"

"'Fessor. Do he write tales lak what Mammy read from a book that time?"

Pappy suddenly snickered and looked around at him in a way he didn't understand. Then he said, "Say he writes books about the colored folks."

"Sho?"

"Sho'."

"And do the colored folks read 'em?"

"Shet yo' mouth and go 'way," Pappy answered, and snickering again, he went on. "White folks buy 'em and read 'em 'way off yonder. That's how he gets so much money to build his house and this heah swimming pool."

Pappy's hand went into his pocket, and Bobo watched it like a hawk. How long had he been waiting for that! This time it was true, he was going to do it, and sure enough Pappy pulled out a twist of homemade tobacco and bit off a big chew. Bobo edged up to him, waiting. For a moment the twist hesitated in Pappy's hand, and then he pinched off a big crumb and handed it to him. Bobo's skinny paw darted out and seized it quick as a bat catching a bug. He stuck it in his mouth, rolled it round with his tongue, and settled it over on one side making his jaw stick out.

"Well, I spec's we better start up the hill with this," and Pappy gathered up the reins. Suke and Mary, who had stood drooping in their tracks, suddenly woke up as if a swarm of hornets had come up out of the ground at them. Suke gave a lunge forward and old blind Mary gave a lunge backward. "Get up there," said Pappy, whopping Mary a blow on the rump with his whip. And now she sprang forward and Suke stood still. "You, Suke!" he shouted. And quicker than hailing, the little blows of the whip danced from one mule to the other. With a rattle and groaning of the wheels the heavy load began to move up the stony hill, and Pappy winked at Bobo as much as to say, "Ain't that pulling for you?"

As they swung round into the little road, the rear wheel hooked the sugar maple again. "Whoa," said Pappy, and just in time, for the coupling pole was bent like an Indian's bow. The mules stopped, slumped down in their tracks and began to gnaw the dead scattering brown oak leaves that hung from a branch above their heads. Suddenly the creaky twanging of an opening screen door sounded across the hollow. Bobo looked out toward the house and saw the professor, partly dressed, standing on the porch again.

"There he is again, Pappy," he said, clutching his father's arm.

"Whoa," said Pappy softly to the mules.

"Heigh," said the professor, "didn't I tell you to keep quiet down there?"

Pappy's hat was already off in his hands again as he answered gently, "Yessuh, yessuh, we's just getting started, 'Fessor, and we"—Pappy looked down at Bobo as if asking him what to say.

"Haven't you hung your wheel in that maple tree?" the professor called, and Bobo saw him sliding his suspenders on his shoulders in a quick nervous jerk.

"He coming down here, Pappy," he whispered.

"No suh," answered Pappy, "we just giving the mules a little breathing space, suh."

"Well, see that you don't hurt anything." And once more the professor gave that look round him and turned quickly back into the house.

After much prying and straining, they got the wheel loose from the tree, but not until an-

other great gleaming gap of bark had been torn off in the process. When they had got the load farther up the hill, they scotched the wheels, and Pappy came back. He grabbed up a handful of dirt, smeared it over the scars so that no one would notice them, and Bobo ran about picking up the pieces of bark which he hid under the fallen leaves. Then they went back to the wagon and rode out onto the high ground. They drove proudly round back of the house and stopped near the cellar door.

"Look a-there, Pappy," whispered Bobo horrified, pointing to one of the rear wheels. The wedges had fallen out from under the tire and the old wheel stood all crank-sided.

"Oh, that wheel'll stand up," said Pappy lightly, eyeing it. "We'll get unloaded and then take a rock and drive that tire back on." And climbing down, he wrapped the reins tight round a front hub so the mules couldn't get at the spirea bushes. Bobo passed the wood piece by piece to his father who took it in armfuls quietly down into the cellar. By this time the people in the house were astir, and Bobo could see into the kitchen where Miss Sally, the cook, wearing some kind of fancy lace thing on her head, was preparing breakfast. The smell of coffee and bacon came out to him and he sniffed the air hungrily like a little dog. And now the professor reappeared, his face clean-shaven and his hair brushed. He came up to the wagon and looked sharply at the load. Bobo tried to keep his mind on his work, handing down the wood to his father below, but he could smell the clear winey stuff the professor had used for shaving. It filled the air, getting into his mouth and nostrils so strong that he could taste it.

"You'll never move that wood with such a turnout as that," said the professor shortly. "Look at that wheel!"

"Yessuh," answered Pappy, as he laid his hat on the ground beside him. "We'll fix that up in a minute, suh, the wedge just fell out."

"Yes, I see it did. How are you, son?"

"Fine, thank, suh," Bobo choked, almost speechless at being addressed by the mighty man who lived in such a house and had cooks and bicycles and automobiles and a big furnace thing down there in the cellar that kept the house warm.

"What's your name?" But now Bobo had lost his tongue.

"His name's Roosevelt, suh, but we calls him Bobo," answered Pappy gravely.

"H'm," said the professor. "And pile the wood straight back against the coalbin, will you?"

"Yessuh, we's fixing it up fine and dandy."

"And you can turn round down there next to the garage."

"Yessuh."

"Good gracious, boy, aren't you frozen, barefooted the way you are?"

"Oh, he don't mind the cold, suh, his feets is tough as whitleather."

"No suh, I don't feel the cold in my feets, suh," Bobo faltered.

"H'm. And what you got in your mouth, son?" But Bobo could only stare at the professor with wide frightened eyes. "Don't you know chewing tobacco at your age will stunt you and keep you from growing up? Why, you're nothing but a baby." And once more the professor looked inquiringly about the world and up at the sky as he turned to re-enter the house.

At last the load was stored away, and after much knocking and wedging down at the garage, the old wheel was strengthened, and they returned to the woods. But now it seemed the mules had decided not to do any more work that day. They kept twisting and turning about and sticking out their heads, trying to get at the dead leaves. And when after a lot of trouble the wagon was finally backed and skewed round to another pile, old Mary suddenly began to kick and lunge in the harness. Pappy seesawed on the reins and spanked her with the whip, and only after she had torn the britching off and burst one of his prized hame-strings did he finally get her quieted. All the while Bobo kept looking up toward the house, expecting the professor to come charging out yelling at them. His heart was in his mouth, and he breathed again when at last the britching was mended, the hamestring retied, and everything ready for the loading to begin. This time Pappy pitched the wood boldly into the wagon. The white folks were up and having breakfast, and the chatter of children was heard in the house. It didn't make any difference about noise now.

"We better not put such a heavy load on this time, had we, Pappy?"

"No, we ain't going to load up furdern to the brim," he replied. And when they were ready, Pappy mounted briskly to the top of the seat and gave the word for the mules to go. Bobo started behind, but old Mary acted as if Satan was in her. She lunged forward, broke the hamestring again, and ran straight out of the harness. And before Pappy could do a thing she had turned herself completely around and stood facing them with her white, sightless eyes as if laughing at him. Pappy suddenly lost his temper and, leaning far over with his rope whip, struck her a knock in the face. She reared up on her hind feet, and giving a great jump, left the harness behind her.

"Look out, look out, Pappy!" Bobo squealed in fright.

Pappy sprang down from the wagon, and with a strong hold upon the reins kept old Mary from getting entirely loose and running away. And now from the porch Bobo heard the dreaded voice again:

"What's the matter down there?"

Bobo didn't dare look up, for he knew the professor was coming down the hill. And in a minute there he stood beside them. Without a word Pappy dropped his whip on the ground and began straightening out the harness, and old Mary started greedily eating the dead leaves again. Suddenly the professor broke into a loud laugh, and Bobo shook in his tracks. Somehow that laugh made him feel queer and trembly.

"What in the name of God did you come trying to haul wood with such a mess as this?" the professor shouted.

"Yessuh, yessuh, but—" Pappy began.

"But nothing," said the professor sharply, and he took a step backward and surveyed the wagon and the team. "Here, son, you hold her head and let's see what we can do." The professor took off his fine coat and undid his white collar and set to work tying up the britching and rehitching the traces on old Mary.

"You sho' know yo' stuff 'bout mules, 'Fessor," Pappy broke in presently, standing there pinching a dead twig in pieces between his fingers.

"Yes, I know enough not to starve them to

death and not to try to haul wood with the harness and wagon falling to bits," he snapped.

Bobo stood looking on, every now and then spitting in noiseless excitement off to one side.

5 He watched the deft movements of the professor as if mesmerized, and now and then his gaze traveled to his father, who stood all shamed and humbled with his hat off. A queer lump rose up from his breast and stuck in his throat, and he swallowed quickly. Then he began sputtering, trying to get back the wad of tobacco that had gone down. Gritting his teeth, he blinked and shook the tears out of his eyes, making little choking noises in his throat.

15 "What's the matter with you, son?" queried the professor, staring at him.

"Nothing, suh, nothing," he answered quickly.

"You look sick. Have you had any breakfast?"

"Yessuh."

"Yessuh, we both et a big bait 'fore we come off," Pappy said, coming over and timidly offering to help fasten the breast chains.

25 "You wait; I'll drive out for you." And clucking kindly to the mules, the professor jiggled the reins gently. The wagon slowly began to move. The professor walked along as the mules pulled on up the hill, and then blam, that old rear wheel struck a stone that was hidden by the leaves, and with a moaning groan it collapsed. And now once more the professor gave his queer laugh. He stood a moment looking at the reins in his hand, and then throwing them
35 down, took out some money and handed it to Pappy, "Here's a dollar, though you've not earned fifty cents."

"Thanky, suh, thanky, suh," said Pappy, wiping his hand on his coat and humbly taking the money.

Without a word the professor turned and strode off toward the house. When he had gone a little distance he turned and shouted, "Take your bundle of trash and clear out. I'll get
45 somebody else to haul my wood!" With that he was gone.

Bobo stood looking at the ground. He could see the toes of his father's ragged shoes in front of him. Finally they moved, and he heard his father say, "I reckon we just about as well quit
50 and go home, son." And then he heard another

voice saying—a woman's voice up on the porch—"What's the matter, Marvin?" and then the professor replying, "The same old story. My God, these everlasting Negroes—poverty—trifling. Come on, let's finish our breakfast." And the door of the great house slammed shut like the jaws of a steel trap.

Pappy tied a limb to the coupling pole under the axle, and the old broken wheel was loaded into the wagon body. All the while Bobo stood by without moving. His hands and arms hung down by his sides. He made no effort to help or do anything, but just stood there. "Come on, boy," Pappy said harshly.

They climbed up into the wagon, and the mules now, as if glad to be free of work, moved quickly up the hill and back into the main highway. Through the town they rode, the old limb dragging under the wheelless end of the axle. People looked out from the houses as they passed, and a group of white schoolchildren playing tag on the sidewalk stopped and pointed at them. Bobo sat on the seat by Pappy, looking straight ahead, and Pappy was looking straight ahead too. When they neared the business section of the village Pappy turned off and went along a side street. And soon they came to the other edge of the town and descended the hill.

When they rode up near the woodpile, Mammy unbent from her sweeping by the door and stared at them.

"Why you back so early?" she called. "I ain't got a speck of dinner ready. Eyh, and look what's happened to your wagon wheel!"

Jumping down from his seat, Bobo entered the yard.

"We don't want no dinner!" he heard his father's rough brutal voice shout behind him.

"What's the matter, son?" Mammy said.

"Nothing, nothing," he gulped. And catching hold of her apron, he began to sob.

"Dry up!" Pappy yelled after him, but Bobo sobbed and sobbed.

"What's happened, son?" Mammy said, smoothing his woolly head with her hand.

"Nothing, nothing," he spluttered.

And then a dreadful thumping and squealing began in the edge of the yard. But Bobo didn't look up. For even with his face buried in his mother's apron and his eyes stuck shut with tears, he could see a skinny black man

there by the woodpile beating old Mary with an ax helve, and that black man was Pappy—and he was ragged and weak and pitiful.

STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT

A large number of poems (1, 190) and short stories reflect Stephen Vincent Benét's (1898–1943) knowledge of, and absorption in, American tradition and customs. John Brown's Body, 1928, is an epic of the Civil War, for example; and We Stand United, 1945, is a collection of radio scripts which spiritedly defend American democratic institutions against the threat of totalitarianism. Benét's vigorous patriotism and tolerant attitudes toward life are reflected in other volumes: Thirteen O'Clock, 1937; Tales Before Midnight, 1939; and The Last Circle, 1940. "The Devil and Daniel Webster," a classic of folk humor, is distinctly in the tradition of American folklore, which is composed of largely legendary customs, tales, and beliefs. Dan'l Webster here assumes a place among such gigantic figures as Davy Crockett, Paul Bunyan, and John Henry. The details of the story—New England beliefs and customs, New Hampshire shrewdness, dialect, and setting—are discriminatingly handled. Especially noteworthy is the blending of historical and legendary details for the purpose of providing folk atmosphere.

THE DEVIL AND DANIEL WEBSTER¹

It's a story they tell in the border country, where Massachusetts joins Vermont and New Hampshire. Yes, Dan'l Webster's dead—or, at least, they buried him. But every time there's a thunderstorm around Marshfield, they say you can hear his rolling voice in the hollows of the sky. And they say that if you go to his grave and speak loud and clear, "Dan'l Webster—Dan'l Webster!" the ground'll begin to shiver and the trees to shake. And after a while you'll hear a deep voice saying, "Neighbor, how stands the Union?" Then you better answer the Union stands as she stood, rock-bottomed and copper-sheathed, one and indivisible, or he's

¹ From *Selected Works of Stephen Vincent Benét*, published by Rinehart & Co., Inc. Copyright, 1936, by Stephen Vincent Benét.

liable to rear right out of the ground. At least that's what I was told when I was a youngster.

You see, for a while, he was the biggest man in the country. He never got to be President, but he was the biggest man. There were thousands that trusted in him right next to God Almighty, and they told stories about him that were like stories of patriarchs and such. They said, when he stood up to speak, stars and stripes came right out in the sky, and once he spoke against a river and made it sink into the ground. They said, when he walked the woods with his fishing rod, Killall, the trout would jump out of the streams right into his pockets, for they knew it was no use putting up a fight against him; and, when he argued a case, he could turn on the harps of the blessed and the shaking of the earth underground. That was the kind of man he was, and his big farm up at Marshfield was suitable to him. The chickens he raised were all white meat down to the drumsticks, the cows were tended like children, and the big ram he called Goliath had horns with a curl like a morning-glory vine and could butt through an iron door. But Dan'l wasn't one of your gentleman farmers; he knew all the ways of the land, and he'd be up at candlelight to see that the chores got done. A man with a mouth like a mastiff, a brow like a mountain and eyes like burning anthracite—that was Dan'l Webster in his prime. And the biggest case he argued never got written down in the books, for he argued it against the devil, nip and tuck and no holds barred. And this is the way I used to hear it told.

There was a man named Jabez Stone, lived at Cross Corners, New Hampshire. He wasn't a bad man to start with, but he was an unlucky man. If he planted corn, he got borers; if he planted potatoes, he got blight. He had good-enough land, but it didn't prosper him; he had a decent wife and children, but the more children he had, the less there was to feed them. If stones cropped up in his neighbor's field, boulders boiled up in his; if he had a horse with the spavins, he'd trade it for one with the staggers and give something extra. There's some folks bound to be like that, apparently. But one day Jabez Stone got sick of the whole business.

He'd been plowing that morning and he'd just broke* the plowshare on a rock that he could have sworn hadn't been there yesterday.

And, as he stood looking at the plowshare, the off horse began to cough—that ropy kind of cough that means sickness and horse doctors. There were two children down with measles, his wife was ailing, and he had a whitlow on his thumb. It was about the last straw for Jabez Stone. "I vow," he said, and he looked around him kind of desperate—"I vow it's enough to make a man want to sell his soul to the devil And I would, too, for two cents."

Then he felt a kind of queerness come over him at having said what he'd said; though naturally, being a New Hampshireman, he wouldn't take it back. But, all the same, when it got to be evening and, as far as he could see, no notice had been taken, he felt relieved in his mind, for he was a religious man. But notice is always taken, sooner or later, just like the Good Book says. And, sure enough, next day, about suppertime, a soft-spoken, dark-dressed stranger drove up in a handsome buggy and asked for Jabez Stone.

Well, Jabez told his family it was a lawyer, come to see him about a legacy. But he knew who it was. He didn't like the looks of the stranger, nor the way he smiled with his teeth. They were white teeth, and plentiful—some say they were filed to a point, but I wouldn't vouch for that. And he didn't like it when the dog took one look at the stranger and ran away howling, with his tail between his legs. But having passed his word, more or less, he stuck to it, and they went out behind the barn and made their bargain. Jabez Stone had to prick his finger to sign, and the stranger lent him a silver pin. The wound healed clean, but it left a little white scar.

After that, all of a sudden, things began to pick up and prosper for Jabez Stone. His cows got fat and his horses sleek, his crops were the envy of the neighborhood, and lightning might strike all over the valley, but it wouldn't strike his barn. Pretty soon, he was one of the prosperous people of the country; they asked him to stand for selectman, and he stood for it; there began to be talk of running him for the state senate. All in all, you might say the Stone family was as happy and contented as cats in a dairy. And so they were, except for Jabez Stone.

He'd been contented enough, the first few years. It's a great thing when bad luck turns; it

drives most other things out of your head. True, every now and then, especially in rainy weather, the little white scar on his finger would give him a twinge. And once a year, punctual as clockwork, the stranger with the handsome buggy would come driving by. But the sixth year, the stranger lighted, and after that, his peace was over for Jabez Stone.

The stranger came through the lower field, switching his boots with a cane—they were 10 handsome black boots, but Jabez Stone never liked the look of them, particularly the toes. And, after he'd passed the time of day, he said, "Well, Mr. Stone, you're a hummer! It's a very pretty property you've got here, Mr. Stone."

"Well, some might favor it and others might not," said Jabez Stone, for he was a New Hampshireman.

"Oh, no need to decry your industry!" said the stranger, very easy, showing his teeth in a smile. "After all, we know what's been done, and it's been according to contract and specifications. So when—ahem—the mortgage falls due next year, you shouldn't have any regrets."

"Speaking of that mortgage, mister," said 25 Jabez Stone, and he looked around for help to the earth and the sky, "I'm beginning to have one or two doubts about it."

"Doubts?" said the stranger, not quite so pleasantly.

"Why, yes," said Jabez Stone. "This being the U. S. A. and me always having been a religious man." He cleared his throat and got bolder. "Yes, sir," he said, "I'm beginning to have considerable doubts as to that mortgage 35 holding in court."

"There's courts and courts," said the stranger, clicking his teeth. "Still, we might as well have a look at the original document." And he hauled out a big black pocketbook full of papers. "Sherwin, Slater, Stevens, Stone," he muttered. "I, Jabez Stone, for a term of seven years— Oh, it's quite in order, I think."

But Jabez Stone wasn't listening, for he saw something else flutter out of the black pocketbook. It was something that looked like a moth, but it wasn't a moth. And as Jabez Stone stared at it, it seemed to speak to him in a small sort of piping voice, terrible small and thin, but terrible human. "Neighbor Stone!" it squeaked. 50 "Neighbor Stone! Help me! For God's sake, help me!"

But before Jabez Stone could stir hand or foot, the stranger whipped out a big bandanna handkerchief, caught the creature in it, just like a butterfly, and started tying up the ends 5 of the bandanna.

"Sorry for the interruption," he said. "As I was saying—"

But Jabez Stone was shaking all over like a scared horse.

10 "That's Miser Stevens' voice!" he said, in a croak. "And you've got him in your handkerchief!"

The stranger looked a little embarrassed.

"Yes, I really should have transferred him to 15 the collecting box," he said with a simper, "but there were some rather unusual specimens there and I didn't want them crowded. Well, well, these little contretemps will occur."

"I don't know what you mean by contertan," said Jabez Stone, "but that was Miser Stevens' voice! And he ain't dead! You can't tell me he is! He was just as spry and mean as a wood-chuck, Tuesday!"

"In the midst of life—" said the stranger, 25 kind of pious. "Listen!" Then a bell began to toll in the valley and Jabez Stone listened, with the sweat running down his face. For he knew it was tolled for Miser Stevens and that he was dead.

30 "These long-standing accounts," said the stranger with a sigh; "one really hates to close them. But business is business."

He still had the bandanna in his hand, and Jabez Stone felt sick as he saw the cloth struggle and flutter.

"Are they all as small as that?" he asked hoarsely.

"Small?" said the stranger. "Oh, I see what you mean. Why, they vary." He measured Jabez Stone with his eyes, and his teeth showed. 40 "Don't worry, Mr. Stone," he said. "You'll go with a very good grade. I wouldn't trust you outside the collecting box. Now, a man like Dan'l Webster, of course—well, we'd have to build a special box for him, and even at that, I imagine the wing spread would astonish you. But, in your case, as I was saying—"

"Put that handkerchief away!" said Jabez Stone, and he began to beg and to pray. But the best he could get at the end was a three 50 years' extension, with conditions.

But till you make a bargain like that, you've

no idea how fast four years can run. By the last months of those years, Jabez Stone's known all over the state and there's talk of running him for governor—and it's dust and ashes in his mouth. For every day, when he gets up, he thinks, "There's one more night gone," and every night when he lies down, he thinks of the black pocketbook and the soul of Miser Stevens, and it makes him sick at heart. Till, finally, he can't bear it any longer, and in the last days of the last year, he hitches up his horse and drives off to seek Dan'l Webster. For Dan'l was born in New Hampshire, only a few miles from Cross Corners, and it's well known that he has a particular soft spot for old neighbors.

It was early in the morning when he got to Marshfield, but Dan'l was up already, talking Latin to the farm hands and wrestling with the ram, Goliath, and trying out a new trotter and working up speeches to make against John C. Calhoun. But when he heard a New Hampshireman had come to see him, he dropped everything else he was doing, for that was Dan'l's way. He gave Jabez Stone a breakfast that five men couldn't eat, went into the history of every living man and woman in Cross Corners, and finally asked him how he could serve him.

Jabez Stone allowed that it was a kind of mortgage case.

"Well, I haven't pleaded a mortgage case in a long time, and I don't generally plead now, except before the Supreme Court," said Dan'l, "but if I can, I'll help you."

"Then I've got hope for the first time in ten years," said Jabez Stone, and told him the details.

Dan'l walked up and down as he listened, hands behind his back, now and then asking a question, now and then plunging his eyes at the floor, as if they'd bore through it like gimlets. When Jabez Stone had finished, Dan'l puffed out his cheeks and blew. Then he turned to Jabez Stone and a smile broke over his face like the sunrise over Monadnock.

"You'll take it?" said Jabez Stone, hardly daring to believe.

"Yes," said Dan'l Webster. "I've got about seventy-five other things to do and the Missouri Compromise to straighten out, but I'll take your case. For if two New Hampshiremen aren't a

match for the devil, we might as well give the country back to the Indians."

Then he shook Jabez Stone by the hand and said, "Did you come down here in a hurry?"

5 "Well, I admit I made time," said Jabez Stone.

"You'll go back faster," said Dan'l Webster, and he told 'em to hitch up Constitution and Constellation to the carriage. They were matched grays with one white forefoot, and they stepped like greased lightning.

Well, I won't describe how excited and pleased the whole Stone family was to have the great Dan'l Webster for a guest, when they finally got there. Jabez Stone had lost his hat on the way, blown off when they overtook a wind, but he didn't take much account of that. But after supper he sent the family off to bed, for he had most particular business with Mr. Webster. Mrs. Stone wanted them to sit in the front parlor, but Dan'l Webster knew front parlors and said he preferred the kitchen. So it was there they sat, waiting for the stranger, with a jug on the table between them and a bright fire on the hearth—the stranger being scheduled to show up on the stroke of midnight, according to specifications.

Well, most men wouldn't have asked for better company than Dan'l Webster and a jug. But with every tick of the clock Jabez Stone got sadder and sadder. His eyes roved around, and though he sampled the jug you could see he couldn't taste it. Finally, on the stroke of 11:30 he reached over and grabbed Dan'l Webster by the arm.

"Mr. Webster, Mr. Webster!" he said, and his voice was shaking with fear and a desperate courage. "For God's sake, Mr. Webster, harness your horses and get away from this place while you can!"

"You've brought me a long way, neighbor, to tell me you don't like my company," said Dan'l Webster, quite peaceable, pulling at the jug.

"Miserable wretch that I am!" groaned Jabez Stone. "I've brought you a devilish way, and now I see my folly. Let him take me if he wills. I don't hanker after it, I must say, but I can stand it. But you're the Union's stay and New Hampshire's pride! He mustn't get you!"

50 Dan'l Webster looked at the distracted man, all gray and shaking in the firelight, and laid a hand on his shoulder.

"I'm obliged to you, Neighbor Stone," he said gently. "It's kindly thought of. But there's a jug on the table and a case in hand. And I never left a jug or a case half finished in my life."

And just at that moment there was a sharp rap on the door.

"Ah," said Dan'l Webster, very coolly, "I thought your clock was a trifle slow, Neighbor Stone." He stepped to the door and opened it. "Come in!" he said.

The stranger came in—very dark and tall he looked in the firelight. He was carrying a box under his arm—a black, japanned box with little air holes in the lid. At the sight of the box Jabez Stone gave a low cry and shrank into a corner of the room.

"Mr. Webster, I presume," said the stranger, very polite, but with his eyes glowing like a fox's deep in the woods.

"Attorney of record for Jabez Stone," said Dan'l Webster, but his eyes were glowing too. "Might I ask your name?"

"I've gone by a good many," said the stranger carelessly. "Perhaps Scratch will do for the evening. I'm often called that in these regions."

Then he sat down at the table and poured himself a drink from the jug. The liquor was cold in the jug, but it came steaming into the glass.

"And now," said the stranger, smiling and showing his teeth, "I shall call upon you, as a law-abiding citizen, to assist me in taking possession of my property."

Well, with that, argument began—and it went hot and heavy. At first, Jabez Stone had a flicker of hope, but when he saw Dan'l Webster being forced back at point after point, he just scrunched in his corner, with his eyes on that japanned box. For there wasn't any doubt as to the deed or the signature—that was the worst of it. Dan'l Webster twisted and turned and thumped his fist on the table, but he couldn't get away from that. He offered to compromise the case; the stranger wouldn't hear of it. He pointed out the property had increased in value, and state senators ought to be worth more; the stranger stuck to the letter of the law. He was a great lawyer, Dan'l Webster, but we know who's the King of Lawyers, as the Good Book tells us, and it

seemed as if, for the first time, Dan'l Webster had met his match.

Finally, the stranger yawned a little. "Your spirited efforts on behalf of your client do you credit, Mr. Webster," he said, "but if you have no more arguments to adduce, I'm rather pressed for time"—and Jabez Stone shuddered.

Dan'l Webster's brow looked dark as a thundercloud.

"Pressed or not, you shall not have this man!" he thundered. "Mr. Stone is an American citizen, and no American citizen may be forced into the service of a foreign prince. We fought England for that in '12 and we'll fight all hell for it again!"

"Foreign?" said the stranger. "And who calls me a foreigner?"

"Well, I never yet heard of the dev— of your claiming American citizenship," said Dan'l Webster with surprise.

"And who with better right," said the stranger, with one of his terrible smiles. "When the first wrong was done to the first Indian, I was there. When the first slaver put out for the Congo, I stood on her deck. Am I not in your books and stories and beliefs, from the first settlements on? Am I not spoken of, still, in every church in New England? 'Tis true the North claims me for a Southerner and the South for a Northerner, but I am neither. I am merely an honest American like yourself—and of the best descent—for, to tell the truth, Mr. Webster, though I don't like to boast of it, my name is older in this country than yours."

"Aha!" said Dan'l Webster, with the veins standing out in his forehead. "Then I stand on the Constitution! I demand a trial for my client!"

"The case is hardly one for an ordinary court," said the stranger, his eyes flickering. "And, indeed, the lateness of the hour—"

"Let it be any court you choose, so it is an American judge and an American jury!" said Dan'l Webster in his pride. "Let it be the quick or the dead; I'll abide the issue!"

"You have said it," said the stranger, and pointed his finger at the door. And with that, and all of a sudden, there was a rushing of wind outside and a noise of footsteps. They came, clear and distinct, through the night. And yet, they were not like the footsteps of living men.

"In God's name, who comes by so late?" cried Jabez Stone, in an agony of fear.

"The jury Mr. Webster demands," said the stranger, sipping at his boiling glass. "You must pardon the rough appearance of one or two; they will have come a long way."

And with that the fire burned blue and the door blew open and twelve men entered one by one.

If Jabez Stone had been sick with terror before, he was blind with terror now. For there was Walter Butler, the loyalist, who spread fire and horror through the Mohawk Valley in the times of the Revolution; and there was Simon Girty, the renegade, who saw white men burned at the stake and whooped with the Indians to see them burn. His eyes were green, like a catamount's, and the stains on his hunting shirt did not come from the blood of the deer. King Philip was there, wild and proud as he had been in life, with the great gash in his head that gave him his death wound, and cruel Governor Dale, who broke men on the wheel. There was Morton of Merry Mount, who so vexed the Plymouth Colony, with his flushed, loose, handsome face and his hate of the godly. There was Teach, the bloody pirate, with his black beard curling on his breast. The Reverend John Smeet, with his strangler's hand and his Geneva gown, walked as daintily as he had to the gallows. The red print of the rope was still around his neck, but he carried a perfumed handkerchief in one hand. One and all, they came into the room with the fires of hell still upon them, and the stranger named their names and their deeds as they came, till the tale of the twelve was told. Yet the stranger had told the truth—they had all played a part in America.

"Are you satisfied with the jury, Mr. Webster?" said the stranger mockingly, when they had taken their places.

The sweat stood upon Dan'l Webster's brow, but his voice was clear.

"Quite satisfied," he said. "Though I miss General Arnold from the company."

"Benedict Arnold is engaged upon other business," said the stranger, with a glower. "Ah, you asked for justice, I believe."

He pointed his finger once more, and a tall man, sobefly clad in Puritan garb, with the burning gaze of the fanatic, stalked into the

room and took his judge's place.

"Justice Hathorne is a jurist of experience," said the stranger. "He presided at certain witch trials once held in Salem. There were others who repented of the business later, but not he."

"Repent of such notable wonders and undertakings?" said the stern old justice. "Nay, hang them—hang them all!" And he muttered to himself in a way that struck ice into the soul of Jabez Stone.

Then the trial began, and, as you might expect, it didn't look anyways good for the defense. And Jabez Stone didn't make much of a witness in his own behalf. He took one look at Simon Girty and screeched, and they had to put him back in his corner in a kind of swoon.

It didn't halt the trial, though; the trial went on, as trials do. Dan'l Webster had faced some hard juries and hanging judges in his time, but this was the hardest he'd ever faced, and he knew it. They sat there with a kind of glitter in their eyes, and the stranger's smooth voice went on and on. Every time he'd raise an objection, it'd be "Objection sustained," but whenever Dan'l objected, it'd be "Objection denied." Well, you couldn't expect fair play from a fellow like this Mr. Scratch.

It got to Dan'l in the end, and he began to heat, like iron in the forge. When he got up to speak he was going to flay that stranger with every trick known to the law, and the judge and jury too. He didn't care if it was contempt of court or what would happen to him for it. He didn't care any more what happened to Jabez Stone. He just got madder and madder, thinking of what he'd say. And yet, curiously enough, the more he thought about it, the less he was able to arrange his speech in his mind.

Till, finally, it was time for him to get up on his feet, and he did so, all ready to bust out with lightnings and denunciations. But before he started he looked over the judge and jury for a moment, such being his custom. And he noticed the glitter in their eyes was twice as strong as before, and they all leaned forward. Like hounds just before they get the fox, they looked, and the blue mist of evil in the room thickened as he watched them. Then he saw what he'd been about to do, and wiped his forehead, as a man might who's just escaped falling into a pit in the dark.

For it was him they'd come for, not only

Jabez Stone. He read it in the glitter of their eyes and in the way the stranger hid his mouth with one hand. And if he fought them with their own weapons, he'd fall into their power; he knew that, though he couldn't have told you how. It was his own anger and horror that burned in their eyes; and he'd have to wipe that out or the case was lost. He stood there for a moment, his black eyes burning like anthracite. And then he began to speak.

He started off in a low voice, though you could hear every word. They say he could call on the harps of the blessed when he chose. And this was just as simple and easy as a man could talk. But he didn't start out by condemning or reviling. He was talking about things that make a country a country, and a man a man.

And he began with the simple things that everybody's known and felt—the freshness of a fine morning when you're young, and the taste of food when you're hungry, and the new day that's every day when you're a child. He took them up and he turned them in his hands. They were good things for any man. But without freedom, they sickened. And when he talked of those enslaved, and the sorrows of slavery, his voice got like a big bell. He talked of the early days of America and the men who had made those days. It wasn't a spread-eagle speech, but he made you see it. He admitted all the wrong that had ever been done. But he showed how, out of the wrong and the right, the suffering and the starvations, something new had come. And everybody had played a part in it, even the traitors.

Then he turned to Jabez Stone and showed him as he was—an ordinary man who'd had hard luck and wanted to change it. And because he'd wanted to change it, now he was going to be punished for all eternity. And yet there was good in Jabez Stone, and he showed that good. He was hard and mean, in some ways, but he was a man. There was sadness in being a man, but it was a proud thing too. And he showed what the pride of it was till you couldn't help feeling it. Yes, even in hell, if a man was a man, you'd know it. And he wasn't pleading for any person any more, though his voice rang like an organ. He was telling the story and the failures and the endless journey of mankind. They got tricked and trapped and bamboozled, but it was a great journey. And

no demon that was ever foaled could know the inwardness of it—it took a man to do that.

The fire began to die on the hearth and the wind before morning to blow. The light was getting gray in the room when Dan'l Webster finished. And his words came back at the end to New Hampshire ground, and the one spot of land that each man loves and clings to. He painted a picture of that, and to each one of that jury he spoke of things long forgotten. For his voice could search the heart, and that was his gift and his strength. And to one, his voice was like the forest and its secrecy, and to another like the sea and the storms of the sea; and one heard the cry of his lost nation in it, and another saw a little harmless scene he hadn't remembered for years. But each saw something. And when Dan'l Webster finished he didn't know whether or not he'd saved Jabez Stone. But he knew he'd done a miracle. For the glitter was gone from the eyes of judge and jury, and, for the moment, they were men again, and knew they were men.

"The defense rests," said Dan'l Webster, and stood there like a mountain. His ears were still ringing with his speech, and he didn't hear anything else till he heard Judge Hathorne say, "The jury will retire to consider the verdict."

Walter Butler rose in his place and his face had a dark, gay pride on it.

"The jury has considered its verdict," he said, and looked the stranger full in the eye. "We find for the defendant, Jabez Stone."

With that, the smile left the stranger's face, but Walter Butler did not flinch.

"Perhaps 'tis not strictly in accordance with the evidence," he said, "but even the damned may salute the eloquence of Mr. Webster."

With that, the long crow of a rooster split the gray morning sky, and judge and jury were gone from the room like a puff of smoke and as if they had never been there. The stranger turned to Dan'l Webster, smiling wryly.

"Major Butler was always a bold man," he said. "I had not thought him quite so bold. Nevertheless, my congratulations, as between two gentlemen."

"I'll have that paper first, if you please," said Dan'l Webster, and he took it and tore it into four pieces. It was queerly warm to the touch. "And now," he said, "I'll have you!" and his hand came down like a bear trap on the stran-

ger's arm. For he knew that once you had bested anybody like Mr. Scratch in fair fight, his power on you was gone. And he could see that Mr. Scratch knew it too.

The stranger twisted and wriggled, but he couldn't get out of that grip. "Come, come, Mr. Webster," he said, smiling palely. "This sort of thing is ridic—ouch!—is ridiculous. If you're worried about the costs of the case, naturally, I'd be glad to pay—"

"And so you shall!" said Dan'l Webster, shaking him till his teeth rattled. "For you'll sit right down at that table and draw up a document, promising never to bother Jabez Stone nor his heirs or assigns nor any other New Hampshireman till doomsday! For any hades we want to raise in this state, we can raise ourselves, without assistance from strangers."

"Ouch!" said the stranger. "Ouch! Well, they never did run very big to the barrel, but—ouch!—I agree."

So he sat down and drew up the document. But Dan'l Webster kept his hand on his coat collar all the time.

"And now, may I go?" said the stranger, quite humble, when Dan'l'd seen the document was in proper and legal form.

"Go?" said Dan'l, giving him another shake. "I'm still trying to figure out what I'll do with you. For you've settled the costs of the case, but you haven't settled with me. I think I'll take you back to Marshfield," he said kind of reflective. "I've got a ram there named Goliath that can butt through an iron door. I'd kind of like to turn you loose in his field and see what he'd do."

Well, with that the stranger began to beg and to plead. And he begged and he pled so humble that finally, Dan'l, who was naturally kindhearted, agreed to let him go. The stranger seemed terribly grateful for that and said, just to show they were friends, he'd tell Dan'l's fortune before leaving. So Dan'l agreed to that, though he didn't take much stock in fortune-tellers ordinarily. But, naturally, the stranger was a little different.

Well, he pried and peered at the lines in Dan'l's hands. And he told him one thing and another that was quite remarkable. But they were all in the past.

"Yes, all that's true, and it happened," said

Dan'l Webster. "But what's to come in the future?"

The stranger grinned, kind of happily, and shook his head.

"The future's not as you think it," he said. "It's dark. You have a great ambition, Mr. Webster."

"I have," said Dan'l firmly, for everybody knew he wanted to be President.

"It seems almost within your grasp," said the stranger, "but you will not attain it. Lesser men will be made President and you will be passed over."

"And, if I am, I'll still be Dan'l Webster," said Dan'l. "Say on."

"You have two strong sons," said the stranger, shaking his head. "You look to found a line. But each will die in war and neither reach greatness."

"Live or die, they are still my sons," said Dan'l Webster. "Say on."

"You have made great speeches," said the stranger. "You will make more."

"Ah," said Dan'l Webster.

"But the last great speech you make will turn many of your own against you," said the stranger. "They will call you Ichabod; they will call you by other names. Even in New England, some will say you have turned your coat and sold your country, and their voices will be loud against you till you die."

"So it is an honest speech, it does not matter what men say," said Dan'l Webster. Then he looked at the stranger and their glances locked.

"One question," he said. "I have fought for the Union all my life. Will I see that fight won against those who would tear it apart?"

"Not while you live," said the stranger, grimly. "but it will be won. And after you are dead, there are thousands who will fight for your cause, because of words that you spoke."

"Why, then, you long-barreled, slab-sided, lantern-jawed, fortune-telling note shaver!" said Dan'l Webster, with a great roar of laughter, "be off with you to your own place before I put my mark on you! For, by the thirteen original colonies, I'd go to the Pit itself to save the Union!"

And with that he drew back his foot for a kick that would have stunned a horse. It was only the tip of his shoe that caught the stran-

ger, but he went flying out of the door with his collection box under his arm.

"And now," said Dan'l Webster, seeing Jabez Stone beginning to rouse from his swoon, "let's see what's left in the jug, for it's dry work talking all night. I hope there's pie for breakfast, Neighbor Stone."

And they say that whenever the devil comes near Marshfield, even now, he gives it a wide berth. And he hasn't been seen in the state of New Hampshire from that day to this. I'm not talking about Massachusetts or Vermont.

JOHN STEINBECK

One of America's most popular novelists, John Steinbeck (1902-) was born and grew up in Salinas, California. He attended Stanford University from 1919 through 1925, leaving the University occasionally to work as a day laborer. Using his intimate knowledge of industrial and agricultural conditions in Salinas Valley as background material, Steinbeck has written perceptively of the place of the "common" man in society. His novels transcend the merely proletarian, reflect a love of humanity and a deep faith in the essential goodness of man. His popularity began with Tortilla Flat, 1935, an affectionate portrayal of the paisanos of Monterey. In Dubious Battle, 1936, is a labor novel; The Grapes of Wrath, 1939, exhibits Steinbeck's vivid descriptive writing and movingly reaffirms his faith in the ability of man to make a positive adjustment in the economic struggle. Other novels, novelettes, and short-story volumes are The Pastures of Heaven, 1932; Of Mice and Men, 1937; Sea of Cortez, 1941; The Moon Is Down, 1942; Cannery Row, 1945; and The Wayward Bus, 1947. "The Leader of the People" is a penetrating story in which irony of situation—a small boy alone appreciating an old man's pride in accomplishment—is delicately and subtly achieved.

THE LEADER OF THE PEOPLE¹

On Saturday afternoon Billy Buck, the ranch-hand, raked together the last of the old year's haystack and pitched small forkfuls over

the wire fence to a few mildly interested catt High in the air small clouds like puffs of cann smoke were driven eastward by the Mar wind. The wind could be heard whishing in t brush on the ridge crests, but no breath of penetrated down into the ranch-cup.

The little boy, Jody, emerged from the hou eating a thick piece of buttered bread. He sa Billy working on the last of the haystack. Jod tramped down scuffing his shoes in a way l had been told was destructive to good sho leather. A flock of white pigeons flew out of th black cypress tree as Jody passed, and circle the tree and landed again. A half-grow tortoise-shell cat leaped from the bunkhou porch, galloped on stiff legs across the roac whirled and galloped back again. Jody picke up a stone to help the game along, but he wa too late, for the cat was under the porch be fore the stone could be discharged. He thre the stone into the cypress tree and started th white pigeons on another whirling flight.

Arriving at the used-up haystack, the boy leaned against the barbed wire fence. "Wil that be all of it, do you think?" he asked.

The middle-aged ranch-hand stopped his careful raking and stuck his fork into the ground. He took off his black hat and smoothe down his hair. "Nothing left of it that isn't soggy from ground moisture," he said. He replaced his hat and rubbed his dry leathery hands together.

"Ought to be plenty mice," Jody suggested. "Lousy with them," said Billy. "Just crawling with mice."

"Well, maybe, when you get all through, I could call the dogs and hunt the mice."

"Sure, I guess you could," said Billy Buck. He lifted a forkful of the damp ground-hay and threw it into the air. Instantly three mice leaped out and burrowed frantically under the hay again.

Jody sighed with satisfaction. Those plump, sleek, arrogant mice were doomed. For eight months they had lived and multiplied in the haystack. They had been immune from cats, from traps, from poison and from Jody. They had grown smug in their security, overbearing and fat. Now the time of disaster had come; they would not survive another day.

Billy looked up at the top of the hills that surrounded the ranch. "Maybe you better ask

¹ From *The Portable Steinbeck*, copyright, 1938, 1943, by John Steinbeck. Reprinted by permission of The Viking Press, Inc., New York.

your father before you do it," he suggested.

"Well, where is he? I'll ask him now."

"He rode up to the ridge ranch after dinner. He'll be back pretty soon."

Jody slumped against the fence post. "I don't think he'd care."

As Billy went back to his work he said ominously, "You'd better ask him anyway. You know how he is."

Jody did know. His father, Carl Tiflin, insisted upon giving permission for anything that was done on the ranch, whether it was important or not. Jody sagged farther against the post until he was sitting on the ground. He looked up at the little puffs of wind-driven cloud. "Is it like to rain, Billy?"

"It might. The wind's good for it, but not strong enough."

"Well, I hope it don't rain until after I kill those damn mice." He looked over his shoulder to see whether Billy had noticed the mature profanity. Billy worked on without comment.

Jody turned back and looked at the side-hill where the road from the outside world came down. The hill was washed with lean March sunshine. Silver thistles, blue lupins and a few poppies bloomed among the sage bushes. Half-way up the hill Jody could see Doubletree Mutt, the black dog, digging in a squirrel hole. He paddled for a while and then paused to kick bursts of dirt out between his hind legs, and then he dug with an earnestness which belied the knowledge he must have had that no dog had ever caught a squirrel by digging in a hole.

Suddenly, while Jody watched, the black dog stiffened, and backed out of the hole and looked up the hill toward the cleft in the ridge where the road came through. Jody looked up too. For a moment Carl Tiflin on horseback stood out against the pale sky and then he moved down the road toward the house. He carried something white in his hand.

The boy started to his feet. "He's got a letter," Jody cried. He trotted away toward the ranch house, for the letter would probably be read aloud and he wanted to be there. He reached the house before his father did, and ran in. He heard Carl dismount from his creaking saddle and slap the horse on the side to send it to the barn where Billy would unsaddle it and turn it out.

Jody ran into the kitchen. "We got a letter!" he cried.

His mother looked up from a pan of beans. "Who has?"

"Father has. I saw it in his hand."

Carl strode into the kitchen then, and Jody's mother asked, "Who's the letter from, Carl?"

He frowned quickly. "How did you know there was a letter?"

She nodded her head in the boy's direction. "Big-Britches Jody told me."

Jody was embarrassed.

His father looked down at him contemptuously. "He is getting to be a Big-Britches." Carl said. "He's minding everybody's business but his own. Got his big nose into everything."

Mrs. Tiflin relented a little. "Well, he hasn't enough to keep him busy. Who's the letter from?"

Carl still frowned on Jody. "I'll keep him busy if he isn't careful." He held out a sealed letter. "I guess it's from your father."

Mrs. Tiflin took a hairpin from her head and slit open the flap. Her lips pursed judiciously. Jody saw her eyes snap back and forth over the lines. "He says," she translated, "he says he's going to drive out Saturday to stay for a little while. Why, this is Saturday. The letter must have been delayed." She looked at the postmark. "This was mailed day before yesterday. It should have been here yesterday." She looked up questioningly at her husband and then her face darkened angrily. "Now what have you got that look on you for? He doesn't come often."

Carl turned his eyes away from her anger. He could be stern with her most of the time, but when occasionally her temper arose, he could not combat it.

"What's the matter with you?" she demanded again.

In his explanation there was a tone of apology Jody himself might have used. "It's just that he talks," Carl said lamely. "Just talks."

"Well, what of it? You talk yourself."

"Sure I do. But your father only talks about one thing."

"Indians!" Jody broke in excitedly. "Indians and crossing the plains!"

Carl turned fiercely on him. "You get out, Mr. Big-Britches! Go on, now! Get out!"

Jody went miserably out the back door and closed the screen with elaborate quietness. Under the kitchen window his shamed, downcast eyes fell upon a curiously shaped stone, a stone of such fascination that he squatted down and picked it up and turned it over in his hands.

The voices came clearly to him through the open kitchen window. "Jody's damn well right," he heard his father say. "Just Indians and crossing the plains. I've heard that story about how the horses got driven off about a thousand times. He just goes on and on, and he never changes a word in the things he tells."

When Mrs. Tiffin answered, her tone was so changed that Jody, outside the window, looked up from his study of the stone. Her voice had become soft and explanatory. Jody knew how her face would have changed to match the tone. She said quietly, "Look at it this way, Carl. That was the big thing in my father's life. He led a wagon train clear across the plains to the coast, and when it was finished, his life was done. It was a big thing to do, but it didn't last long enough. Look!" she continued, "it's as though he was born to do that, and after he finished it, there wasn't anything more for him to do but think about it and talk about it. If there'd been any farther west to go, he'd have gone. He's told me so himself. But at last there was the ocean. He lives right by the ocean where he had to stop."

She had caught Carl, caught him and entangled him in her soft tone.

"I've seen him," he agreed quietly. "He goes down and stares off west over the ocean." His voice sharpened a little. "And then he goes up to the Horseshoe Club in Pacific Grove, and he tells people how the Indians drove off the horses."

She tried to catch him again. "Well, it's everything to him. You might be patient with him and pretend to listen."

Carl turned impatiently away. "Well, if it gets too bad, I can always go down to the bunkhouse and sit with Billy," he said irritably. He walked through the house and slammed the front door after him.

Jody ran to his chores. He dumped the grain to the chickens without chasing any of them. He gathered the eggs from the nests. He trotted into the house with the wood and interlaced

it so carefully in the woodbox that two armloads seemed to fill it to overflowing.

His mother had finished the beans by now. She stirred up the fire and brushed off the stove-top with a turkey wing. Jody peered cautiously at her to see whether any rancor toward him remained. "Is he coming today?" Jody asked.

"That's what his letter said."

"Maybe I better walk up the road to meet him."

Mrs. Tiffin clanged the stove-lid shut. "That would be nice," she said. "He'd probably like to be met."

"I guess I'll just do it then."

Outside, Jody whistled shrilly to the dogs. "Come on up the hill," he commanded. The two dogs waved their tails and ran ahead. Along the roadside the sage had tender new tips. Jody tore off some pieces and rubbed them on his hands until the air was filled with the sharp wild smell. With a rush the dogs leaped from the road and yapped into the brush after a rabbit. That was the last Jody saw of them, for when they failed to catch the rabbit, they went back home.

Jody plodded on up the hill toward the ridge top. When he reached the little cleft where the road came through, the afternoon wind struck him and blew up his hair and ruffled his shirt. He looked down on the little hills and ridges below and then out at the huge green Salinas Valley. He could see the white town of Salinas far out in the flat and the flash of its windows under the waning sun. Directly below him, in an oak tree, a crow congress had convened. The tree was black with crows all cawing at once.

Then Jody's eyes followed the wagon road down from the ridge where he stood, and lost it behind a hill, and picked it up again on the other side. On that distant stretch he saw a cart slowly pulled by a bay horse. It disappeared behind the hill. Jody sat down on the ground and watched the place where the cart would reappear again. The wind sang on the hilltops and the puff-ball clouds hurried eastward.

Then the cart came into sight and stopped. A man dressed in black dismounted from the seat and walked to the horse's head. Although it was so far away, Jody knew he had un-

hooked the check-rein, for the horse's head dropped forward. The horse moved on, and the man walked slowly up the hill beside it. Jody gave a glad cry and ran down the road toward them. The squirrels bumped along off the road, and a roadrunner flitted its tail and raced over the edge of the hill and sailed out like a glider.

Jody tried to leap into the middle of his shadow at every step. A stone rolled under his foot and he went down. Around a little bend he raced, and there, a short distance ahead, were his grandfather and the cart. The boy dropped from his unseemly running and approached at a dignified walk.

The horse plodded stumble-footedly up the hill and the old man walked beside it. In the lowering sun their giant shadows flickered darkly behind them. The grandfather was dressed in a black broadcloth suit and he wore kid congress gaiters and a black tie on a short, hard collar. He carried his black slouch hat in his hand. His white beard was cropped close and his white eyebrows overhung his eyes like moustaches. The blue eyes were sternly merry. About the whole face and figure there was a granite dignity, so that every motion seemed an impossible thing. Once at rest, it seemed the old man would be stone, would never move again. His steps were slow and certain. Once made, no step could ever be retraced; once headed in a direction, the path would never bend nor the pace increase nor slow.

When Jody appeared around the bend, Grandfather waved his hat slowly in welcome, and he called, "Why, Jody! Come down to meet me, have you?"

Jody sidled near and turned and matched his step to the old man's step and stiffened his body and dragged his heels a little. "Yes, sir," he said. "We got your letter only today."

"Should have been here yesterday," said Grandfather. "It certainly should. How are all the folks?"

"They're fine, sir." He hesitated and then suggested slyly, "Would you like to come on a mouse hunt tomorrow, sir?"

"Mouse hunt, Jody?" Grandfather chuckled. "Have the people of this generation come down to hunting mice? They aren't very strong, the new people,* but I hardly thought mice would be game for them."

"No, sir. It's just play. The haystack's gone. I'm going to drive out the mice to the dogs. And you can watch, or even beat the hay a little."

5 The stern, merry eyes turned down on him. "I see. You don't eat them, then. You haven't come to that yet."

Jody explained, "The dogs eat them, sir. It wouldn't be much like hunting Indians, I 10 guess.

"No, not much—but then later, when the troops were hunting Indians and shooting children and burning tepees, it wasn't much different from your mouse hunt."

15 They topped the rise and started down into the ranch cup, and they lost the sun from their shoulders. "You've grown," Grandfather said. "Nearly an inch, I should say."

"More," Jody boasted. "Where they mark 20 me on the door, I'm up more than an inch since Thanksgiving even."

Grandfather's rich throaty voice said, "Maybe you're getting too much water and turning to pith and stalk. Wait until you head 25 out, and then we'll see."

Jody looked quickly into the old man's face to see whether his feelings should be hurt, but there was no will to injure, no punishing nor putting-in-your-place light in the keen blue eyes. "We might kill a pig," Jody suggested.

"Oh, no! I couldn't let you do that. You're just humoring me. It isn't the time and you know it."

"You know Riley, the big boar, sir?"

35 "Yes. I remember Riley well."

"Well, Riley ate a hole into that same haystack, and it fell down on him and smothered him."

"Pigs do that when they can," said Grandfather.

"Riley was a nice pig, for a boar, sir. I rode him sometimes, and he didn't mind."

A door slammed at the house below them, and they saw Jody's mother standing on the porch waving her apron in welcome. And they saw Carl Tiflin walking up from the barn to be at the house for the arrival.

The sun had disappeared from the hills by now. The blue smoke from the house chimney hung in flat layers in the purpling ranch-cup. The puff-ball clouds, dropped by the falling wind, hung listlessly in the sky.

Billy Buck came out of the bunkhouse and flung a wash basin of soapy water on the ground. He had been shaving in mid-week, for Billy held Grandfather in reverence, and Grandfather said that Billy was one of the few men of the new generation who had not gone soft. Although Billy was in middle age, Grandfather considered him a boy. Now Billy was hurrying toward the house too.

When Jody and Grandfather arrived, the three were waiting for them in front of the yard gate.

Carl said, "Hello, sir. We've been looking for you."

Mrs. Tiffin kissed Grandfather on the side of his beard, and stood still while his big hand patted her shoulder. Billy shook hands solemnly, grinning under his straw moustache. "I'll put up your horse," said Billy, and he led the rig away.

Grandfather watched him go, and then, turning back to the group, he said as he had said a hundred times before, "There's a good boy. I knew his father, old Mule-tail Buck. I never knew why they called him Mule-tail except he packed mules."

Mrs. Tiffin turned and led the way into the house. "How long are you going to stay, Father? Your letter didn't say."

"Well, I don't know. I thought I'd stay about two weeks. But I never stay as long as I think I'm going to."

In a short while they were sitting at the white oilcloth table eating their supper. The lamp with the tin reflector hung over the table. Outside the dining-room windows the big moths battered softly against the glass.

Grandfather cut his steak into tiny pieces and chewed slowly. "I'm hungry," he said. "Driving out here got my appetite up. It's like when we were crossing. We all got so hungry every night we could hardly wait to let the meat get done. I could eat about five pounds of buffalo meat every night."

"It's moving around does it," said Billy. "My father was a government packer. I helped him when I was a kid. Just the two of us could about clean up a deer's ham."

"I knew your father, Billy," said Grandfather. "A fine man he was. They called him Mule-tail Buck. I don't know why except he packed mules."

"That was it," Billy agreed. "He packed mules."

Grandfather put down his knife and fork and looked around the table. "I remember one time we ran out of meat—" His voice dropped to a curious low sing-song, dropped into a tonal groove the story had worn for itself. "There was no buffalo, no antelope, not even rabbits. The hunters couldn't even shoot a coyote. That was the time for the leader to be on the watch. I was the leader, and I kept my eyes open, know why? Well, just the minute the people began to get hungry they'd start slaughtering the team oxen. Do you believe that? I've heard of parties that just ate up their draft cattle. Started from the middle and worked towards the ends. Finally they'd eat the lead pair, and then the wheelers. The leader of a party had to keep them from doing that."

In some manner a big moth got into the room and circled the hanging kerosene lamp. Billy got up and tried to clap it between his hands. Carl struck with a cupped palm and caught the moth and broke it. He walked to the window and dropped it out.

"As I was saying," Grandfather began again, but Carl interrupted him. "You better eat some more meat. All the rest of us are ready for our pudding."

Jody saw a flash of anger in his mother's eyes. Grandfather picked up his knife and fork. "I'm pretty hungry, all right," he said. "I'll tell you about that later."

When supper was over, when the family and Billy Buck sat in front of the fireplace in the other room, Jody anxiously watched Grandfather. He saw the signs he knew. The bearded head leaned forward; the eyes lost their sternness and looked wonderingly into the fire; the big lean fingers laced themselves on the black knees. "I wonder," he began, "I just wonder whether I ever told you how those thieving Piutes drove off thirty-five of our horses."

"I think you did," Carl interrupted. "Wasn't it just before you went up into the Tahoe country?"

Grandfather turned quickly toward his son-in-law. "That's right. I guess I must have told you that story."

"Lots of times," Carl said cruelly, and he avoided his wife's eyes. But he felt the angry

eyes on him, and he said, " 'Course I'd like to hear it again."

Grandfather looked back at the fire. His fingers unlaced and laced again. Jody knew how he felt, how his insides were collapsed and empty. Hadn't Jody been called a Big-Britches that very afternoon? He arose to heroism and opened himself to the term Big-Britches again. "Tell about Indians," he said softly.

Grandfather's eyes grew stern again. "Boys 10 always want to hear about Indians. It was a job for men, but boys want to hear about it. Well, let's see. Did I ever tell you how I wanted each wagon to carry a long iron plate?"

Everyone but Jody remained silent. Jody 15 said. "No. You didn't."

"Well, when the Indians attacked, we always put the wagons in a circle and fought from between the wheels. I thought that if every wagon carried a long plate with rifle holes, the men could stand the plates on the outside of the wheels when the wagons were in the circle and they would be protected. It would save lives and that would make up for the extra weight of the iron. But of course the party 25 wouldn't do it. No party had done it before and they couldn't see why they should go to the expense. They lived to regret it, too."

Jody looked at his mother, and knew from her expression that she was not listening at all. 30 Carl picked at a callus on his thumb and Billy Buck watched a spider crawling up the wall.

Grandfather's tone dropped into its narrative groove again. Jody knew in advance exactly what words would fall. The story droned on, 35 speeded up for the attack, grew sad over the wounds, struck a dirge at the burials on the great plains. Jody sat quietly watching Grandfather. The stern blue eyes were detached. He looked as though he were not very interested 40 in the story himself.

When it was finished, when the pause had been politely respected as the frontier of the story, Billy Buck stood up and stretched and hitched his trousers. "I guess I'll turn in," 45 he said. Then he faced Grandfather. "I've got an old powder horn and a cap and ball pistol down to the bunkhouse. Did I ever show them to you?"

Grandfather nodded slowly. "Yes, I think you 50 did, Billy. Reminds me of a pistol I had when I was leading the people across." Billy stood po-

lately until the little story was done, and then he said, "Good night," and went out of the house.

Carl Tiffin tried to turn the conversation 5 then. "How's the country between here and Monterey? I've heard it's pretty dry."

"It is dry," said Grandfather. "There's not a drop of water in the Laguna Seca. But it's a long pull from '87. The whole country was powder then, and in '81 I believe all the coyotes starved to death. We had fifteen inches of rain this year."

"Yes, but it all came too early. We could do with some now." Carl's eye fell on Jody. "Hadn't you better be getting to bed?"

Jody stood up obediently. "Can I kill the mice in the old haystack, sir?"

"Mice? Oh! Sure, kill them all off. Billy said there isn't any good hay left."

Jody exchanged a secret and satisfying look 20 with Grandfather. "I'll kill every one tomorrow," he promised.

Jody lay in his bed and thought of the impossible world of Indians and buffaloes, a world that had ceased to be forever. He wished he could have been living in the heroic time, but he knew he was not of heroic timber. No one living now, save possibly Billy Buck, was worthy to do the things that had been done. A race of giants had lived then, fearless men, men of a staunchness unknown in this day. Jody thought of the wide plains and of the wagons moving across like centipedes. He thought of Grandfather on a huge white horse, marshaling 35 the people. Across his mind marched the great phantoms, and they marched off the earth and they were gone.

He came back to the ranch for a moment, then. He heard the dull rushing sound that space and silence make. He heard one of the dogs, out in the doghouse, scratching a flea and bumping his elbow against the floor with every stroke. Then the wind arose again and the black cypress groaned and Jody went to sleep.

He was up half an hour before the triangle sounded for breakfast. His mother was rattling the stove to make the flames roar when Jody went through the kitchen. "You're up early," she said. "Where are you going?"

"Out to get a good stick. We're going to kill the mice today."

"Who is 'we'?"

"Why, Grandfather and I."

"So, you've got him in it. You always like to have someone in with you in case there's blame to share."

"I'll be right back," said Jody. "I just want to have a good stick ready for after breakfast."

He closed the screen door after him and went out into the cool blue morning. The birds were noisy in the dawn and the ranch cats came down from the hill like blunt snakes. They had been hunting gophers in the dark, and although the four cats were full of gopher meat, they sat in a semi-circle at the back door and mewed piteously for milk. Doubletree Mutt and Smasher moved sniffing along the edge of the brush, performing the duty with rigid ceremony, but when Jody whistled, their heads jerked up and their tails waved. They plunged down to him, wriggling their skins and yawning. Jody patted their heads seriously, and moved on to the weathered scrap pile. He selected an old broom handle and a short piece of inch-square scrap wood. From his pocket he took a shoelace and tied the ends of the sticks loosely together to make a flail. He whistled his new weapon through the air and struck the ground experimentally, while the dogs leaped aside and whined with apprehension.

Jody turned and started down past the house toward the old haystack ground to look over the field of slaughter, but Billy Buck, sitting patiently on the back steps, called to him, "You better come back. It's only a couple of minutes till breakfast."

Jody changed his course and moved toward the house. He leaned his flail against the steps. "That's to drive the mice out," he said. "I'll bet they're fat. I'll bet they don't know what's going to happen to them today."

"No, nor you either," Billy remarked philosophically, "nor me, nor anyone."

Jody was staggered by this thought. He knew it was true. His imagination twitched away from the mouse hunt. Then his mother came out on the back porch and struck the triangle, and all thoughts fell in a heap.

Grandfather hadn't appeared at the table when they sat down. Billy nodded at his empty chair. "He's all right? He isn't sick?"

"He takes a long time to dress," said Mrs. Tiffin. "He combs his whiskers and rubs up his shoes and brushes his clothes."

Carl scattered sugar on his mush. "A man that's led a wagon train across the plains has got to be pretty careful how he dresses."

Mrs. Tiffin turned on him. "Don't do that, Carl! Please don't!" There was more of threat than of request in her tone. And the threat irritated Carl.

"Well, how many times do I have to listen to the story of the iron plates, and the thirty-five horses? That time's done. Why can't he forget it, now it's done?" He grew angrier while he talked, and his voice rose. "Why does he have to tell them over and over? He came across the plains. All right! Now it's finished. Nobody wants to hear about it over and over."

The door into the kitchen closed softly. The four at the table sat frozen. Carl laid his mush spoon on the table and touched his chin with his fingers.

Then the kitchen door opened and Grandfather walked in. His mouth smiled tightly and his eyes were squinted. "Good morning," he said, and he sat down and looked at his mush dish.

Carl could not leave it there. "Did—did you hear what I said?"

Grandfather jerked a little nod.

"I don't know what got into me, sir. I didn't mean it. I was just being funny."

Jody glanced in shame at his mother, and he saw that she was looking at Carl, and that she wasn't breathing. It was an awful thing that he was doing. He was tearing himself to pieces to talk like that. It was a terrible thing to him to retract a word, but to retract it in shame was infinitely worse.

Grandfather looked sidewise. "I'm trying to get right side up," he said gently. "I'm not being mad. I don't mind what you said, but it might be true, and I would mind that."

"It isn't true," said Carl. "I'm not feeling well this morning. I'm sorry I said it."

"Don't be sorry, Carl. An old man doesn't see things sometimes. Maybe you're right. The crossing is finished. Maybe it should be forgotten, now it's done."

Carl got up from the table. "I've had enough to eat. I'm going to work. Take your time, Billy!" He walked quickly out of the dining-room. Billy gulped the rest of his food and followed soon after. But Jody could not leave his chair.

"Won't you tell any more stories?" Jody asked.

"Why, sure I'll tell them, but only when—I'm sure people want to hear them."

"I like to hear them, sir."

"Oh! Of course you do, but you're a little boy. It was a job for men, but only little boys like to hear about it."

Jody got up from his place. "I'll wait outside for you, sir. I've got a good stick for those mice."

He waited by the gate until the old man came out on the porch. "Let's go down and kill the mice now," Jody called.

"I think I'll just sit in the sun, Jody. You go kill the mice."

"You can use my stick if you like."

"No, I'll just sit here a while."

Jody turned disconsolately away and walked down toward the old haystack. He tried to whip up his enthusiasm with thoughts of the fat juicy mice. He beat the ground with his flail. The dogs coaxed and whined about him, but he could not go. Back at the house he could see Grandfather sitting on the porch, looking small and thin and black.

Jody gave up and went to sit on the steps at the old man's feet.

"Back already? Did you kill the mice?"

"No, sir. I'll kill them some other day."

The morning flies buzzed close to the ground and the ants dashed about in front of the steps. The heavy smell of sage slipped down the hill. The porch boards grew warm in the sunshine.

Jody hardly knew when Grandfather started to talk. "I shouldn't stay here, feeling the way I do." He examined his strong old hands "I feel as though the crossing wasn't worth doing." His eyes moved up the side-hill and stopped on a motionless hawk perched on a dead limb. "I tell those old stories, but they're not what I want to tell. I only know how I want people to feel when I tell them.

"It wasn't Indians that were important, nor adventures, nor even getting out here. It was a whole bunch of people made into one big crawling beast. And I was the head. It was westering and westering. Every man wanted something for himself, but the big beast that was all of them wanted only westering. I was the leader, but if I hadn't been there, someone

else would have been the head. The thing had to have a head.

"Under the little bushes the shadows were black at white noonday. When we saw the mountains at last, we cried—all of us. But it wasn't getting here that mattered, it was movement and westering.

"We carried life out here and set it down the way those ants carry eggs. And I was the leader. The westering was as big as God, and the slow steps that made the movement piled up and piled up until the continent was crossed.

"Then we came down to the sea, and it was done." He stopped and wiped his eyes until the rims were red. "That's what I should be telling instead of stories."

When Jody spoke, Grandfather started and looked down at him. "Maybe I could lead the people some day," Jody said.

The old man smiled. "There's no place to go. There's the ocean to stop you. There's a line of old men along the shore hating the ocean because it stopped them."

"In boats I might, sir."

"No place to go, Jody. Every place is taken. But that's not the worst—no, not the worst. Westering has died out of the people. Westering isn't a hunger any more. It's all done. Your father is right. It is finished." He laced his fingers on his knee and looked at them.

Jody felt very sad. "If you'd like a glass of lemonade I could make it for you."

Grandfather was about to refuse, and then he saw Jody's face. "That would be nice," he said. "Yes, it would be nice to drink a lemonade."

Jody ran into the kitchen where his mother was wiping the last of the breakfast dishes. "Can I have a lemon to make a lemonade for Grandfather?"

His mother mimicked—"And another lemon to make a lemonade for you."

"No, ma'am. I don't want one."

"Jody! You're sick!" Then she stopped suddenly. "Take a lemon out of the cooler," she said softly. "Here, I'll reach the squeezer down to you."

JAMES GROVER THURBER

James Grover Thurber (1894—) is better known as an essayist and cartoonist than as a

short-story writer (see II, 377). In 1926 he began writing for the *New Yorker*, accompanying many of his contributions with line drawings which sharply, sometimes acidly, express his views of life. Among his works are a play, *The Male Animal* (with Elliott Nugent), 1940, and miscellaneous collections of essays and autobiography: *The Owl in the Attic*, 1931; *The Middle-Aged Man on the Flying Trapeze*, 1935; *Let Your Mind Alone*, 1937; *Men, Women, and Dogs*, 1943; *The Thurber Carnival*, 1945; and *The White Deer*, 1945. "*The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*," also a successful motion picture, is a wryly amusing sketch of inhibition and a shrewd commentary on the humdrum quality of twentieth-century life.

THE SECRET LIFE OF
WALTER MITTY¹

"We're going through!" The Commander's voice was like thin ice breaking. He wore his full-dress uniform, with the heavily braided white cap pulled down rakishly over one cold gray eye. "We can't make it, sir. It's spoiling for a hurricane, if you ask me." "I'm not asking you, Lieutenant Berg," said the Commander. "Throw on the power lights! Rev her up to 8,500! We're going through!" The pounding of the cylinders increased: ta-pocketa-pocketa-pocketa-pocketa-pocketa. The Commander stared at the ice forming on the pilot window. He walked over and twisted a row of complicated dials. "Switch on No. 8 auxiliary!" he shouted. "Switch on No. 8 auxiliary!" repeated Lieutenant Berg. "Full strength in No. 3 turret!" shouted the Commander. "Full strength in No. 3 turret!" The crew, bending to their various tasks in the huge, hurtling eight-engined Navy hydroplane, looked at each other and grinned. "The Old Man'll get us through," they said to one another. "The Old Man ain't afraid of Hell!" . . .

"Not so fast! You're driving too fast!" said Mrs. Mitty. "What are you driving so fast for?"

"Hm?" said Walter Mitty. He looked at his wife, in the seat beside him, with shocked astonishment. She seemed grossly unfamiliar, like a strange woman who had yelled at him in

a crowd. "You were up to fifty-five," she said. "You know I don't like to go more than forty. You were up to fifty-five." Walter Mitty drove on toward Waterbury in silence, the roaring of the SN202 through the worst storm in twenty years of Navy flying fading in the remote, intimate airways of his mind. "You're tensed up again," said Mrs. Mitty. "It's one of your days. I wish you'd let Dr. Renshaw look you over."

Walter Mitty stopped the car in front of the building where his wife went to have her hair done. "Remember to get those overshoes while I'm having my hair done," she said. "I don't need overshoes," said Mitty. She put her mirror back into her bag. "We've been all through that," she said, getting out of the car. "You're not a young man any longer." He raced the engine a little. "Why don't you wear your gloves? Have you lost your gloves?" Walter Mitty reached in a pocket and brought out the gloves. He put them on, but after she had turned and gone into the building and he had driven on to a red light, he took them off again. "Pick it up, brother!" snapped a cop as the light changed, and Mitty hastily pulled on his gloves and lurched ahead. He drove around the streets aimlessly for a time, and then he drove past the hospital on his way to the parking lot.

. . . "It's the millionaire banker, Wellington McMillan," said the pretty nurse. "Yes?" said Walter Mitty, removing his gloves slowly. "Who has the case?" "Dr. Renshaw and Dr. Benbow, but there are two specialists here, Dr. Remington from New York and Mr. Pritchard-Mitford from London. He flew over." A door opened down a long, cool corridor and Dr. Renshaw came out. He looked distraught and haggard. "Hello, Mitty," he said. "We're having the devil's own time with McMillan, the millionaire banker and close personal friend of Roosevelt. Obstreosis of the ductal tract. Tertiary. Wish you'd take a look at him." "Glad to," said Mitty.

In the operating room there were whispered introductions: "Dr. Remington, Dr. Mitty. Mr. Pritchard-Mitford, Dr. Mitty." "I've read your book on streptothricosis," said Pritchard-Mitford, shaking hands. "A brilliant performance sir." "Thank you," said Walter Mitty. "Didn't know you were in the States, Mitty," grumbled Remington. "Coals to Newcastle, bringing Mitford and me up here for a tertiary." "You are

¹ From *My World—And Welcome to It* by James Thurber; copyright, 1943, by James Thurber. Reprinted by permission.

very kind," said Mitty. A huge, complicated machine, connected to the operating table with many tubes and wires, began at this moment to go pocketa-pocketa-pocketa. "The new anestheticizer is giving way!" shouted an interne. "There is no one in the East who knows how to fix it!" "Quiet, man!" said Mitty, in a low, cool voice. He sprang to the machine, which was now going pocketa-pocketa-queep-pocketa-queep. He began fingering delicately a row of glistening dials. "Give me a fountain pen!" he snapped. Someone handed him a fountain pen. He pulled a faulty piston out of the machine and inserted the pen in its place. "That will hold for ten minutes," he said. "Get on with the operation." A nurse hurried over and whispered to Renshaw, and Mitty saw the man turn pale. "Coreopsis has set in," said Renshaw nervously. "If you would take over, Mitty?" Mitty looked at him and at the craven figure of Benbow, who drank, and at the grave, uncertain faces of the two great specialists. "If you wish," he said. They slipped a white gown on him; he adjusted a mask and drew on thin gloves; nurses handed him shining . . .

"Back it up, Mac! Look out for that Buick!" Walter Mitty jammed on the brakes. "Wrong lane, Mac," said the parking-lot attendant, looking at Mitty closely. "Gee. Yeh," muttered Mitty. He began cautiously to back out of the lane marked "Exit Only." "Leave her sit there," said the attendant. "I'll put her away." Mitty got out of the car. "Hey, better leave the keys." "Oh," said Mitty, handing the man the ignition key. The attendant vaulted into the car, backed it up with insolent skill, and put it where it belonged.

They're so damn cocky, thought Walter Mitty, walking along Main Street; they think they know everything. Once he had tried to take his chains off, outside New Milford, and he had got them wound around the axles. A man had had to come out in a wrecking car and unwind them, a young, grinning garageman. Since then Mrs. Mitty always made him drive to a garage to have the chains taken off. The next time, he thought, I'll wear my right arm in a sling; they won't grin at me then. I'll have my right arm in a sling and they'll see I couldn't possibly take the chains off myself. He kicked at the slush on the sidewalk. "Overshoes," he said to himself, and he began looking for a shoe store.

When he came out into the street again, with the overshoes in a box under his arm, Walter Mitty began to wonder what the other thing was his wife had told him to get. She had told him twice before they set out from their house for Waterbury. In a way he hated these weekly trips to town—he was always getting something wrong. Kleenex, he thought. Squibb's, razor blades? No. Toothpaste, toothbrush, bicarbonate, carborundum, initiative and referendum? He gave it up. But she would remember it. "Where's the what's-its-name?" she would ask. "Don't tell me you forgot the what's-its-name." A newsboy went by shouting something about the Waterbury trial.

. . . "Perhaps this will refresh your memory." The District Attorney suddenly thrust a heavy automatic at the quiet figure on the witness stand. "Have you ever seen this before?" Walter Mitty took the gun and examined it expertly. "This is my Webley-Vickers 50.80," he said calmly. An excited buzz ran around the courtroom. The judge rapped for order. "You are a crack shot with any sort of firearms, I believe?" said the District Attorney, insinuatingly. "Objection!" shouted Mitty's attorney. "We have shown that the defendant could not have fired the shot. We have shown that he wore his right arm in a sling on the night of the fourteenth of July." Walter Mitty raised his hand briefly and the bickering attorneys were stilled. "With any known make of gun," he said evenly, "I could have killed Gregory Fitzhust at three hundred feet *with my left hand.*" Pandemonium broke loose in the courtroom. A woman's scream rose above the bedlam and suddenly a lovely, dark-haired girl was in Walter Mitty's arms. The District Attorney struck at her savagely. Without rising from his chair, Mitty let the man have it on the point of the chin. "You miserable cur!" . . .

"Puppy biscuit," said Walter Mitty. He stopped walking and the buildings of Waterbury rose up out of the misty courtroom and surrounded him again. A woman who was passing laughed. "He said 'Puppy biscuit,'" she said to her companion. "That man said 'Puppy biscuit' to himself." Walter Mitty hurried on. He went into an A. & P., not the first one he came to but a smaller one farther up the street. "I want some biscuit for small, young dogs," he said to the clerk. "Any special brand, sir?" The

greatest pistol shot in the world thought a moment. "It says 'Puppies Bark for It' on the box," said Walter Mitty.

His wife would be through at the hairdresser's in fifteen minutes, Mitty saw in looking at his watch, unless they had trouble drying it; sometimes they had trouble drying it. She didn't like to get to the hotel first; she would want him to be there waiting for her as usual. He found a big leather chair in the lobby, facing a window, and he put the overshoes and the puppy biscuit on the floor beside it. He picked up an old copy of *Liberty* and sank down into the chair. "Can Germany Conquer the World Through the Air?" Walter Mitty looked at the pictures of bombing planes and of ruined streets.

... "The cannonading has got the wind up in young Raleigh, sir," said the sergeant. Captain Mitty looked up at him through tousled hair. "Get him to bed," he said wearily. "With the others. I'll fly alone." "But you can't, sir," said the sergeant anxiously. "It takes two men to handle that bomber and the Archies are pounding hell out of the air. Von Richtman's circus is between here and Saulier." "Somebody's got to get that ammunition dump," said Mitty. "I'm going over. Spot of brandy?" He poured a drink for the sergeant and one for himself. War thundered and whined around the dugout and battered at the door. There was a rending of wood and splinters flew through the room. "A bit of a near thing," said Captain Mitty carelessly. "The box barrage is closing in," said the sergeant. "We only live once, Sergeant," said Mitty, with his faint, fleeting smile. "Or do we?" He poured another brandy and tossed it off. "I never see a man could hold his brandy like you, sir," said the sergeant. "Begging your pardon, sir." Captain Mitty stood up and strapped on his huge Webley-Vickers automatic. "It's forty kilometers through hell, sir," said the sergeant. Mitty finished one last brandy. "After all," he said softly, "what isn't?" The pounding of the cannon increased; there was the rat-tat-tatting of machine guns, and from somewhere came the menacing pocketa-pocketa-pocketa of the new flame-throwers. Walter Mitty walked to the door of the dugout humming "Au près de Ma Blonde." He turned and waved to the sergeant. "Cheerio!" he said. ...

Something struck his shoulder. "I've been looking all over this hotel for you," said Mrs. Mitty. "Why do you have to hide in this old chair? How did you expect me to find you?"

5 "Things close in," said Walter Mitty vaguely. "What?" Mrs. Mitty said. "Did you get the what's-its-name? The puppy biscuit? What's in that box?" "Overshoes," said Mitty. "Couldn't you have put them on in the store?" "I was thinking," said Walter Mitty. "Does it ever occur to you that I am sometimes thinking?" She looked at him. "I'm going to take your temperature when I get you home," she said.

They went out through the revolving doors 15 that made a faintly derisive whistling sound when you pushed them. It was two blocks to the parking lot. At the drugstore on the corner she said, "Wait here for me. I forgot something. I won't be a minute." She was more than a 20 minute. Walter Mitty lighted a cigarette. It began to rain, rain with sleet in it. He stood up against the wall of the drugstore, smoking. ... He put his shoulders back and his heels together. "To hell with the handkerchief," said 25 Walter Mitty scornfully. He took one last drag on his cigarette and snapped it away. Then, with that faint, fleeting smile playing about his lips, he faced the firing squad; erect and motionless, proud and disdainful, Walter Mitty 30 the Undefeated, inscrutable to the last.

HENRY JAMES

35 *A New Yorker by birth, Henry James (1843–1916) lived intermittently in America and Europe, finally settling in England in 1877 and becoming a British subject in 1915. James was a prolific writer of criticism, long and short stories, and novels. A conscientious artist, he examined comparatively the cultures and moral values of his native country and Europe. His writings are noteworthy for their subtle psychological analysis done in an oblique, convoluted style. Among his long stories are "Daisy Miller," 40 1878; "An International Episode," 1879; and "The Turn of the Screw," 1898. Major novels include The American, 1877; The Portrait of a Lady, 1881; The Bostonians, 1886; The Wings of the Dove, 1902; The Ambassadors, 1903; The Golden Bowl, 1904. Typically, "The Lesson of the Master" subordinates incident, high-*

lights psychological reactions of character to situation, and thematically concerns itself with artistic values. This long story, together with those of Conrad and Cather which follow, illustrates narrative principles and techniques which apply to both the novel and the short story.

THE LESSON OF THE MASTER

1

He had been informed that the ladies were at church, but that was corrected by what he saw from the top of the steps (they descended from a great height in two arms, with a circular sweep of the most charming effect) at the threshold of the door which, from the long, bright gallery, overlooked the immense lawn. Three gentlemen, on the grass, at a distance, sat under the great trees; but the fourth figure was not a gentleman, the one in the crimson dress which made so vivid a spot, told so as a "bit of colour" amid the fresh, rich green. The servant had come so far with Paul Overt to show him the way and had asked him if he wished first to go to his room. The young man declined this privilege, having no disorder to repair after so short and easy a journey and liking to take a general perceptive possession of the new scene immediately, as he always did. He stood there a little with his eyes on the group and on the admirable picture—the wide grounds of an old country-house near London (that only made it better,) on a splendid Sunday in June. "But that lady, who is she?" he said to the servant before the man went away.

"I think it's Mrs. St. George, sir."

"Mrs. St. George, the wife of the distinguished—" Then Paul Overt checked himself, doubting whether the footman would know.

"Yes, sir—probably, sir," said the servant, who appeared to wish to intimate that a person staying at Summersoft would naturally be, if only by alliance, distinguished. His manner, however, made poor Overt feel for the moment as if he himself were but little so.

"And the gentlemen?" he inquired.

"Well, sir, one of them is General Fancourt."

"Ah yes, I know; thank you." General Fancourt was distinguished, there was no doubt of that, for something he had done, or perhaps even had not done (the young man could not

remember which) some years before in India. The servant went away, leaving the glass doors open into the gallery, and Paul Overt remained at the head of the wide double staircase, saying to himself that the place was sweet and promised a pleasant visit, while he leaned on the balustrade of fine old ironwork which, like all the other details, was of the same period as the house. It all went together and spoke in one voice—a rich English voice of the early part of the eighteenth century. It might have been church-time on a summer's day in the reign of Queen Anne; the stillness was too perfect to be modern, the nearness counted so as distance and there was something so fresh and sound in the originality of the large smooth house, the expanse of whose beautiful brickwork, which had been kept clear of messy creepers (as a woman with a rare complexion disdains a veil), was pink rather than red. When Paul Overt perceived that the people under the trees were noticing him he turned back through the open doors into the great gallery which was the pride of the place. It traversed the mansion from end to end and seemed—with its bright colors, its high panelled windows, its faded, flowered chintzes, its quickly-recognized portraits and pictures, the blue and white china of its cabinets and the attenuated festoons and rosettes of its ceiling—a cheerful upholstered avenue into the other century.

The young man was slightly nervous; that belonged in general to his disposition as a student of fine prose, with his dose of the artist's restlessness; and there was a particular excitement in the idea that Henry St. George might be a member of the party. For the younger writer he had remained a high literary figure, in spite of the lower range of production to which he had fallen after his three first great successes, the comparative absence of quality in his later work. There had been moments when Paul Overt almost shed tears upon this; but now that he was near him (he had never met him) he was conscious only of the fine original source and of his own immense debt. After he had taken a turn or two up and down the gallery he came out again and descended the steps. He was but slenderly supplied with a certain social boldness (it was really a weakness in him) so that, conscious of a want of acquaintance with the four persons in the dis-

tance, he indulged in a movement as to which he had a certain safety in feeling that it did not necessarily appear to commit him to an attempt to join them. There was a fine English awkwardness in it—he felt this too as he sauntered vaguely and obliquely across the lawn, as if to take an independent line. Fortunately there was an equally fine English directness in the way one of the gentlemen presently rose and made as if to approach him, with an air of conciliation and reassurance. To this demonstration Paul Overt instantly responded, though he knew the gentleman was not his host. He was tall, straight and elderly, and had a pink, smiling face and a white moustache. Our young man met him half way while he laughed and said: “A— Lady Watermouth told us you were coming; she asked me just to look after you.” Paul Overt thanked him (he liked him without delay,) and turned round with him, walking toward the others. “They’ve all gone to church—all except us,” the stranger continued as they went; “we’re just sitting here—it’s so jolly.” Overt rejoined that it was jolly indeed—it was such a lovely place; he mentioned that he had not seen it before—it was a charming impression.

“Ah, you’ve not been here before?” said his companion. “It’s a nice little place—not much to do, you know.” Overt wondered what he wanted to “do”—he felt as if he himself were doing a good deal. By the time they came to where the others sat he had guessed his initiator was a military man, and (such was the turn of Overt’s imagination), this made him still more sympathetic. He would naturally have a passion for activity—for deeds at variance with the pacific, pastoral scene. He was evidently so good-natured, however, that he accepted the inglorious hour for what it was worth. Paul Overt shared it with him and with his companions for the next twenty minutes; the latter looked at him and he looked at them without knowing much who they were, while the talk went on without enlightening him much as to what it was about. It was indeed about nothing in particular, and wandered, with casual, pointless pauses and short terrestrial flights, amid the names of persons and places—names which, for him, had no great power of evocation. It was all sociable and slow, as was right and natural on a warm Sunday morning.

Overt’s first attention was given to the question, privately considered, of whether one of the two younger men would be Henry St. George. He knew many of his distinguished contemporaries by their photographs, but he had never, as it happened, seen a portrait of the great misguided novelist. One of the gentlemen was out of the question—he was too young; and the other scarcely looked clever enough, with such mild, indiscriminating eyes. If those eyes were St. George’s the problem presented by the ill-matched parts of his genius was still more difficult of solution. Besides, the deportment of the personage possessing them was not, as regards the lady in the red dress, such as could be natural, towards his wife, even to a writer accused by several critics of sacrificing too much to manner. Lastly, Paul Overt had an indefinite feeling that if the gentleman with the sightless eyes bore the name that had set his heart beating faster (he also had contradictory, conventional whiskers—the young admirer of the celebrity had never in a mental vision seen his face in so vulgar a frame), he would have given him a sign of recognition or of friendliness—would have heard of him a little, would know something about *Ginistrella*, would have gathered at least that that recent work of fiction had made an impression on the discerning. Paul Overt had a dread of being grossly proud, but it seemed to him that his self-consciousness took no undue license in thinking that the authorship of *Ginistrella* constituted a degree of identity. His soldierly friend became clear enough; he was “Fancourt,” but he was also the General; and he mentioned to our young man in the course of a few moments that he had but lately returned from twenty years’ service abroad.

“And do you mean to remain in England?” Overt asked.

“Oh yes, I have bought a little house in London.”

“And I hope you like it,” said Overt, looking at Mrs. St. George.

“Well, a little house in Manchester Square—there’s a limit to the enthusiasm that that inspires.”

“Oh, I meant being at home again—being in London.”

“My daughter likes it—that’s the main thing. She’s very fond of art and music and literature

and all that kind of thing. She missed it in India and she finds it in London, or she hopes she will find it. Mr. St. George has promised to help her—he has been awfully kind to her. She has gone to church—she's fond of that too—but they'll all be back in a quarter of an hour. You must let me introduce you to her—she will be so glad to know you. I dare say she has read every word you have written."

"I shall be delighted—I haven't written very many," said Overt, who felt without resentment that the General at least was very vague about that. But he wondered a little why, since he expressed his friendly disposition, it did not occur to him to pronounce the word which would put him in relation with Mrs. St. George. If it was a question of introductions Miss Fancourt (apparently she was unmarried) was far away and the wife of his illustrious *confrère* was almost between them. This lady struck Paul Overt as a very pretty woman, with a surprising air of youth and a high smartness of aspect which seemed to him (he could scarcely have said why,) a sort of mystification. St. George certainly had every right to a charming wife, but he himself would never have taken the important little woman in the aggressively Parisian dress for the domestic partner of a man of letters. That partner in general, he knew, was far from presenting herself in a single type: his observation had instructed him that she was not inveterately, not necessarily dreary. But he had never before seen her look so much as if her prosperity had deeper foundations than an ink-spotted study-table littered with proof-sheets. Mrs. St. George might have been the wife of a gentleman who "kept" books rather than wrote them, who carried on great affairs in the City and made better bargains than those that poets make with publishers. With this she hinted at a success more personal, as if she had been the most characteristic product of an age in which society, the world of conversation, is a great drawing-room with the City for its antechamber. Overt judged her at first to be about thirty years of age; then, after a while, he perceived that she was much nearer fifty. But she juggled away the twenty years somehow—you only saw them in a rare glimpse, like the rabbit in the conjurer's sleeve. She was extraordinarily white, and everything about her was pretty—her eyes,

her ears, her hair, her voice, her hands, her feet (to which her relaxed attitude in her wicker chair gave a great publicity,) and the numerous ribbons and trinkets with which she was bedecked. She looked as if she had put on her best clothes to go to church and then had decided that they were too good for that and had stayed at home. She told a story of some length about the shabby way Lady Jane had treated the Duchess, as well as an anecdote in relation to a purchase she had made in Paris (on her way back from Cannes) for Lady Egbert, who had never refunded the money. Paul Overt suspected her of a tendency to figure great people as larger than life, until he noticed the manner in which she handled Lady Egbert, which was so subversive that it reassured him. He felt that he should have understood her better if he might have met her eye; but she scarcely looked at him. "Ah, here they come—all the good ones!" she said at last; and Paul Overt saw in the distance the return of the churchgoers—several persons, in couples and threes, advancing in a flicker of sun and shade at the end of a large green vista formed by the level grass and the overarching boughs.

"If you mean to imply that we are bad, I protest," said one of the gentlemen—"after making oneself agreeable all the morning!"

"Ah, if they've found you agreeable!" Mrs. St. George exclaimed, smiling. "But if we are good the others are better."

"They must be angels then," observed the General.

"Your husband was an angel, the way he went off at your bidding," the gentleman who had first spoken said to Mrs. St. George.

"At my bidding?"

"Didn't you make him go to church?"

"I never made him do anything in my life but once, when I made him burn up a bad book. That's all!" At her "That's all!" Paul broke into an irrepressible laugh; it lasted only a second, but it drew her eyes to him. His own met them, but not long enough to help him to understand her; unless it were a step towards this that he felt sure on the instant that the burnt book (the way she alluded to it!) was one of her husband's finest things.

"A bad book?" her interlocutor repeated.

"I didn't like it. He went to church because your daughter went," she continued, to General

Fancourt. "I think it my duty to call your attention to his demeanor to your daughter."

"Well, if you don't mind it, I don't," the General laughed.

"*Il s'attache à ses pas.*¹ But I don't wonder—she's so charming."

"I hope she won't make him burn any books!" Paul Overt ventured to exclaim.

"If she would make him write a few it would be more to the purpose," said Mrs. St. George. "He has been of an indolence this year!"

Our young man stared—he was so struck with the lady's phraseology. Her "write a few" seemed to him almost as good as her "That's all." Didn't she, as the wife of a rare artist, know what it was to produce *one* perfect work of art? How in the world did she think they were turned off? His private conviction was that admirably as Henry St. George wrote, he had written for the last ten years, and especially for the last five, only too much, and there was an instant during which he felt the temptation to make this public. But before he had spoken a diversion was effected by the return of the absent guests. They strolled up dispersedly—there were eight or ten of them—and the circle under the trees rearranged itself as they took their place in it. They made it much larger; so that Paul Overt could feel (he was always feeling that sort of thing, as he said to himself,) that if the company had already been interesting to watch it would now become a great deal more so. He shook hands with his hostess, who welcomed him without many words, in the manner of a woman able to trust him to understand—conscious that, in every way, so pleasant an occasion would speak for itself. She offered him no particular facility for sitting by her, and when they had all subsided again he found himself still next to General Fancourt, with an unknown lady on his other flank.

"That's my daughter—that one opposite," the General said to him without loss of time. Overt saw a tall girl, with magnificent red hair, in a dress of a pretty grey-green tint and of a limp silken texture, in which every modern effect had been avoided. It had therefore some-

how the stamp of the latest thing, so that Overt quickly perceived she was eminently a contemporary young lady.

"She's very handsome—very handsome," he repeated, looking at her. There was something noble in her head, and she appeared fresh and strong.

Her father surveyed her with complacency; then he said: "She looks too hot—that's her walk. But she'll be all right presently. Then I'll make her come over and speak to you."

"I should be sorry to give you that trouble; if you were to take me over there—" the young man murmured.

"My dear sir, do you suppose I put myself out that way? I don't mean for you, but for Marian," the General added.

"I would put myself out for her, soon enough," Overt replied; after which he went on: "Will you be so good as to tell me which of those gentlemen is Henry St. George?"

"The fellow talking to my girl. By Jove, he is making up to her—they're going off for another walk."

"Ah, is that he, really?" The young man felt a certain surprise, for the personage before him contradicted a preconception which had been vague only till it was confronted with the reality. As soon as this happened the mental image, retiring with a sigh, became substantial enough to suffer a slight wrong. Overt, who had spent a considerable part of his short life in foreign lands, made now, but not for the first time, the reflection that whereas in those countries he had almost always recognised the artist and the man of letters by his personal "type," the mould of his face, the character of his head, the expression of his figure and even the indications of his dress, in England this identification was as little as possible a matter of course, thanks to the greater conformity, the habit of sinking the profession instead of advertising it, the general diffusion of the air of the gentleman—the gentleman committed to no particular set of ideas. More than once, on returning to his own country, he had said to himself in regard to the people whom he met in society: "One sees them about and one even talks with them; but to find out what they *do* one would really have to be a detective." In respect to several individuals whose work he was unable to like (perhaps he was wrong) he found himself adding,

¹ Literally: "He attaches himself to her footsteps."

"No wonder they conceal it—it's so bad!" He observed that oftener than in France and in Germany his artist looked like a gentleman (that is, like an English one,) while he perceived that outside of a few exceptions his gentleman didn't look like an artist. St. George was not one of the exceptions; that circumstance he definitely apprehended before the great man had turned his back to walk off with Miss Fancourt. He certainly looked better behind than any foreign man of letters, and beautifully correct in his tall black hat and his superior frock coat. Somehow, all the same, these very garments (he wouldn't have minded them so much on a weekday) were disconcerting to Paul Overt, who forgot for the moment that the head of the profession was not a bit better dressed than himself. He had caught a glimpse of a regular face, with a fresh colour, a brown moustache and a pair of eyes surely never visited by a fine frenzy, and he promised himself to study it on the first occasion. His temporary opinion was that St. George looked like a lucky stockbroker—a gentleman driving eastward every morning from a sanitary suburb in a smart dog-cart. That carried out the impression already derived from his wife. Paul Overt's glance, after a moment, travelled back to this lady, and he saw that her own had followed her husband as he moved off with Miss Fancourt. Overt permitted himself to wonder a little whether she were jealous when another woman took him away. Then he seemed to perceive that Mrs. St. George was not glaring at the indifferent maiden—her eyes rested only on her husband, and with unmistakable serenity. That was the way she wanted him to be—she liked his conventional uniform. Overt had a great desire to hear more about the book she had induced him to destroy.

2

As they all came out from luncheon General Fancourt took hold of Paul Overt and exclaimed, "I say, I want you to know my girl!" as if the idea had just occurred to him and he had not spoken of it before. With the other hand he possessed himself of the young lady and said: "You know all about him. I've seen you with his books. She reads everything—everything!" he added to the young man. The girl smiled at him and then laughed at her

father. The General turned away and his daughter said:

"Isn't papa delightful?"

"He is indeed, Miss Fancourt."

5 "As if I read you because I read 'everything!'"

"Oh, I don't mean for saying that," said Paul Overt. "I liked him from the moment he spoke to me. Then he promised me this privilege."

10 "It isn't for you he means it, it's for me. If you flatter yourself that he thinks of anything in life but me you'll find you are mistaken. He introduces every one to me. He thinks me insatiable."

15 "You speak like him," said Paul Overt, laughing.

"Ah, but sometimes I want to," the girl replied, colouring. "I don't read everything—I read very little. But I *have* read you."

20 "Suppose we go into the gallery," said Paul Overt. She pleased him greatly, not so much because of this last remark (though that of course was not disagreeable to him) as because, seated opposite to him at luncheon, she had given him for half an hour the impression of her beautiful face. Something else had come with it—a sense of generosity, of an enthusiasm which, unlike many enthusiasms, was not all manner. That was not spoiled for him by the circumstance that the repast had placed her again in familiar contact with Henry St. George. Sitting next to her he was also opposite to our young man, who had been able to observe that he multiplied the attentions which his wife had brought to the General's notice. Paul Overt had been able to observe further that this lady was not in the least decomposed by these demonstrations and that she gave every sign of an unclouded spirit. She had Lord Masham on one side of her and on the other the accomplished Mr. Mulliner, editor of the new high-class, lively evening paper which was expected to meet a want felt in circles increasingly conscious that Conservatism must be made amusing, and unconvinced when assured by those of another political colour that it was already amusing enough. At the end of an hour spent in her company Paul Overt thought her still prettier than she had appeared to him at first, and if her profane allusions to her husband's work had not still rung in his ears he should have liked her—so far as it could be

a question of that in connection with a woman to whom he had not yet spoken and to whom probably he should never speak if it were left to her. Pretty women evidently were necessary to Henry St. George, and for the moment it was Miss Fancourt who was most indispensable. If Overt had promised himself to take a better look at him the opportunity now was of the best, and it brought consequences which the young man felt to be important. He saw more in his face, and he liked it the better for its not telling its whole story in the first three minutes. That story came out as one read, in little instalments (it was excusable that Overt's mental comparisons should be somewhat professional,) and the text was a style considerably involved—a language not easy to translate at sight. There were shades of meaning in it and a vague perspective of history which receded as you advanced. Of two facts Paul Overt had taken especial notice. The first of these was that he liked the countenance of the illustrious novelist much better when it was in repose than when it smiled; the smile displeased him (as much as anything from that source could), whereas the quiet face had a charm which increased in proportion as it became completely quiet. The change to the expression of gaiety excited on Overt's part a private protest which resembled that of a person sitting in the twilight and enjoying it, when the lamp is brought in too soon. His second reflection was that, though generally he disliked the sight of a man of that age using arts to make himself agreeable to a pretty girl, he was not struck in this case by the ugliness of the thing, which seemed to prove that St. George had a light hand or the air of being younger than he was, or else that Miss Fancourt showed that *she* was not conscious of an anomaly.

Overt walked with her into the gallery, and they strolled to the end of it, looking at the pictures, the cabinets, the charming vista, which harmonised with the prospect of the summer afternoon, resembling it in its long brightness, with great divans and old chairs like hours of rest. Such a place as that had the added merit of giving persons who came into it plenty to talk about. Miss Fancourt sat down with Paul Overt on a flowered sofa, the cushions of which, very numerous, were tight, ancient cubes, of many sizes, and presently she said:

"I'm so glad to have a chance to thank you."

"To thank me?"

"I liked your book so much. I think it's splendid."

5 She sat there smiling at him, and he never asked himself which book she meant; for after all he had written three or four. That seemed a vulgar detail, and he was not even gratified by the idea of the pleasure she told him—her
10 bright, handsome face told him—he had given her. The feeling she appealed to, or at any rate the feeling she excited, was something larger—something that had little to do with any quickened pulsation of his own vanity. It was responsive admiration of the life she embodied,
15 the young purity and richness of which appeared to imply that real success was to resemble *that*, to live, to bloom, to present the perfection of a fine type, not to have hammered
20 out headachy fancies with a bent back at an ink-stained table. While her grey eyes rested on him (there was a wideish space between them, and the division of her rich-coloured hair, which was so thick that it ventured to be
25 smooth, made a free arch above them,) he was almost ashamed of that exercise of the pen which it was her present inclination to eulogise. He was conscious that he should have liked better to please her in some other way. The
30 lines of her face were those of a woman grown, but there was something childish in her complexion and the sweetness of her mouth. Above all she was natural—that was indubitable now—more natural than he had
35 supposed at first, perhaps on account of her æsthetic drapery, which was conventionally unconventional, suggesting a tortuous spontaneity. He had feared that sort of thing in other cases, and his fears had been justified; though
40 he was an artist to the essence, the modern reactionary nymph, with the brambles of the woodland caught in her folds and a look as if the satyrs had toyed with her hair, was apt to make him uncomfortable. Miss Fancourt was
45 really more candid than her costume, and the best proof of it was her supposing that such garments suited her liberal character. She was robed like a pessimist, but Overt was sure she liked the taste of life. He thanked her for her
50 appreciation—aware at the same time that he didn't appear to thank her enough and that she might think him ungracious. He was afraid she

would ask him to explain something that he had written, and he always shrank from that (perhaps too timidly) for to his own ear the explanation of a work of art sounded fatuous. But he liked her so much as to feel a confidence that in the long run he should be able to show her that he was not rudely evasive. Moreover it was very certain that she was not quick to take offence; she was not irritable, she could be trusted to wait. So when he said to her, "Ah! don't talk of anything I have done, *here*; there is another man in the house who is the actuality!" when he uttered this short, sincere protest, it was with the sense that she would see in the words neither mock humility nor the ungraciousness of a successful man bored with praise.

"You mean Mr. St. George—isn't he delightful?"

Paul Overt looked at her a moment; there was a species of morning-light in her eyes.

"Alas, I don't know him. I only admire him at a distance."

"Oh, you must know him—he wants so to talk to you," rejoined Miss Fancourt, who evidently had the habit of saying the things that, by her quick calculation, would give people pleasure. Overt divined that she would always calculate on everything's being simple between others.

"I shouldn't have supposed he knew anything about me," Paul said, smiling.

"He does then—everything. And if he didn't, I should be able to tell him."

"To tell him everything?"

"You talk just like the people in your book!" the girl exclaimed.

"Then they must all talk alike."

"Well, it must be so difficult. Mr. St. George tells me it is, terribly. I've tried too and I find it so. I've tried to write a novel."

"Mr. St. George oughtn't to discourage you," said Paul Overt.

"You do much more—when you wear that expression."

"Well, after all, why try to be an artist?" the young man went on. "It's so poor—so poor!"

"I don't know what you mean," said Marian Fancourt, looking grave.

"I mean as compared with being a person of action—as *living* your works."

"But what is art but a life—if it be real?"

asked the girl. "I think it's the only one—everything else is so clumsy!" Paul Overt laughed, and she continued: "It's so interesting, meeting so many celebrated people."

"So I should think; but surely it isn't new to you."

"Why, I have never seen any one—any one: living always in Asia."

"But doesn't Asia swarm with personages? Haven't you administered provinces in India and had captive rajahs and tributary princes chained to your ear?"

"I was with my father, after I left school to go out there. It was delightful being with him—we are alone together in the world, he and I—but there was none of the society I like best. One never heard of a picture—never of a book, except bad ones."

"Never of a picture? Why, wasn't all life a picture?"

Miss Fancourt looked over the delightful place where they sat. "Nothing to compare with this. I adore England!" she exclaimed.

"Ah, of course I don't deny that we must do something with it yet."

"It hasn't been touched, really," said the girl.

"Did Henry St. George say that?"

There was a small and, as he felt it, venial intention of irony in his question; which, however, the girl took very simply, not noticing the insinuation. "Yes, he says it has not been touched—not touched comparatively," she answered, eagerly. "He's so interesting about it. To listen to him makes one want so to do something."

"It would make me want to," said Paul Overt, feeling strongly, on the instant, the suggestion of what she said and of the emotion with which she said it, and what an incentive, on St. George's lips, such a speech might be.

"Oh, you—as if you hadn't! I should like so to hear you talk together," the girl added, ardently.

"That's very genial of you; but he would have it all his own way. I'm prostrate before him."

Marian Fancourt looked earnest for a moment. "Do you think then he's so perfect?"

"Far from it. Some of his later books seem to me awfully queer."

"Yes, yes—he knows that."

Paul Overt stared. "That they seem to me awfully queer?"

"Well, yes, or at any rate that they are not what they should be. He told me he didn't esteem them. He has told me such wonderful things—he's so interesting."

There was a certain shock for Paul Overt in the knowledge that the fine genius they were talking of had been reduced to so explicit a confession and had made it, in his misery, to the first comer; for though Miss Fancourt was charming, what was she after all but an immature girl encountered at a country-house? Yet precisely this was a part of the sentiment that he himself had just expressed; he would make way completely for the poor peccable great man, not because he didn't read him clear, but altogether because he did. His consideration was half composed of tenderness for superficialities which he was sure St. George judged privately with supreme sternness and which denoted some tragic intellectual secret. He would have his reasons for his psychology *à fleur de peau*,² and these reasons could only be cruel ones, such as would make him dearer to those who already were fond of him. "You excite my envy. I judge him, I discriminate—but I love him," Overt said in a moment. "And seeing him for the first time this way is a great event for me."

"How momentous—how magnificent!" cried the girl. "How delicious to bring you together!"

"Your doing it—that makes it perfect," Overt responded.

"He's as eager as you," Miss Fancourt went on. "But it's so odd you shouldn't have met."

"It's not so odd as it seems. I've been out of England so much—repeated absences during all these last years."

"And yet you write of it as well as if you were always here."

"It's just the being away perhaps. At any rate the best bits, I suspect, are those that were done in dreary places abroad."

"And why were they dreary?"

"Because they were health-resorts—where my poor mother was dying."

"Your poor mother?" the girl murmured, kindly.

"We went from place to place to help her to

get better. But she never did. To the deadly Riviera (I hate it!) to the high Alps, to Algiers, and far away—a hideous journey—to Colorado."

5 "And she isn't better?" Miss Fancourt went on.

"She died a year ago."

"Really?—like mine! Only that is far away. Some day you must tell me about your mother," she added.

Overt looked at her a moment. "What right things you say! If you say them to St. George I don't wonder he's in bondage."

15 "I don't know what you mean. He doesn't make speeches and professions at all—he isn't ridiculous."

"I'm afraid you consider that I am."

"No, I don't," the girl replied, rather shortly. "He understands everything."

20 Overt was on the point of saying jocosely: "And I don't—is that it?" But these words, before he had spoken, changed themselves into others slightly less trivial: "Do you suppose he understands his wife?"

25 Miss Fancourt made no direct answer to his question; but after a moment's hesitation she exclaimed: "Isn't she charming?"

"Not in the least!"

30 "Here he comes. Now you must know him," the girl went on. A small group of visitors had gathered at the other end of the gallery and they had been joined for a moment by Henry St. George, who strolled in from a neighbouring room. He stood near them a moment, not, apparently, falling into the conversation, but taking up an old miniature from a table and vaguely examining it. At the end of a minute he seemed to perceive Miss Fancourt and her companion in the distance; whereupon, laying down his miniature, he approached them with the same procrastinating air, with his hands in his pockets, looking to right and left at the pictures. The gallery was so long that this transit took some little time, especially as there was a moment when he stopped to admire the fine Gainsborough. "He says she has been the making of him," Miss Fancourt continued, in a voice slightly lowered.

45 "Ah, he's often obscure!" laughed Paul Overt.

"Obscure?" she repeated, interrogatively. Her eyes rested upon her other friend, and it

² skin-deep.

was not lost upon Paul that they appeared to send out great shafts of softness. "He is going to speak to us!" she exclaimed, almost breathlessly. There was a sort of rapture in her voice; Paul Overt was startled. "Bless my soul, is she so fond of him as that—is she in love with him?" he mentally inquired. "Didn't I tell you he was eager?" she added, to her companion.

"It's eagerness dissimulated," the young man rejoined, as the subject of their observation lingered before his Gainsborough. "He edges toward us shyly. Does he mean that she saved him by burning that book?"

"That book? what book did she burn?" The girl turned her face quickly upon him.

"Hasn't he told you, then?"

"Not a word."

"Then he doesn't tell you everything!" Paul Overt had guessed that Miss Fancourt pretty much supposed he did. The great man had now resumed his course and come nearer, nevertheless Overt risked the profane observation: "St. George and the dragon, the anecdote suggests!"

Miss Fancourt, however, did not hear it; she was smiling at her approaching friend. "He is eager—he is!" she repeated.

"Eager for you—yes."

The girl called out frankly, joyously: "I know you want to know Mr. Overt. You'll be great friends, and it will always be delightful to me to think that I was here when you first met and that I had something to do with it."

There was a freshness of intention in this speech which carried it off; nevertheless our young man was sorry for Henry St. George, as he was sorry at any time for any one who was publicly invited to be responsive and delightful. He would have been so contented to believe that a man he deeply admired attached an importance to him that he was determined not to play with such a presumption if it possibly were vain. In a single glance of the eye of the pardonable master he discovered (having the sort of divination that belonged to his talent) that this personage was full of general goodwill, but had not read a word he had written. There was even a relief, a simplification, in that: liking him so much already for what he had done, how could he like him more for having been struck with a certain promise? He got up, trying to show his compassion, but at the same instant he found himself encompassed

by St. George's happy personal art—a manner of which it was the essence to conjure away false positions. It all took place in a moment. He was conscious that he knew him now, 5 conscious of his handshake and of the very quality of his hand; of his face, seen nearer and consequently seen better, of a general fraternising assurance, and in particular of the circumstance that St. George didn't dislike him 10 (as yet at least) for being imposed by a charming but too gushing girl, valuable enough without such dangles. At any rate no irritation was reflected in the voice with which he questioned Miss Fancourt in respect to some project of a 15 walk—a general walk of the company round the park. He had said something to Overt about a talk—"We must have a tremendous lot of talk; there are so many things, aren't there?"—but Paul perceived that this idea would not in the present case take very immediate effect. All 20 the same he was extremely happy, even after the matter of the walk had been settled (the three presently passed back to the other part of the gallery, where it was discussed with several members of the party) even when, after they had all gone out together, he found himself for half an hour in contact with Mrs. St. George. Her husband had taken the advance with Miss Fancourt, and this pair were quite 30 out of sight. It was the prettiest of rambles for a summer afternoon—a grassy circuit, of immense extent, skirting the limit of the park within. The park was completely surrounded by its old mottled but perfect red wall, which, 35 all the way on their left, made a picturesque accompaniment. Mrs. St. George mentioned to him the surprising number of acres that were thus enclosed, together with numerous other facts relating to the property and the family, and its other properties; she could not too 40 strongly urge upon him the importance of seeing their other houses. She ran over the names of these and rang the changes on them with the facility of practice, making them appear an almost endless list. She had received Paul Overt very amiably when he broke ground with her by telling her that he had just had the joy of making her husband's acquaintance, and struck him as so alert and so accommodating a little 50 woman that he was rather ashamed of his *mot* about her to Miss Fancourt; though he reflected that a hundred other people, on a hundred oc-

casions, would have been sure to make it. He got on with Mrs. St. George, in short, better than he expected; but this did not prevent her from suddenly becoming aware that she was faint with fatigue and must take her way back to the house by the shortest cut. She hadn't the strength of a kitten, she said—she was awfully seedy; a state of things that Overt had been too preoccupied to perceive—preoccupied with a private effort to ascertain in what sense she could be held to have been the making of her husband. He had arrived at a glimmering of the answer when she announced that she must leave him, though this perception was of course provisional. While he was in the very act of placing himself at her disposal for the return the situation underwent a change; Lord Masham suddenly turned up, coming back to them, overtaking them, emerging from the shrubbery—Overt could scarcely have said how he appeared, and Mrs. St. George had protested that she wanted to be left alone and not to break up the party. A moment later she was walking off with Lord Masham. Paul Overt fell back and joined Lady Watermouth, to whom he presently mentioned that Mrs. St. George had been obliged to renounce the attempt to go further.

"She oughtn't to have come out at all," her ladyship remarked, rather grumpily.

"Is she so very much of an invalid?"

"Very bad indeed." And his hostess added, with still greater austerity: "She oughtn't to come to stay with one!" He wondered what was implied by this, and presently gathered that it was not a reflection on the lady's conduct or her moral nature: it only represented that her strength was not equal to her aspirations.

3

The smoking-room at Summersoft was on the scale of the rest of the place; that is, it was high and light and commodious, and decorated with such refined old carvings and mouldings that it seemed rather a bower for ladies who should sit at work at fading crewels than a parliament of gentlemen smoking strong cigars. The gentlemen mustered there in considerable force on the Sunday evening, collecting mainly at one end, in front of one of the cool fair fireplaces of white marble, the entablature of which was adorned with a delicate little Italian

"subject." There was another in the wall that faced it, and, thanks to the mild summer night, there was no fire in either; but a nucleus for aggregation was furnished on one side by a table in the chimney-corner laden with bottles, decanters and tall tumblers. Paul Overt was an insincere smoker; he puffed cigarettes occasionally for reasons with which tobacco had nothing to do. This was particularly the case on the occasion of which I speak; his motive was the vision of a little direct talk with Henry St. George. The "tremendous" communion of which the great man had held out hopes to him earlier in the day had not yet come off, and this saddened him considerably, for the party was to go its several ways immediately after breakfast on the morrow. He had, however, the disappointment of finding that apparently the author of *Shadowmere* was not disposed to prolong his vigil. He was not among the gentlemen assembled in the smoking-room when Overt entered it, nor was he one of those who turned up, in bright habiliments, during the next ten minutes. The young man waited a little, wondering whether he had only gone to put on something extraordinary; this would account for his delay as well as contribute further to Overt's observation of his tendency to do the approved superficial thing. But he didn't arrive—he must have been putting on something more extraordinary than was probable. Paul gave him up, feeling a little injured, a little wounded at his not having managed to say twenty words to him. He was not angry, but he puffed his cigarette sighingly, with the sense of having lost a precious chance. He wandered away with his regret, moved slowly round the room, looking at the old prints on the walls. In this attitude he presently felt a hand laid on his shoulder and a friendly voice in his ear. "This is good. I hoped I should find you. I came down on purpose." St. George was there, without a change of dress and with a kind face—his graver one—to which Overt eagerly responded. He explained that it was only for the Master—the idea of a little talk—that he had sat up and that, not finding him, he had been on the point of going to bed.

"Well, you know, I don't smoke—my wife doesn't let me," said St. George, looking for a place to sit down. "It's very good for me—very good for me. Let us take that sofa."

"Do you mean smoking is good for you?"

"No, no, her not letting me. It's a great thing to have a wife who proves to one all the things one can do without. One might never find them out for oneself. She doesn't allow me to touch a cigarette."

They took possession of the sofa, which was at a distance from the group of smokers, and St. George went on: "Have you got one yourself?"

"Do you mean a cigarette?"

"Dear no! a wife."

"No; and yet I would give up my cigarette for one."

"You would give up a good deal more than that," said St. George. "However, you would get a great deal in return. There is a great deal to be said for wives," he added, folding his arms and crossing his outstretched legs. He declined tobacco altogether and sat there without returning fire. Paul Overt stopped smoking, touched by his courtesy; and after all they were out of the fumes, their sofa was in a far-away corner. It would have been a mistake, St. George went on, a great mistake for them to have separated without a little chat; "for I know all about you," he said, "I know you're very remarkable. You've written a very distinguished book."

"And how do you know it?" Overt asked.

"Why, my dear fellow, it's in the air, it's in the papers, it's everywhere," St. George replied, with the immediate familiarity of a *confrère*—a tone that seemed to his companion the very rustle of the laurel. "You're on all men's lips and, what's better, you're on all women's. And I've just been reading your book."

"Just? You hadn't read it this afternoon," said Overt.

"How do you know that?"

"You know how I know it," the young man answered, laughing.

"I suppose Miss Fancourt told you."

"No, indeed; she led me rather to suppose that you had."

"Yes; that's much more what she would do. Doesn't she shed a rosy glow over life? But you didn't believe her?" asked St. George.

"No, not when you came to us there."

"Did I pretend? did I pretend badly?" But without waiting for an answer to this St. George went on: "You ought always to believe

such a girl as that—always, always. Some women are meant to be taken with allowances and reserves; but you must take *her* just as she is."

"I like her very much," said Paul Overt.

5 Something in his tone appeared to excite on his companion's part a momentary sense of the absurd; perhaps it was the air of deliberation attending this judgment. St. George broke into a laugh and returned. "It's the best thing you can do with her. She's a rare young lady! In point of fact, however, I confess I hadn't read you this afternoon."

"Then you see how right I was in this particular case not to believe Miss Fancourt."

15 "How right? how can I agree to that, when I lost credit by it?"

"Do you wish to pass for exactly what she represents you? Certainly you needn't be afraid," Paul said.

20 "Ah, my dear young man, don't talk about passing—for the likes of me! I'm passing away—nothing else than that. She has a better use for her young imagination (isn't it fine?) than in 'representing' in any way such a weary, 25 wasted, used-up animal!" St. George spoke with a sudden sadness which produced a protest on Paul's part, but before the protest could be uttered he went on, reverting to the latter's successful novel: "I had no idea you were so good 30 —one hears of so many things. But you're surprisingly good."

"I'm going to be surprisingly better," said Overt.

"I see that and it's what fetches me. I don't see so much else—as one looks about—that's going to be surprisingly better. They're going to be consistently worse—most of the things. It's so much easier to be worse—heaven knows I've found it so. I'm not in a great glow, you know, 40 about what's being attempted, what's being done. But you *must* be better—you must keep it up. I haven't, of course. It's very difficult—that's the devil of the whole thing; but I see you can. It will be a great disgrace if you 45 don't."

"It's very interesting to hear you speak of yourself; but I don't know what you mean by your allusions to your having fallen off," Paul Overt remarked, with pardonable hypocrisy. He liked his companion so much now that it had ceased for the moment to be vivid to him that there had been any decline.

"Don't say that—don't say that," St. George replied gravely, with his head resting on the top of the back of the sofa and his eyes on the ceiling. "You know perfectly what I mean. I haven't read twenty pages of your book without seeing that you can't help it."

"You make me very miserable," Paul murmured.

"I'm glad of that, for it may serve as a kind of warning. Shocking enough it must be, especially to a young, fresh mind, full of faith,—the spectacle of a man meant for better things sunk at my age in such dishonour." St. George, in the same contemplative attitude, spoke softly but deliberately, and without perceptible emotion. His tone indeed suggested an impersonal lucidity which was cruel—cruel to himself—and which made Paul lay an argumentative hand on his arm. But he went on, while his eyes seemed to follow the ingenuities of the beautiful Adams ceiling: "Look at me well and take my lesson to heart, for it is a lesson. Let that good come of it at least that you shudder with your pitiful impression and that this may help to keep you straight in the future. Don't become in your old age what I am in mine—the depressing, the deplorable illustration of the worship of false gods!"

"What do you mean by your old age?" Paul Overt asked.

"It has made me old. But I like your youth."

Overt answered nothing—they sat for a minute in silence. They heard the others talking about the governmental majority. Then, "What do you mean by false gods?" Paul inquired.

"The idols of the market—money and luxury and 'the world,' placing one's children and dressing one's wife—everything that drives one to the short and easy way. Ah, the vile things they make one do!"

"But surely one is right to want to place one's children."

"One has no business to have any children," St. George declared, placidly. "I mean of course if one wants to do something good."

"But aren't they an inspiration—an incentive?"

"An incentive to damnation, artistically speaking."

"You touch on very deep things—things I should like to discuss with you," Paul Overt

said. "I should like you to tell me volumes about yourself. This is a festival for me!"

"Of course it is, cruel youth. But to show you that I'm still not incapable, degraded as I am, of an act of faith, I'll tie my vanity to the stake for you and burn it to ashes. You must come and see me—you must come and see us. Mrs. St. George is charming; I don't know whether you have had any opportunity to talk with her. She will be delighted to see you; she likes great celebrities, whether incipient or predominant. You must come and dine—my wife will write to you. Where are you to be found?"

"This is my little address"—and Overt drew out his pocketbook and extracted a visiting-card. On second thoughts, however, he kept it back, remarking that he would not trouble his friend to take charge of it but would come and see him straightway in London and leave it at his door if he should fail to obtain admittance.

"Ah! you probably will fail; my wife's always out, or when she isn't out she's knocked up from having been out. You must come and dine—though that won't do much good either, for my wife insists on big dinners. You must come down and see us in the country, that's the best way; we have plenty of room, and it isn't bad."

"You have a house in the country?" Paul asked, enviously.

"Ah, not like this! But we have a sort of place we go to—an hour from Euston. That's one of the reasons."

"One of the reasons?"

"Why my books are so bad."

"You must tell me all the others!" Paul exclaimed, laughing.

St. George made no direct rejoinder to this; he only inquired rather abruptly: "Why have I never seen you before?"

The tone of the question was singularly flattering to his new comrade; it seemed to imply that he perceived now that for years he had missed something. "Partly, I suppose, because there has been no particular reason why you should see me. I haven't lived in the world—in your world. I have spent many years out of England, in different places abroad."

"Well, please don't do it any more. You must do England—there's such a lot of it."

"Do you mean I must write about it?" Paul asked, in a voice which had the note of the listening candor of a child.

"Of course you must. And tremendously well, do you mind? That takes off a little of my esteem for this thing of yours—that it goes on abroad. Hang abroad! Stay at home and do things here—do subjects we can measure."

"I'll do whatever you tell me," said Paul Overt, deeply attentive. "But excuse me if I say I don't understand how you have been reading my book," he subjoined. "I've had you before me all the afternoon, first in that long walk, then at tea on the lawn, till we went to dress for dinner, and all the evening at dinner and in this place."

St. George turned his face round with a smile. "I only read for a quarter of an hour."

"A quarter of an hour is liberal, but I don't understand where you put it in. In the drawing-room, after dinner, you were not reading, you were talking to Miss Fancourt."

"It comes to the same thing, because we talked about *Ginistrella*. She described it to me—she lent it to me."

"Lent it to you?"

"She travels with it."

"It's incredible," Paul Overt murmured, blushing.

"It's glorious for you; but it also turned out very well for me. When the ladies went off to bed she kindly offered to send the book down to me. Her maid brought it to me in the hall and I went to my room with it. I hadn't thought of coming here, I do that so little. But I don't sleep early, I always have to read for an hour or two. I sat down to your novel on the spot, without undressing, without taking off anything but my coat. I think that's a sign that my curiosity had been strongly roused about it. I read a quarter of an hour, as I tell you, and even in a quarter of an hour I was greatly struck."

"Ah, the beginning isn't very good—it's the whole thing!" said Overt, who had listened to this recital with extreme interest. "And you laid down the book and came after me?" he asked.

"That's the way it moved me. I said to myself, 'I see it's off his own bat, and he's there, by the way, and the day's over and I haven't said twenty words to him.' It occurred to me that you would probably be in the smoking-room and that it wouldn't be too late to repair my omission. I wanted to do something civil to

you, so I put on my coat and came down. I shall read your book again when I go up."

Paul Overt turned round in his place—he was exceedingly touched by the picture of such a demonstration in his favour. "You're really the kindest of men. *Cela s'est passé comme ça*²⁸ And I have been sitting here with you all this time and never apprehended it and never thanked you!"

"Thank Miss Fancourt—it was she who wound me up. She has made me feel as if I had read your novel."

"She's an angel from heaven!" Paul Overt exclaimed.

"She is indeed. I have never seen anyone like her. Her interest in literature is touching—something quite peculiar to herself; she takes it all so seriously. She feels the arts and she wants to feel them more. To those who practise them it's almost humiliating—her curiosity, her sympathy, her good faith. How can anything be as fine as she supposes it?"

"She's a rare organisation," Paul Overt sighed.

"The richest I have ever seen—an artistic intelligence really of the first order. And lodged in such a form!" St. George exclaimed.

"One would like to paint such a girl as that," Overt continued.

"Ah, there it is—there's nothing like life! When you're finished, squeezed dry and used up and you think the sack's empty, you're still spoken to, you still get touches and thrills, the idea springs up—out of the lap of the actual—and shows you there's always something to be done. But I shan't do it—she's not for me!"

"How do you mean, not for you?"

"Oh, it's all over—she's for you, if you like."

"Ah, much less!" said Paul Overt. "She's not for a dingy little man of letters; she's for the world, the bright rich world of bribes and rewards. And the world will take hold of her—it will carry her away."

"It will try; but it's just a case in which there may be a fight. It would be worth fighting, for a man who had it in him, with youth and talent on his side."

These words rang not a little in Paul Overt's consciousness—they held him silent a moment.

"It's a wonder she has remained as she is—

²⁸ Did it really happen that way?

giving herself away so, with so much to give away."

"Do you mean so ingenuous—so natural? Oh, she doesn't care a straw—she gives away because she overflows. She has her own feelings, her own standards; she doesn't keep remembering that she must be proud. And then she hasn't been here long enough to be spoiled; she has picked up a fashion or two, but only the amusing ones. She's a provincial—a provincial of genius; her very blunders are charming, her mistakes are interesting. She has come back from Asia with all sorts of excited curiosities and unappeased appetites. She's first-rate herself and she expends herself on the second-rate. She's life herself and she takes a rare interest in imitations. She mixes all things up, but there are none in regard to which she hasn't perceptions. She sees things in a perspective—as if from the top of the Himalayas—and she enlarges everything she touches. Above all she exaggerates—to herself, I mean. She exaggerates you and me!"

There was nothing in this description to allay the excitement produced in the mind of our younger friend by such a sketch of a fine subject. It seemed to him to show the art of St. George's admired hand, and he lost himself in it, gazing at the vision (it hovered there before him) of a woman's figure which should be part of the perfection of a novel. At the end of a moment he became aware that it had turned into smoke, and out of the smoke—the last puff of a big cigar—proceeded the voice of General Fancourt, who had left the others and come and planted himself before the gentlemen on the sofa. "I suppose that when you fellows get talking you sit up half the night."

"Half the night?—*j'aurais de la vie!*⁴ I follow a hygiene," St. George replied, rising to his feet.

"I see, you're hothouse plants," laughed the General. "That's the way you produce your flowers."

"I produce mine between ten and one every morning; I bloom with a regularity!" St. George went on.

"And with a splendour!" added the polite General, while Paul Overt noted how little the author of *Shadowmere* minded, as he phrased it to himself, when he was addressed as a cele-

⁴ never!

brated story-teller. The young man had an idea that *he* should never get used to that—it would always make him uncomfortable (from the suspicion that people would think they had to) and he would want to prevent it. Evidently his more illustrious congener had toughened and hardened—had made himself a surface. The group of men had finished their cigars and taken up their bedroom candlesticks; but before they all passed out Lord Watermouth invited St. George and Paul Overt to drink something. It happened that they both declined, upon which General Fancourt said: "Is that the hygiene? You don't sprinkle the flowers?"

"Oh, I should drown them!" St. George replied; but leaving the room beside Overt he added whimsically, for the latter's benefit, in a lower tone: "My wife doesn't let me."

"Well, I'm glad I'm not one of you fellows!" the General exclaimed.

The nearness of Summersoft to London had this consequence, chilling to a person who had had a vision of sociability in a railway-carriage, that most of the company, after breakfast, drove back to town, entering their own vehicles, which had come out to fetch them, while their servants returned by train with their luggage. Three or four young men, among whom was Paul Overt, also availed themselves of the common convenience; but they stood in the portico of the house and saw the others roll away. Miss Fancourt got into a victoria with her father, after she had shaken hands with Paul Overt and said, smiling in the frankest way in the world—"I *must* see you more. Mrs. St. George is so nice: she has promised to ask us both to dinner together." This lady and her husband took their places in a perfectly-appointed brougham (she required a closed carriage) and as our young man waved his hat to them in response to their nods and flourishes he reflected that, taken together, they were an honourable image of success, of the material rewards and the social credit of literature. Such things were not the full measure, but all the same he felt a little proud for literature.

4

Before a week had elapsed Paul Overt met Miss Fancourt in Bond Street, at a private view of the works of a young artist in, "black and white" who had been so good as to invite him

to the stuffy scene. The drawings were admirable, but the crowd in the one little room was so dense that he felt as if he were up to his neck in a big sack of wool. A fringe of people at the outer edge endeavoured by curving forward their backs and presenting, below them, a still more convex surface of resistance to the pressure of the mass, to preserve an interval between their noses and the glazed mounts of the pictures; while the central body, in the comparative gloom projected by a wide horizontal screen, hung under the skylight and allowing only a margin for the day, remained upright, dense and vague, lost in the contemplation of its own ingredients. This contemplation sat especially in the sad eyes of certain female heads, surmounted with hats of strange convolution and plumage, which rose on long necks above the others. One of the heads, Paul Overt perceived, was much the most beautiful of the collection, and his next discovery was that it belonged to Miss Fancourt. Its beauty was enhanced by the glad smile that she sent him across surrounding obstructions, a smile which drew him to her as fast as he could make his way. He had divined at Summersoft that the last thing her nature contained was an affectation of indifference; yet even with this circumspection he had a freshness of pleasure in seeing that she did not pretend to await his arrival with composure. She smiled as radiantly as if she wished to make him hurry, and as soon as he came within earshot she said to him, in her voice of joy: "He's here—he's here—he's coming back in a moment!"

"Ah, your father?" Paul responded, as she offered him her hand.

"Oh dear no, this isn't in my poor father's line. I mean Mr. St. George. He has just left me to speak to some one—he's coming back. It's he who brought me—wasn't it charming?"

"Ah, that gives him a pull over me—I couldn't have 'brought' you, could I?"

"If you had been so kind as to propose it—why not you as well as he?" the girl asked, with a face which expressed no cheap coquetry, but simply affirmed a happy fact.

"Why, he's a *père de famille*. They have privileges," Paul Overt explained. And then, quickly: "Will you go to see places with me?" he broke out.

"Anything you like!" she smiled. "I know what you mean, that girls have to have a lot of people—" She interrupted herself to say: "I don't know; I'm free. I have always been like that," she went on; "I can go anywhere with any one. I'm so glad to meet you," she added, with a sweet distinctness that made the people near her turn round.

"Let me at least repay that speech by taking you out of this squash," said Paul Overt. "Surely people are not happy here!"

"No, they are *mornes*, aren't they? But I am very happy indeed, and I promised Mr. St. George to remain in this spot till he comes back. He's going to take me away. They send him invitations for things of this sort—more than he wants. It was so kind of him to think of me."

"They also send me invitations of this kind—more than I want. And if thinking of you will do it—I" Paul went on.

"Oh, I delight in them—everything that's life—everything that's London!"

"They don't have private views in Asia, I suppose. But what a pity that for this year, in this fertile city, they are pretty well over."

"Well, next year will do, for I hope you believe we are going to be friends always. Here he comes!" Miss Fancourt continued, before Paul had time to respond.

He made out St. George in the gaps of the crowd, and this perhaps led to his hurrying a little to say: "I hope that doesn't mean that I'm to wait till next year to see you."

"No, no; are we not to meet at dinner on the 25th?" she answered, with an eagerness greater even than his own.

"That's almost next year. Is there no means of seeing you before?"

She stared, with all her brightness. "Do you mean that you would *come*?"

"Like a shot, if you'll be so good as to ask me!"

"On Sunday, then—this next Sunday?"

"What have I done that you should doubt it?" the young man demanded, smiling.

Miss Fancourt turned instantly to St. George, who had now joined them, and announced triumphantly: "He's coming on Sunday—this next Sunday!"

"Ah, my day—my day too!" said the famous novelist, laughing at Paul Overt.

"Yes, but not yours only. You shall meet in Manchester Square; you shall talk—you shall be wonderful!"

"We don't meet often enough," St. George remarked, shaking hands with his disciple. "Too many things—ah, too many things! But we must make it up in the country in September. You won't forget that you've promised me that?"

"Why, he's coming on the 25th; you'll see him then," said Marian Fancourt.

"On the 25th?" St. George asked, vaguely.

"We dine with you; I hope you haven't forgotten. He's dining out," she added gaily to Paul Overt.

"Oh, bless me, yes; that's charming! And you're coming? My wife didn't tell me," St. George said to Paul. "Too many things—too many things!" he repeated.

"Too many people—too many people!" Paul exclaimed, giving ground before the penetration of an elbow.

"You oughtn't to say that; they all read you."

"Me? I should like to see them! Only two or three at most," the young man rejoined.

"Did you ever hear anything like that? He knows how good he is!" St. George exclaimed, laughing, to Miss Fancourt. "They read *me*, but that doesn't make me like them any better. Come away from them, come away!" And he led the way out of the exhibition.

"He's going to take me to the Park," the girl said, with elation, to Paul Overt, as they passed along the corridor which led to the street.

"Ah, does he go there?" Paul asked, wondering at the idea as a somewhat unexpected illustration of St. George's *moeurs*.

"It's a beautiful day; there will be a great crowd. We're going to look at the people, to look at types," the girl went on. "We shall sit under the trees; we shall walk by the Row."

"I go once a year, on business," said St. George, who had overheard Paul's question.

"Or with a country cousin, didn't you tell me? I'm the country cousin!" she went on, over her shoulder, to Paul, as her companion drew her toward a hansom to which he had signalled. The young man watched them get in; he returned, as he stood there, the friendly wave of the hand with which, ensconced in the vehicle beside Miss Fancourt, St. George took

leave of him. He even lingered to see the vehicle start away and lose itself in the confusion of Bond Street. He followed it with his eyes; it was embarrassingly suggestive. "She's not for me!" the great novelist had said emphatically at Summersoft; but his manner of conducting himself toward her appeared not exactly in harmony with such a conviction. How could he have behaved differently if she *had* been for him? An indefinite envy rose in Paul Overt's heart as he took his way on foot alone, and the singular part of it was that it was directed to each of the occupants of the hansom. How much he should like to rattle about London with such a girl! How much he should like to go and look at "types" with St. George!

The next Sunday, at four o'clock, he called in Manchester Square, where his secret wish was gratified by his finding Miss Fancourt alone. She was in a large, bright, friendly, occupied room, which was painted red all over, draped with the quaint, cheap, florid stuffs that are represented as coming from southern and eastern countries, where they are fabled to serve as the counterpanes of the peasantry, and bedecked with pottery of vivid hues, ranged on casual shelves, and with many water-colour drawings from the hand (as the visitor learned) of the young lady, commemorating, with courage and skill, the sunsets, the mountains, the temples and palaces of India. Overt sat there an hour—more than an hour, two hours—and all the while no one came in. Miss Fancourt was so good as to remark, with her liberal humanity, that it was delightful they were not interrupted; it was so rare in London, especially at that season, that people got a good talk. But fortunately now, of a fine Sunday, half the world went out of town, and that made it better for those who didn't go, when they were in sympathy. It was the defect of London (one of two or three, the very short list of those she recognised in the teeming world-city that she adored) that there were too few good chances for talk; one never had time to carry anything far.

"Too many things—too many things!" Paul Overt said, quoting St. George's exclamation of a few days before.

"Ah, yes, for him there are too many; his life is too complicated."

"Have you seen it *near*? That's what I should

like to do; it might explain some mysteries," Paul Overt went on. The girl asked him what mysteries he meant, and he said: "Oh, peculiarities of his work, inequalities, superficialities. For one who looks at it from the artistic point of view it contains a bottomless ambiguity."

"Oh, do describe that more—it's so interesting. There are no such suggestive questions. I'm so fond of them. He thinks he's a failure—fancy!" Miss Fancourt added.

"That depends upon what his ideal may have been. Ah, with his gifts it ought to have been high. But till one knows what he really proposed to himself—Do *you* know, by chance?" the young man asked, breaking off.

"Oh, he doesn't talk to me about himself. I can't make him. It's too provoking."

Paul Overt was on the point of asking what then he did talk about; but discretion checked this inquiry, and he said instead: "Do you think he's unhappy at home?"

"At home?"

"I mean in his relations with his wife. He has a mystifying little way of alluding to her."

"Not to me," said Marian Fancourt, with her clear eyes. "That wouldn't be right, would it?" she asked, seriously.

"Not particularly; so I am glad he doesn't mention her to you. To praise her might bore you, and he has no business to do anything else. Yet he knows you better than me."

"Ah, but he respects *you*!" the girl exclaimed, enviously.

Her visitor stared a moment; then he broke into a laugh. "Doesn't he respect you?"

"Of course, but not in the same way. He respects what you've done—he told me so, the other day."

"When you went to look at types?"

"Ah, we found so many—he has such an observation of them! He talked a great deal about your book. He says it's really important."

"Important! Ah! the grand creature," Paul murmured, hilarious.

"He was wonderfully amusing, he was inexpressibly droll, while we walked about. He sees everything; he has so many comparisons, and they are always exactly right. *C'est d'un trouvé!*⁵ as they say."

⁵ in colloquial English: "He's a rare one!"

"Yes, with his gifts, such things as he ought to have done!" Paul Overt remarked.

"And don't you think he *has* done them?"

He hesitated a moment. "A part of them— 5 and of course even that part is immense. But he might have been one of the greatest! However, let us not make this an hour of qualifications. Even as they stand, his writings are a mine of gold."

To this proposition Marian Fancourt ardently responded, and for half an hour the pair talked over the master's principal productions. She knew them well—she knew them even better than her visitor, who was struck with her critical intelligence and with something large and bold in the movement in her mind. She said things that startled him and that evidently had come to her directly, they were not picked-up phrases, she placed them too well. St. George had been right about her being first-rate, about her not being afraid to gush, not remembering that she must be proud. Suddenly something reminded her, and she said: "I recollect that he did speak of Mrs. St. George to me 25 once. He said, *à propos* of something or other, that she didn't care for perfection."

"That's a great crime, for an artist's wife," said Paul Overt.

"Yes, poor thing!" and the young lady sighed, with a suggestion of many reflections, some of them mitigating. But she added in a moment, "Ah, perfection, perfection—how one ought to go in for it! I wish I could."

"Every one can, in his way," said Paul Overt.

"In *his* way, yes; but not in hers. Women are so hampered—so condemned! But it's a kind of dishonour if you don't, when you want to *do* something, isn't it?" Miss Fancourt pursued, dropping one train in her quickness to take up 40 another, an accident that was common with her. So these two young persons sat discussing high themes in their electric drawing-room, in their London season—discussing, with extreme seriousness, the high theme of perfection. And it must be said, in extenuation of this eccentricity, that they were interested in the business; their tone was genuine, their emotion real; they were not posturing for each other or for some one else.

50 The subject was so wide that they found it necessary to contract it; the perfection to which for the moment they agreed to confine their

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from the other side and come a part of the way toward him. He was on the point of hailing the driver when he perceived that he carried a fare; then he waited, seeing him prepare to deposit his passenger by pulling up at one of the houses. The house was apparently the one he himself had just quitted; at least he drew that inference as he saw that the person who stepped out of the hansom was Henry St. George. Paul Overt turned away quickly, as if he had been caught in the act of spying. He gave up his cab—he preferred to walk; he would go nowhere else. He was glad St. George had not given up his visit altogether—that would have been too absurd. Yes, the world was magnanimous, and Overt felt so too, as, on looking at his watch, he found it was only six o'clock, so that he could mentally congratulate his successor on having an hour still to sit in Miss Fancourt's drawing-room. He himself might use that hour for another visit, but by the time he reached the Marble Arch the idea of another visit had become incongruous to him. He passed beneath that architectural effort and walked into the Park till he got upon the grass. Here he continued to walk; he took his way across the elastic turf and came out by the Serpentine. He watched with a friendly eye the diversions of the London people, and bent a glance almost encouraging upon the young ladies paddling their sweethearts on the lake, and the guardsmen tickling tenderly with their bearskins the artificial flowers in the Sunday hats of their partners. He prolonged his meditative walk; he went into Kensington Gardens—he sat upon the penny chairs—he looked at the little sail-boats launched upon the round pond—he was glad he had no engagement to dine. He repaired for this purpose, very late, to his club, where he found himself unable to order a repast and told the waiter to bring whatever he would. He did not even observe what he was served with, and he spent the evening in the library of the establishment, pretending to read an article in an American magazine. He failed to discover what it was about; it appeared in a dim way to be about Marian Fancourt.

Quite late in the week she wrote to him that she was not to go into the country—it had only just been settled. Her father, she added, would never settle anything—he put it all on her. She

felt her responsibility—she had to—and since she was forced that was the way she had decided. She mentioned no reasons, which gave Paul Overt all the clearer field for bold conjecture about them. In Manchester Square, on this second Sunday, he esteemed his fortune less good, for she had three or four other visitors. But there were three or four compensations, the greatest, perhaps, of which was that, learning from her that her father had, after all, at the last hour, gone out of town alone, the bold conjecture I just now spoke of found itself becoming a shade more bold. And then her presence was her presence, and the personal red room was there and was full of it, whatever phantoms passed and vanished, emitting incomprehensible sounds. Lastly, he had the resource of staying till every one had come and gone and of supposing that this pleased her, though she gave no particular sign. When they were alone together he said to her: "But St. George did come—last Sunday. I saw him as I looked back."

"Yes; but it was the last time."

"The last time?"

"He said he would never come again."

Paul Overt stared. "Does he mean that he wishes to cease to see you?"

"I don't know what he means," the girl replied, smiling. "He won't, at any rate, see me here."

"And, pray, why not?"

"I don't know," said Marian Fancourt; and her visitor thought he had not yet seen her more beautiful than in uttering these unsatisfactory words.

5

"Oh, I say, I want you to remain," Henry St. George said to him at eleven o'clock, the night he dined with the head of the profession. The company had been numerous and they were taking their leave; our young man, after bidding good-night to his hostess, had put out his hand in farewell to the master of the house. Besides eliciting from St. George the protest I have quoted this movement provoked a further observation about such a chance to have a talk, their going into his room, his having still everything to say. Paul Overt was delighted to be asked to stay; nevertheless he mentioned jocularly the literal fact that he had promised to

go to another place, at a distance.

"Well then, you'll break your promise, that's all. You humbug!" St. George exclaimed, in a tone that added to Overt's contentment.

"Certainly, I'll break it; but it was a real promise."

"Do you mean to Miss Fancourt? You're following her?" St. George asked.

Paul Overt answered by a question. "Oh, is *she* going?"

"Base impostor!" his ironic host went on; "I've treated you handsomely on the article of that young lady: I won't make another concession. Wait three minutes—I'll be with you." He gave himself to his departing guests, went with the long-trained ladies to the door. It was a hot night, the windows were open, the sound of the quick carriages and of the linkmen's call came into the house. The company had been brilliant; a sense of festal things was in the heavy air: not only the influence of that particular entertainment, but the suggestion of the wide hurry of pleasure which, in London, on summer nights, fills so many of the happier quarters of the complicated town. Gradually Mrs. St. George's drawing-room emptied itself; Paul Overt was left alone with his hostess, to whom he explained the motive of his waiting. "Ah, yes, some intellectual, some *professional*, talk," she smiled; "at this season doesn't one miss it? Poor dear Henry, I'm so glad!" The young man looked out of the window a moment, at the called hansoms that lurched up, at the smooth broughams that rolled away. When he turned round Mrs. St. George had disappeared; her husband's voice came up to him from below—he was laughing and talking, in the portico, with some lady who awaited her carriage. Paul had solitary possession, for some minutes, of the warm, deserted rooms, where the covered, tinted lamplight was soft, the seats had been pushed about and the odour of flowers lingered. They were large, they were pretty, they contained objects of value; everything in the picture told of a "good house." At the end of five minutes a servant came in with a request from Mr. St. George that he would join him downstairs; upon which, descending, he followed his conductor through a long passage to an apartment thrown out, in the rear of the habitation, for the special requirements, as he guessed, of a busy man of letters.

St. George was in his shirt-sleeves in the middle of a large, high room—a room without windows, but with a wide sky-light at the top, like a place of exhibition. It was furnished as a library, and the serried bookshelves rose to the ceiling, a surface of incomparable tone, produced by dimly-gilt "backs," which was interrupted here and there by the suspension of old prints and drawings. At the end furthest from the door of admission was a tall desk, of great extent, at which the person using it could only write standing, like a clerk in a counting-house; and stretching from the door to this structure was a large plain band of crimson cloth, as straight as a garden-path and almost as long, where, in his mind's eye, Paul Overt immediately saw his host pace to and fro during his hours of composition. The servant gave him a coat, an old jacket with an air of experience, from a cupboard in the wall, retiring afterwards with the garment he had taken off. Paul Overt welcomed the coat; it was a coat for talk and promised confidences—it must have received so many—and had pathetic literary bows. "Ah, we're practical—we're practical!" St. George said, as he saw his visitor looking the place over. "Isn't it a good big cage, to go round and round? My wife invented it and she locks me up here every morning."

"You don't miss a window—a place to look out?"

"I did at first, awfully; but her calculation was just. It saves time, it has saved me many months in these ten years. Here I stand, under the eye of day—in London of course, very often, it's rather a bleared old eye—walled in to my trade. I can't get away, and the room is a fine lesson in concentration. I've learned the lesson, I think; look at that big bundle of proof and admit that I have." He pointed to a fat roll of papers, on one of the tables, which had not been undone.

"Are you bringing out another—?" Paul Overt asked, in a tone of whose deficiencies he was not conscious till his companion burst out laughing, and indeed not even then.

"You humbug—you humbug! Don't I know what you think of them?" St. George inquired, standing before him with his hands in his pockets and with a new kind of smile. It was as if he were going to let his young votary know him well now.

"Upon my word, in that case you know more than I do!" Paul ventured to respond, revealing a part of the torment of being able neither clearly to esteem him nor distinctly to renounce him.

"My dear fellow," said his companion, "don't imagine I talk about my books, specifically, it isn't a decent subject—*il ne manquerait plus que ça*⁶—I'm not so bad as you may apprehend! About myself, a little, if you like; though it wasn't for that I brought you down here. I want to ask you something—very much indeed—I value this chance. Therefore sit down. We are practical, but there is a sofa, you see, for she does humour me a little, after all. Like all really great administrators she knows when to." Paul Overt sank into the corner of a deep leather couch, but his interlocutor remained standing and said: "If you don't mind, in this room this is my habit. From the door to the desk and from the desk to the door. That shakes up my imagination, gently, and don't you see what a good thing it is that there's no window for her to fly out of? The eternal standing as I write (I stop at that bureau and put it down, when anything comes, and so we go on) was rather wearisome at first, but we adopted it with an eye to the long run; you're in better order (if your legs don't break down!) and you can keep it up for more years. Oh, we're practical—we're practical!" St. George repeated, going to the table and taking up, mechanically, the bundle of proofs. He pulled off the wrapper, he turned the papers over with a sudden change of attention which only made him more interesting to Paul Overt. He lost himself a moment, examining the sheets of his new book, while the younger man's eyes wandered over the room again.

"Lord, what good things I should do if I had such a charming place as this to do them in!" Paul reflected. The outer world, the world of accident and ugliness was so successfully excluded, and within the rich, protecting square, beneath the patronising sky, the figures projected for an artistic purpose could hold their particular revel. It was a prevision of Paul Overt's rather than an observation on actual data, for which the occasions had been too few,

that his new friend would have the quality, the charming quality, of surprising him by flashing out in personal intercourse, at moments of suspended, or perhaps even of diminished expectation. A happy relation with him would be a thing proceeding by jumps, not by traceable stages.

"Do you read them—really?" he asked, laying down the proofs on Paul's inquiring of him how soon the work would be published. And when the young man answered, "Oh, yes, always," he was moved to mirth again by something he caught in his manner of saying that. "You go to see your grandmother on her birthday—and very proper it is, especially as she won't last for ever. She has lost every faculty and every sense, she neither sees, nor hears, nor speaks; but all customary pieties and kindly habits are respectable. But you're strong if you do read 'em! I couldn't, my dear fellow. You are strong, I know, and that's just a part of what I wanted to say to you. You're very strong indeed. I've been going into your other things—they've interested me exceedingly. Some one ought to have told me about them before—some one I could believe. But whom can one believe? You're wonderfully in the good direction—it's extremely curious work. Now do you mean to keep it up?—that's what I want to ask you."

"Do I mean to do others?" Paul Overt asked, looking up from his sofa at his erect inquisitor and feeling partly like a happy little boy when the schoolmaster is gay and partly like some pilgrim of old who might have consulted the oracle. St. George's own performance had been infirm, but as an adviser he would be infallible.

"Others—others? Ah, the number won't matter; one other would do, if it were really a further step—a throb of the same effort. What I mean is, have you it in your mind to go in for some sort of little perfection?"

"Ah, perfection!" Overt sighed, "I talked of that the other Sunday with Miss Fancourt."

"Oh yes, they'll talk of it, as much as you like! But they do mighty little to help one to it. There's no obligation, of course; only you strike me as capable," St. George went on. "You must have thought it all over. I can't believe you're without a plan. That's the sensation you give me, and it's so rare that it really stirs up

⁶ in colloquial English: "That would be the last straw!"

one; it makes you remarkable. If you haven't a plan and you don't mean to keep it up, of course it's all right, it's no one's business, no one can force you, and not more than two or three people will notice that you don't go straight. The others—all the rest, every blessed soul in England, will think you do—will think you *are* keeping it up: upon my honour they will! I shall be one of the two or three who know better. Now the question is whether you can do it for two or three. Is that the stuff you're made of?"

"I could do it for one, if you were the one."

"Don't say that—I don't deserve it; it scorches me," St. George exclaimed, with eyes suddenly grave and glowing. "The 'one' is of course oneself—one's conscience, one's idea, the singleness of one's aim. I think of that pure spirit as a man thinks of a woman whom, in some detested hour of his youth, he has loved and forsaken. She haunts him with reproachful eyes, she lives for ever before him. As an artist, you know, I've married for money." Paul stared and even blushed a little, confounded by this avowal; whereupon his host, observing the expression of his face, dropped a quick laugh and went on: "You don't follow my figure. I'm not speaking of my dear wife, who had a small fortune, which, however, was not my bribe. I fell in love with her, as many other people have done. I refer to the mercenary muse whom I led to the altar of literature. Don't do that, my boy. She'll lead you a life!"

"Haven't you been happy!"

"Happy? It's a kind of hell."

"There are things I should like to ask you,"

Paul Overt said, hesitating.

"Ask me anything in all the world. I'd turn myself inside out to save you."

"To save me?" Paul repeated.

"To make you stick to it—to make you see it through. As I said to you the other night at Summersoft, let my example be vivid to you."

"Why, your books are not so bad as that," said Paul, laughing and feeling that he breathed the air of art.

"So bad as what?"

"Your talent is so great that it is in everything you do, in what's less good as well as in what's best. You've some forty volumes to show for it—forty volumes of life, of observation, of magnificent ability."

"I'm very clever, of course I know that," St. George replied, quietly. "Lord, what rot they'd all be if I hadn't been! I'm a successful charlatan—I've been able to pass off my system. But do you know what it is? It's *carton-pierre*."⁷

"*Carton-pierre*?"

"Lincrusta-Walton!"

"Ah, don't say such things—you make me bleed!" the younger man protested. "I see you in a beautiful, fortunate home, living in comfort and honour."

"Do you call it honour?" St. George interrupted, with an intonation that often comes back to his companion. "That's what I want you to go in for. I mean the real thing. This is brummagaem."⁸

"Brummagaem?" Paul ejaculated, while his eyes wandered, by a movement natural at the moment, over the luxurious room.

"Ah, they make it so well to-day; it's wonderfully deceptive!"

"Is it deceptive that I find you living with every appearance of domestic felicity—blessed with a devoted, accomplished wife, with children whose acquaintance I haven't yet had the pleasure of making, but who *must* be delightful young people, from what I know of their parents?"

"It's all excellent, my dear fellow—heaven forbid I should deny it. I've made a great deal of money; my wife has known how to take care of it, to use it without wasting it, to put a good bit of it by, to make it fructify. I've got a loaf on the shelf; I've got everything, in fact, but the great thing—"

"The great thing?"

"The sense of having done the best—the sense, which is the real life of the artist and the absence of which is his death, of having drawn from his intellectual instrument the finest music that nature had hidden in it, of having played it as it should be played. He either does that or he doesn't—and if he doesn't he isn't worth speaking of. And precisely those who really know don't speak of him. He may still hear a great chatter, but what he hears most is the incorruptible silence of Fame. I have squared her, you may say, for my little hour—but what is my little hour? Don't imagine for a moment I'm such a cad as to have brought you

⁷ by implication, deceptive.

⁸ showy but worthless; usually, brummagem.

down here to abuse or to complain of my wife to you. She is a woman of very distinguished qualities, to whom my obligations are immense; so that, if you please, we will say nothing about her. My boys—my children are all boys—are straight and strong, thank God; and have no poverty of growth about them, no penury of needs. I receive, periodically, the most satisfactory attestation from Harrow, from Oxford, from Sandhurst (oh, we have done the best for them!) of their being living, thriving, consuming organisms."

"It must be delightful to feel that the son of one's loins is at Sandhurst," Paul remarked enthusiastically.

"It is—it's charming. Oh, I'm a patriot!"

"Then what did you mean—the other night at Summersoft—by saying that children are a curse?"

"My dear fellow, on what basis are we talking?" St. George asked, dropping upon the sofa, at a short distance from his visitor. Sitting a little sideways he leaned back against the opposite arm with his hands raised and interlocked behind his head. "On the supposition that a certain perfection is possible and even desirable—isn't it so? Well, all I say is that one's children interfere with perfection. One's wife interferes. Marriage interferes."

"You think then the artist shouldn't marry?"

"He does so at his peril—he does so at his cost."

"Not even when his wife is in sympathy with his work?"

"She never is—she can't be! Women don't know what work is."

"Surely, they work themselves," Paul Overt objected.

"Yes, very badly. Oh, of course, often, they think they understand, they think they sympathise. Then it is that they are most dangerous. Their idea is that you shall do a great lot and get a great lot of money. Their great nobleness and virtue, their exemplary conscientiousness as British females, is in keeping you up to that. My wife makes all my bargains with my publishers for me, and she has done so for twenty years. She does it consummately well; that's why I'm really pretty well off. Are you not the father of their innocent babes, and will you withhold from them their natural sustenance? You asked me the other night if they were not

an immense incentive. Of course they are—there's no doubt of that!"

"For myself, I have an idea I need incentives," Paul Overt dropped.

"Ah well, then, *n'en parlons plus!*" said his companion, smiling.

"You are an incentive, I maintain," the young man went on. "You don't affect me in the way you apparently would like to. Your great success is what I see—the pomp of Ennismore Gardens!"

"Success?—do you call it success to be spoken of as you would speak of me if you were sitting here with another artist—a young man intelligent and sincere like yourself? Do you call it success to make you blush—as you would blush—if some foreign critic (some fellow, of course, I mean, who should know what he was talking about and should have shown you he did, as foreign critics like to show it!) were to say to you: 'He's the one, in this country, whom they consider the most perfect, isn't he?' Is it success to be the occasion of a young Englishman's having to stammer as you would have to stammer at such a moment for old England? No, no; success is to have made people tremble after another fashion. Do try it!"

"Try it?"

"Try to do some really good work."

"Oh, I want to, heaven knows!"

"Well, you can't do it without sacrifices; don't believe that for a moment," said Henry St. George. "I've made none. I've had everything. In other words, I've missed everything."

"You've had the full, rich, masculine, human, general life, with all the responsibilities and duties and burdens and sorrows and joys—all the domestic and social initiations and complications. They must be immensely suggestive, immensely amusing."

"Amusing?"

"For a strong man—yes."

"They've given me subjects without number, if that's what you mean; but they've taken away at the same time the power to use them. I've touched a thousand things, but which one of them have I turned into gold? The artist has to do only with that—he knows nothing of any baser metal. I've led the life of the world, with my wife and my progeny; the clumsy, expensive, materialised, brutalised, Philistine, snobbish life of London. We've got everything

handsome, even a carriage—we are prosperous, hospitable, eminent people. But, my dear fellow, don't try to stultify yourself and pretend you don't know what we *haven't* got. It's bigger than all the rest. Between artists—come! You know as well as you sit there that you would put a pistolball into your brain if you had written my books!"

It appeared to Paul Overt that the tremendous talk promised by the master at Summersoft had indeed come off, and with a promptitude, a fullness, with which his young imagination had scarcely reckoned. His companion made an immense impression on him and he throbbed with the excitement of such deep soundings and such strange confidences. He throbbed indeed with the conflict of his feelings—bewilderment and recognition and alarm, enjoyment and protest and assent, all commingled with tenderness (and a kind of shame in the participation) for the sores and bruises exhibited by so fine a creature, and with a sense of the tragic secret that he nursed under his trappings. The idea of *his* being made the occasion of such an act of humility made him flush and pant, at the same time that his perception, in certain directions, had been too much awakened to conceal from him anything that St. George really meant. It had been his odd fortune to blow upon the deep waters, to make them surge and break in waves of strange eloquence. He launched himself into a passionate contradiction of his host's last declaration; tried to enumerate to him the parts of his work he loved, the splendid things he had found in it, beyond the compass of any other writer of the day. St. George listened awhile, courteously; then he said, laying his hand on Paul Overt's:

"That's all very well; and if your idea is to do nothing better there is no reason why you shouldn't have as many good things as I—as many human and material appendages, as many sons or daughters, a wife with as many gowns, a house with as many servants, a stable with as many horses, a heart with as many aches." He got up when he had spoken thus, and then stood a moment near the sofa, looking down on his agitated pupil. "Are you possessed of any money?" it occurred to him to ask.

"None to speak of."

"Oh, well, there's no reason why you

shouldn't make a goodish income—if you set about it the right way. Study *me* for that—study me well. You may really have a carriage."

Paul Overt sat there for some moments without speaking. He looked straight before him—he turned over many things. His friend had wandered away from him, taking up a parcel of letters that were on the table where the roll of proofs had lain. "What was the book Mrs. St. George made you burn—the one she didn't like?" he abruptly inquired.

"The book she made me burn—how did you know that?" St. George looked up from his letters.

"I heard her speak of it at Summersoft."

"Ah, yes; she's proud of it. I don't know—it was rather good."

"What was it about?"

"Let me see." And St. George appeared to make an effort to remember. "Oh, yes, it was about myself." Paul Overt gave an irrepressible groan for the disappearance of such a production, and the elder man went on: "Oh, but *you* should write it—you should do me. There's a subject, my boy: no end of stuff in it!"

Again Paul was silent, but after a little he spoke. "Are there no women that really understand—that can take part in a sacrifice?"

"How can they take part? They themselves are the sacrifice. They're the idol and the altar and the flame."

"Isn't there even *one* who sees further?" Paul continued.

For a moment St. George made no answer to this; then, having torn up his letters, he stood before his disciple again, ironic. "Of course I know the one you mean. But not even Miss Fancourt."

"I thought you admired her so much."

"It's impossible to admire her more. Are you in love with her?" St. George asked.

"Yes," said Paul Overt.

"Well, then, give it up."

Paul stared. "Give up my love?"

"Bless me, no; your idea."

"My idea?"

"The one you talked with her about. The idea of perfection."

"She would help it—she would help it!" cried the young man.

"For about a year—the first year, yes. After

that she would be as a millstone round its neck."

"Why, she has a passion for completeness, for good work—for everything you and I care for most."

"You and I' is charming, my dear fellow! She has it indeed, but she would have a still greater passion for her children; and very proper too. She would insist upon everything's being made comfortable, advantageous, propitious for them. That isn't the artist's business."

"The artist—the artist! Isn't he a man all the same?"

St. George hesitated. "Sometimes I really think not. You know as well as I what he has to do: the concentration, the finish, the independence that he must strive for, from the moment that he begins to respect his work. Ah, my young friend, his relation to women, especially in matrimony, is at the mercy of this damning fact—that whereas he can in the nature of things have but one standard, they have about fifty. That's what makes them so superior," St. George added, laughing. "Fancy an artist with a plurality of standards," he went on. "To do it—to do it and make it divine is the only thing he has to think about. 'Is it done or not?' is his only question. Not 'Is it done as well as a proper solicitude for my dear little family will allow?' He has nothing to do with the relative, nothing to do with a dear little family!"

"Then you don't allow him the common passions and affections of men?"

"Hasn't he a passion, an affection, which includes all the rest? Besides, let him have all the passions he likes—if he only keeps his independence. He must afford to be poor."

Paul Overt slowly got up. "Why did you advise me to make up to her, then?"

St. George laid his hand on his shoulder. "Because she would make an adorable wife! And I hadn't read you then."

"I wish you had left me alone!" murmured the young man.

"I didn't know that that wasn't good enough for you," St. George continued.

"What a false position, what a condemnation of the artist, that he's a mere disfranchised monk and can produce his effect only by giving up personal happiness. What an arraign-

ment of art!" Paul Overt pursued, with a trembling voice.

"Ah, you don't imagine, by chance, that I'm defending art? Arraignment, I should think so! Happy the societies in which it hasn't made its appearance; for from the moment it comes they have a consuming ache, they have an incurable corruption in their bosom. Assuredly, the artist is in a false position. But I thought we were taking him for granted. Pardon me," St. George continued; "*Ginistrella* made me!"

Paul Overt stood looking at the floor—one o'clock struck, in the stillness, from a neighbouring church-tower. "Do you think she would ever look at me?" he asked at last.

"Miss Fancourt—as a suitor? Why shouldn't I think it? That's why I've tried to favour you—I have had a little chance or two of bettering your opportunity."

"Excuse my asking you, but do you mean by keeping away yourself?" Paul said, blushing.

"I'm an old idiot—my place isn't there," St. George replied, gravely.

"I'm nothing, yet, I've no fortune; and there must be so many others."

"You're a gentleman and a man of genius. I think you might do something."

"But if I must give that up—the genius?"

"Lots of people, you know, think I've kept mine."

"You have a genius for torment!" Paul Overt exclaimed; but taking his companion's hand in farewell as a mitigation of this judgment.

"Poor child, I do bother you. Try, try, then! I think your chances are good, and you'll win a great prize."

Paul held the other's hand a minute; he looked into his face. "No, I *am* an artist—I can't help it!"

"Ah, show it then!" St. George broke out—"let me see before I die the thing I most want, the thing I yearn for—a life in which the passion is really intense. If you can be rare, don't fail of it! Think what it is—how it counts—how it lives!" They had moved to the door and St. George had closed both his own hands over that of his companion. Here they paused again and Paul Overt ejaculated—"I want to live!"

"In what sense?"

"In the greatest sense."

"Well then, stick to it—see it through."

"With your sympathy—your help?"

"Count on that—you'll be a great figure to me. Count on my highest appreciation, my devotion. You'll give me satisfaction!—if that has any weight with you." And as Paul appeared still to waver, St. George added: "Do you remember what you said to me at Summersoft?"

"Something infatuated, no doubt!"

"I'll do anything in the world you tell me. You said that."

"And you hold me to it?"

"Ah, what am I?" sighed the master, shaking his head.

"Lord, what things I shall have to do!" Paul almost moaned as he turned away.

6

"It goes on too much abroad—hang abroad!" These, or something like them, had been St. George's remarkable words in relation to the action of *Ginistrella*; and yet, though they had made a sharp impression on Paul Overt, like almost all the master's spoken words, the young man, a week after the conversation I have narrated, left England for a long absence and full of projects of work. It is not a perversion of the truth to say that that conversation was the direct cause of his departure. If the oral utterance of the eminent writer had the privilege of moving him deeply it was especially on his turning it over at leisure, hours and days afterward, that it appeared to yield its full meaning and exhibit its extreme importance. He spent the summer in Switzerland, and having, in September, begun a new task, he determined not to cross the Alps till he should have made a good start. To this end he returned to a quiet corner that he knew well, on the edge of the Lake of Geneva, within sight of the towers of Chillon: a region and a view for which he had an affection springing from old associations, capable of mysterious little revivals and refreshments. Here he lingered late, till the snow was on the nearer hills, almost down to the limit to which he could climb when his stint was done, on the shortening afternoons. The autumn was fine, the lake was blue, and his book took form and direction. These circumstances, for the time, embroidered his life, and he suffered it to cover him with its mantle. At the end of six weeks he appeared to himself to have learned St. George's lesson by heart—to have tested and proved its doctrine. Neverthe-

less he did a very inconsistent thing: before crossing the Alps he wrote to Marian Fancourt. He was aware of the perversity of this act, and it was only as a luxury, an amusement, the reward of a strenuous autumn, that he justified it. She had not asked any such favour of him when he went to see her three days before he left London—three days after their dinner in Ennismore Gardens. It is true that she had no reason to, for he had not mentioned that he was on the eve of such an excursion. He hadn't mentioned it because he didn't know it; it was that particular visit that made the matter clear. He had paid the visit to see how much he really cared for her, and quick departure, without so much as a farewell, was the sequel to this inquiry, the answer to which had been a distinct superlative. When he wrote to her from Clarens he noted that he owed her an explanation (more than three months after!) for the omission of such a form.

She answered him briefly but very promptly, and gave him a striking piece of news: the death, a week before, of Mrs. St. George. This exemplary woman had succumbed, in the country, to a violent attack of inflammation of the lungs—he would remember that for a long time she had been delicate. Miss Fancourt added that she heard her husband was overwhelmed with the blow; he would miss her unspeakably—she had been everything to him. Paul Overt immediately wrote to St. George. He had wished to remain in communication with him, but had hitherto lacked the right excuse for troubling so busy a man. Their long nocturnal talk came back to him in every detail, but this did not prevent his expressing a cordial sympathy with the head of the profession, for had not that very talk made it clear that the accomplished lady was the influence that ruled his life? What catastrophe could be more cruel than the extinction of such an influence? This was exactly the tone that St. George took in answering his young friend, upwards of a month later. He made no allusion, of course, to their important discussion. He spoke of his wife as frankly and generously as if he had quite forgotten that occasion, and the feeling of deep bereavement was visible in his words. "She took everything off my hands—off my mind. She carried on our life with the greatest art, the rarest devotion, and I was free, as few men

can have been, to drive my pen, to shut myself up with my trade. This was a rare service—the highest she could have rendered me. Would I could have acknowledged it more fitly!”

A certain bewilderment, for Paul Overt, disengaged itself from these remarks: they struck him as a contradiction, a retraction. He had certainly not expected his correspondent to rejoice in the death of his wife, and it was perfectly in order that the rupture of a tie of more than twenty years should have left him sore. But if she was such a benefactress as that, what in the name of consistency had St. George meant by turning *him* upside down that night—by dosing him to that degree, at the most sensitive hour of his life, with the doctrine of renunciation? If Mrs. St. George was an irreparable loss, then her husband's inspired advice had been a bad joke and renunciation was a mistake. Overt was on the point of rushing back to London to show that, for his part, he was perfectly willing to consider it so, and he went so far as to take the manuscript of the first chapters of his new book out of his table-drawer, to insert it into a pocket of his portmanteau. This led to his catching a glimpse of some pages he had not looked at for months, and that accident, in turn, to his being struck with the high promise they contained—a rare result of such retrospections, which it was his habit to avoid as much as possible. They usually made him feel that the glow of composition might be a purely subjective and a very barren emotion. On this occasion a certain belief in himself disengaged itself whimsically from the serried erasures of his first draft, making him think it best after all to carry out his present experiment to the end. If he could write as well as that under the influence of renunciation, it would be a pity to change the conditions before the termination of the work. He would go back to London of course, but he would go back only when he should have finished his book. This was the vow he privately made, restoring his manuscript to the table-drawer. It may be added that it took him a long time to finish his book, for the subject was as difficult as it was fine and he was literally embarrassed by the fullness of his notes. Something within him told him that he must make it supremely good—otherwise he should lack, as regards his

private behaviour, a handsome excuse. He had a horror of this deficiency and found himself, as firm as need be on the question of the lamp and the file. He crossed the Alps at last and spent the winter, the spring, the ensuing summer, in Italy, where still, at the end of a twelvemonth, his task was unachieved. “Stick to it—see it through:” this general injunction of St. George's was good also for the particular case. He applied it to the utmost, with the result that when in its slow order, the summer had come round again he felt that he had given all that was in him. This time he put his papers into his portmanteau, with the address of his publisher attached, and took his way northward.

He had been absent from London for two years—two years which were a long period and had made such a difference in his own life (through the production of a novel far stronger, he believed, than *Ginistrella*) that he turned out into Piccadilly, the morning after his arrival, with an indefinite expectation of changes, of finding that things had happened. But there were few transformations in Piccadilly (only three or four big red houses where there had been low black ones), and the brightness of the end of June peeped through the rusty railings of the Green Park and glittered in the varnish of the rolling carriages as he had seen it in other, more cursory Junes. It was a greeting that he appreciated; it seemed friendly and pointed, added to the exhilaration of his finished book, of his having his own country and the huge, oppressive, amusing city that suggested everything, that contained everything, under his hand again. “Stay at home and do things here—do subjects we can measure,” St. George had said; and now it appeared to him that he should ask nothing better than to stay at home for ever. Late in the afternoon he took his way to Manchester Square, looking out for a number he had not forgotten. Miss Fancourt, however, was not within, so that he turned, rather dejectedly, from the door. This movement brought him face to face with a gentleman who was approaching it and whom he promptly perceived to be Miss Fancourt's father. Paul saluted this personage, and the General returned his greeting with his customary good manner—a manner so good, however, that you could never tell whether it meant

that he placed you. Paul Overt felt the impulse to speak to him; then, hesitating, became conscious both that he had nothing particular to say and that though the old soldier remembered him he remembered him wrong. He therefore passed on, without calculating on the irresistible effect that his own evident recognition would have upon the General, who never neglected a chance to gossip. Our young man's face was expressive, and observation seldom let it pass. He had not taken ten steps before he heard himself called after with a friendly, semi-articulate "A—I beg your pardon!" He turned round and the General, smiling at him from the steps, said: "Won't you come in? I won't leave you the advantage of me!" Paul declined to come in, and then was sorry he had done so, for Miss Fancourt, so late in the afternoon, might return at any moment. But her father gave him no second chance; he appeared mainly to wish not to have struck him as inhospitable. A further look at the visitor told him more about him, enough at least to enable him to say—"You've come back, you've come back?" Paul was on the point of replying that he had come back the night before, but he bethought himself to suppress this strong light on the immediacy of his visit, and, giving merely a general assent, remarked that he was extremely sorry not to have found Miss Fancourt. He had come late, in the hope that she would be in. "I'll tell her—I'll tell her," said the old man; and then he added quickly, gallantly, "You'll be giving us something new? It's a long time, isn't it?" Now he remembered him right.

"Rather long. I'm very slow," said Paul. "I met you at Summersoft a long time ago."

"Oh, yes, with Henry St. George. I remember very well. Before his poor wife—" General Fancourt paused a moment, smiling a little less. "I daresay you know."

"About Mrs. St. George's death? Oh, yes, I heard at the time."

"Oh, no; I mean—I mean he's to be married."

"Ah! I've not heard that." Just as Paul was about to add, "To whom?" the General crossed his intention with a question.

"When did you come back? I know you've been away—from my daughter. She was very sorry. You ought to give her something new."

"I came back last night," said our young man, to whom something had occurred which made his speech, for the moment, a little thick.

"Ah, most kind of you to come so soon. 5 Couldn't you turn up at dinner?"

"At dinner?" Paul Overt repeated, not liking to ask whom St. George was going to marry, but thinking only of that.

"There are several people, I believe. Certainly St. George. Or afterwards, if you like better. I believe my daughter expects—" He appeared to notice something in Overt's upward face (on his steps he stood higher) which led him to interrupt himself, and the interruption gave him a momentary sense of awkwardness, from which he sought a quick issue. "Perhaps then you haven't heard she's to be married."

"To be married?" Paul stared.

"To Mr. St. George—it has just been settled. 20 Odd marriage, isn't it?" Paul uttered no opinion on this point: he only continued to stare. "But I daresay it will do—she's so awfully literary!" said the General.

Paul had turned very red. "Oh, it's a surprise—very interesting, very charming! I'm afraid I can't dine—so many thanks!"

"Well, you must come to the wedding!" cried the General. "Oh, I remember that day at Summersoft. He's a very good fellow."

"Charming—charming!" Paul stammered, retreating. He shook hands with the General and got off. His face was red and he had the sense of its growing more and more crimson. All the evening at home—he went straight to his rooms and remained there dinnerless—his cheek burned at intervals as if it had been smitten. He didn't understand what had happened to him, what trick had been played him, what treachery practised. "None, none," he said to himself. "I've nothing to do with it. I'm out of it—it's none of my business." But that bewildered murmur was followed again and again by the incongruous ejaculation—"Was it a plan—was it a plan?" Sometimes he cried to himself, breathless, "Am I a dupe—am I a dupe?" If he was, he was an absurd and abject one. It seemed to him he had never lost her till now. He had renounced her, yes; but that was another affair—that was a closed but not a locked door. Now he felt as if the door had been slammed in his face. Did he expect her to wait

—was she to give him his time like that: two years at a stretch? He didn't know what he had expected—he only knew what he hadn't. It wasn't this—it wasn't this. Mystification, bitterness and wrath rose and boiled in him when he thought of the deference, the devotion, the credulity with which he had listened to St. George. The evening wore on and the light was long; but even when it had darkened he remained without a lamp. He had flung himself on the sofa, and he lay there through the hours with his eyes either closed or gazing into the gloom, in the attitude of a man teaching himself to bear something, to bear having been made a fool of. He had made it too easy—that idea passed over him like a hot wave. Suddenly, as he heard eleven o'clock strike, he jumped up, remembering what General Fancourt had said about his coming after dinner. He would go—he would see her at least; perhaps he should see what it meant. He felt as if some of the elements of a hard sum had been given him and the others were wanting: he couldn't do his sum till he was in possession of them all.

He dressed quickly, so that by half-past eleven he was at Manchester Square. There were a good many carriages at the door—a party was going on; a circumstance which at the last gave him a slight relief, for now he would rather see her in a crowd. People passed him on the staircase; they were going away, going “on,” with the hunted, herdlike movement of London society at night. But sundry groups remained in the drawing-room, and it was some minutes, as she didn't hear him announced, before he discovered her and spoke to her. In this short interval he had perceived that St. George was there, talking to a lady before the fireplace; but he looked away from him, for the moment, and therefore failed to see whether the author of *Shadowmure* noticed him. At all events he didn't come to him. Miss Fancourt did, as soon as she saw him; she almost rushed at him, smiling, rustling, radiant, beautiful. He had forgotten what her head, what her face offered to the sight; she was in white, there were gold figures on her dress, and her hair was like a casque of gold. In a single moment he saw she was happy, happy with a kind of aggressiveness, of splendour. But she would not speak to him of that, she would speak only of himself.

“I'm so delighted, my father told me. How kind of you to come!” She struck him as so fresh and brave, while his eyes moved over her, that he said to himself, irresistibly: “Why to *him*, why not to youth, to strength, to ambition, to a future? Why, in her rich young capacity, to failure, to abdication, to superannuation?” In his thought, at that sharp moment, he blasphemed even against all that had been left of his faith in the peccable master. “I'm so sorry I missed you,” she went on. “My father told me. How charming of you to have come so soon!”

“Does that surprise you?” Paul Overt asked.

“The first day? No, from you—nothing that's nice.” She was interrupted by a lady who bade her good-night, and he seemed to read that it cost her nothing to speak to one in that tone; it was her old bounteous, demonstrative way, with a certain added amplitude that time had brought; and if it began to operate on the spot, at such a juncture in her history, perhaps in the other days too it had meant just as little or as much—a sort of mechanical charity, with the difference now that she was satisfied, ready to give but asking nothing. Oh, she was satisfied—and why shouldn't she be? Why shouldn't she have been surprised at his coming the first day—for all the good she had ever got from him? As the lady continued to hold her attention Paul Overt turned from her with a strange irritation in his complicated artistic soul and a kind of disinterested disappointment. She was so happy that it was almost stupid—it seemed to deny the extraordinary intelligence he had formerly found in her. Didn't she know how bad St. George could be, hadn't she perceived the deplorable thinness—? If she didn't she was nothing, and if she did why such an insolence of serenity? This question expired as our young man's eyes settled at last upon the genius who had advised him in a great crisis. St. George was still before the chimney-piece, but now he was alone (fixed, waiting, as if he meant to remain after every one), and he met the clouded gaze of the young friend who was tormented with uncertainty as to whether he had the right (which his resentment would have enjoyed) to regard himself as his victim. Somehow, the fantastic inquiry I have just noted was answered by St. George's aspect. It was as fine in its way as Marian Fancourt's

—it denoted the happy human being; but somehow it represented to Paul Overt that the author of *Shadowmere* had now definitely ceased to count—ceased to count as a writer. As he smiled a welcome across the room he was almost *banal*, he was almost smug. Paul had the impression that for a moment he hesitated to make a movement forward, as if he had a bad conscience; but the next they had met in the middle of the room and had shaken hands, expressively, cordially on St. George's part. Then they had passed together to where the elder man had been standing, while St. George said: "I hope you are never going away again. I have been dining here; the General told me." He was handsome, he was young, he looked as if he had still a great fund of life. He bent the friendliest, most unconfessing eyes upon Paul Overt; asked him about everything, his health, his plans, his late occupations, the new book. "When will it be out—soon, soon, I hope? Splendid, eh? That's right; you're a comfort! I've read you all over again, the last six months." Paul waited to see if he would tell him what the General had told him in the afternoon, and what Miss Fancourt, verbally at least, of course had not. But as it didn't come out he asked at last: "Is it true, the great news I hear, that you're to be married?"

"Ah, you *have* heard it then?"

"Didn't the General tell you?" Paul Overt went on.

"Tell me what?"

"That he mentioned it to me this afternoon?"

"My dear fellow, I don't remember. We've been in the midst of people. I'm sorry, in that case, that I lose the pleasure, myself, of announcing to you a fact that touches me so nearly. It is a fact, strange as it may appear. It has only just become one. Isn't it ridiculous?" St. George made this speech without confusion, but on the other hand, so far as Paul could see, without latent impudence. It appeared to his interlocutor that, to talk so comfortably and coolly, he must simply have forgotten what had passed between them. His next words, however, showed that he had not, and they had, as an appeal to Paul's own memory, an effect which would have been ludicrous if it had not been cruel. "Do you recollect the talk we had at my house that night, into which Miss Fancourt's name entered? I've often thought of it since."

"Yes—no wonder you said what you did," said Paul, looking at him.

"In the light of the present occasion? Ah! but there was no light then. How could I have foreseen this hour?"

"Didn't you think it probable?"

"Upon my honour, no," said Henry St. George. "Certainly, I owe you that assurance. Think how my situation has changed."

"I see—I see," Paul murmured.

His companion went on, as if, now that the subject had been broached, he was, as a man of imagination and tact, perfectly ready to give every satisfaction—being able to enter fully into everything another might feel. "But it's not only that—for honestly, at my age, I never dreamed—a widower, with big boys and with so little else! It has turned out differently from any possible calculation, and I am fortunate beyond all measure. She has been so free, and yet she consents. Better than any one else perhaps—for I remember how you liked her, before you went away, and how she liked you—you can intelligently congratulate me."

"She has been so free!" Those words made a great impression on Paul Overt, and he almost writhed under that irony in them as to which it little mattered whether it was intentional or casual. Of course she had been free and, appreciably perhaps, by his own act; for was not St. George's allusion to her having liked him a part of the irony too? "I thought that by your theory you disapproved of a writer's marrying."

"Surely—surely. But you don't call me a writer?"

"You ought to be ashamed," said Paul.

"Ashamed of marrying again?"

"I won't say that—but ashamed of your reasons."

"You must let me judge of them, my friend."

"Yes; why not? For you judged wonderfully of mine."

The tone of these words appeared suddenly, for Henry St. George, to suggest the unsuspected. He stared as if he read a bitterness in them. "Don't you think I have acted fair?"

"You might have told me at the time, perhaps."

"My dear fellow, when I say I couldn't pierce futurity!"

"I mean afterwards."

St. George hesitated. "After my wife's death?"

"When this idea came to you."

"Ah, never, never! I wanted to save you, rare and precious as you are."

"Are you marrying Miss Fancourt to save me?"

"Not absolutely, but it adds to the pleasure. I shall be the making of you," said St. George, smiling. "I was greatly struck, after our talk, with the resolute way you quitted the country and still more, perhaps, with your force of character in remaining abroad. You're very strong—you're wonderfully strong."

Paul Overt tried to sound his pleasant eyes; the strange thing was that he appeared sincere—not a mocking fiend. He turned away, and as he did so he heard St. George say something about his giving them the proof, being the joy of his old age. He faced him again, taking another look. "Do you mean to say you've stopped writing?"

"My dear fellow, of course I have. It's too late. Didn't I tell you?"

"I can't believe it!"

"Of course you can't—with your own talent! No, no; for the rest of my life I shall only read you."

"Does she know that—Miss Fancourt?"

"She will—she will." Our young man wondered whether St. George meant this as a covert intimation that the assistance he should derive from that young lady's fortune, moderate as it was, would make the difference of putting it in his power to cease to work, ungratefully, an exhausted vein. Somehow, standing there in the ripeness of his successful manhood, he did not suggest that any of his veins were exhausted. "Don't you remember the moral I offered myself to you—that night—as pointing?" St. George continued. "Consider, at any rate, the warning I am at present."

This was too much—he *was* the mocking fiend. Paul separated from him with a mere nod for good-night; the sense that he might come back to him some time in the far future but could not fraternise with him now. It was necessary to his sore spirit to believe for the hour that he had a grievance—all the more cruel for not being a legal one. It was doubtless in the attitude of hugging this wrong that he descended the stairs without taking leave of

Miss Fancourt, who had not been in view at the moment he quitted the room. He was glad to get out into the honest, dusky, unsophisticating night, to move fast, to take his way home on foot. He walked a long time, missing his way, not thinking of it. He was thinking of too many other things. His steps recovered their direction, however, and at the end of an hour he found himself before his door, in the small, inexpensive, empty street. He lingered, questioning himself still, before going in, with nothing around and above him but moonless blackness, a bad lamp or two and a few far-away dim stars. To these last faint features he raised his eyes; he had been saying to himself that there would have been mockery indeed if now, on his new foundation, at the end of a year, St. George should put forth something with his early quality—something of the type of *Shadowmure* and finer than his finest. Greatly as he admired his talent Paul literally hoped such an incident would not occur; it seemed to him just then that he scarcely should be able to endure it. St. George's words were still in his ears. "You're very strong—wonderfully strong." Was he really? Certainly, he would have to be; and it would be a sort of revenge.

Is he? the reader may ask in turn, if his interest has followed the perplexed young man so far. The best answer to that perhaps is that he is doing his best but that it is too soon to say. When the new book came out in the autumn Mr. and Mrs. St. George found it really magnificent. The former still has published nothing, but Paul Overt does not even yet feel safe. I may say for him, however, that if this event were to befall he would really be the very first to appreciate it: which is perhaps a proof that St. George was essentially right and that Nature dedicated him to intellectual, not to personal passion.

JOSEPH CONRAD

One of the most remarkable achievements in English literature is that of Joseph Conrad (1857–1924), whose writing, begun at the age of thirty-eight, was done entirely in a language learned comparatively late in life. Born of Polish parents in the Ukraine, Conrad (Theodor Josef

Konrad Korzeniowski) left Poland at seventeen and voyaged for twenty years before settling permanently in England. His intimate knowledge of the sea is evident in all of his stories and novels, in which the ocean is often used metaphorically to symbolize life itself. His philosophical view embodies the individual's need for positive virtues—duty, loyalty, courage, honor—in a chaotic and unstable world. Among Conrad's outstanding fictional works are *Almayer's Folly*, 1895; *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, 1897; *Lord Jim*, 1900; *Heart of Darkness*, 1902; *Typhoon*, 1902; *Nostromo*, 1904; *Under Western Eyes*, 1911; *Chance*, 1914; *Victory*, 1915; and *The Arrow of Gold*, 1919. "*Youth*" is a moving romance of the sea. Here Conrad, using a narrator as in much of his fiction, tells in his characteristically rich prose a story of the power of illusions to sustain man's steadfastness and courage in the face of physical and spiritual hardship.

YOUTH¹

This could have occurred nowhere but in England, where men and sea interpenetrate, so to speak—the sea entering into the life of most men, and the men knowing something or everything about the sea, in the way of amusement, of travel, or of breadwinning.

We were sitting round a mahogany table that reflected the bottle, the claret glasses, and our faces as we leaned on our elbows. There was a director of companies, an accountant, a lawyer, Marlow, and myself. The director had been a *Conway* boy, the accountant had served four years at sea, the lawyer—a fine crusted Tory, High Churchman, the best of old fellows, the soul of honor—had been chief officer in the P. & O. service in the good old days when mailboats were square-rigged at least on two masts, and used to come down the China Sea before a fair monsoon with stunsails set aloft and aloft. We all began life in the merchant service. Between the five of us there was the strong bond of the sea, and also the fellowship of the craft, which no amount of enthusiasm for yachting, cruising, and so on can give,

since one is only the amusement of life and the other is life itself.

Marlow (at least I think that is how he spelt his name) told the story, or rather the chronicle, of a voyage:

"Yes, I have seen a little of the Eastern seas; but what I remember best is my first voyage there. You fellows know there are those voyages that seem ordered for the illustration of life, that might stand for a symbol of existence. You fight, work, sweat, nearly kill yourself, sometimes do kill yourself, trying to accomplish something—and you can't. Not from any fault of yours. You simply can do nothing, neither great nor little—not a thing in the world—not even marry an old maid, or get a wretched 600-ton cargo of coal to its port of destination.

"It was altogether a memorable affair. It was my first voyage to the East, and my first voyage as second mate; it was also my skipper's first command. You'll admit it was time. He was sixty if a day; a little man, with a broad, not very straight back, with bowed shoulders and one leg more bandy than the other, he had that queer, twisted-about appearance you see so often in men who work in the fields. He had a nutcracker face—chin and nose trying to come together over a sunken mouth—and it was framed in iron-gray fluffy hair, that looked like a chinstrap of cotton-wool sprinkled with coal-dust. And he had blue eyes in that old face of his which were amazingly like a boy's, with that candid expression some quite common men preserve to the end of their days by a rare internal gift of simplicity of heart and rectitude of soul. What induced him to accept me was a wonder. I had come out of a crack Australian clipper, where I had been third officer, and he seemed to have a prejudice against crack clipper as aristocratic and high-toned. He said to me, 'You know, in this ship you will have to work.' I said I had to work in every ship I had ever been in. 'Ah, but this is different, and you gentlemen out of them big ships; . . . but there! I dare say you will do. Join tomorrow.'

"I joined tomorrow. It was twenty-two years ago; and I was just twenty. How time passes! It was one of the happiest days of my life. Fancy! Second mate for the first time—a really responsible officer! I wouldn't have thrown up my new billet for a fortune. The mate looked me over carefully. He was also an old chap, but of

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another stamp. He had a Roman nose, a snow-white, long beard, and his name was Mahon, but he insisted that it should be pronounced Mann. He was well connected; yet there was something wrong with his luck, and he had never got on.

"As to the captain, he had been for years in coasters, then in the Mediterranean, and last in the West Indian trade. He had never been round the Capes. He could just write a kind of sketchy hand, and didn't care for writing at all. Both were thorough good seamen of course, and between those two old chaps I felt like a small boy between two grandfathers.

"The ship also was old. Her name was the *Judea*. Queer name, isn't it? She belonged to a man Wilmer, Wilcox—some name like that; but he has been bankrupt and dead these twenty years or more, and his name don't matter. She had been laid up in Shadwell basin for ever so long. You may imagine her state. She was all rust, dust, grime—soot aloft, dirt on deck. To me it was like coming out of a palace into a ruined cottage. She was about 400 tons, had a primitive windlass, wooden latches to the doors, not a bit of brass about her, and a big square stern. There was on it, below her name in big letters, a lot of scrollwork, with the gilt off, and some sort of a coat of arms, with the motto 'Do or Die' underneath. I remember it took my fancy immensely. There was a touch of romance in it, something that made me love the old thing—something that appealed to my youth!

"We left London in ballast—sand ballast—to load a cargo of coal in a northern port for Bangkok. Bangkok! I thrilled. I had been six years at sea, but had only seen Melbourne and Sydney, very good places, charming places in their way—but Bangkok!

"We worked out of the Thames under canvas, with a North Sea pilot on board. His name was Jermyn, and he dodged all day long about the galley drying his handkerchief before the stove. Apparently he never slept. He was a dismal man, with a perpetual tear sparkling at the end of his nose, who either had been in trouble, or was in trouble, or expected to be in trouble—couldn't be happy unless something went wrong. He mistrusted my youth, my common sense, and my seamanship, and made a point of showing it in a hundred little ways. I dare say

he was right. It seems to me I knew very little then, and I know not much more now; but I cherish a hate for that Jermyn to this day.

"We were a week working up as far as Yarmouth Roads, and then we got into a gale—the famous October gale of twenty-two years ago. It was wind, lightning, sleet, snow, and a terrific sea. We were flying light, and you may imagine how bad it was when I tell you we had smashed bulwarks and a flooded deck. On the second night she shifted her ballast into the lee bow, and by that time we had been blown off somewhere on the Dogger Bank. There was nothing for it but go below with shovels and try to right her, and there we were in that vast hold, gloomy like a cavern, the tallow dips stuck and flickering on the beams, the gale howling above, the ship tossing about like mad on her side; there we all were, Jermyn, the captain, everyone, hardly able to keep our feet, engaged on that gravedigger's work, and trying to toss shovelfuls of wet sand up to windward. At every tumble of the ship you could see vaguely in the dim light men falling down with a great flourish of shovels. One of the ship's boys (we had two), impressed by the weirdness of the scene, wept as if his heart would break. We could hear him blubbing somewhere in the shadows.

"On the third day the gale died out, and by and by a north-country tug picked us up. We took sixteen days in all to get from London to the Tyne! When we got into dock we had lost our turn for loading, and they hauled us off to a pier where we remained for a month. Mrs. Beard (the captain's name was Beard) came from Colechester to see the old man. She lived on board. The crew of runners had left, and there remained only the officers, one boy and the steward, a mulatto who answered to the name of Abraham. Mrs. Beard was an old woman, with a face all wrinkled and ruddy like a winter apple, and the figure of a young girl. She caught sight of me once, sewing on a button, and insisted on having my shirts to repair. This was something different from the captains' wives I had known on board crack clippers. When I brought her the shirts, she said: 'And the socks? They want mending, I am sure, and John's—Captain Beard's—things are all in order now. I would be glad of something to do.' Bless the old woman. She overhauled my outfit

for me, and meantime I read for the first time *Sartor Resartus* and Burnaby's *Ride to Khiva*. I didn't understand much of the first then; but I remember I preferred the soldier to the philosopher at the time; a preference which life has only confirmed. One was a man, and the other was either more—or less. However, they are both dead and Mrs. Beard is dead, and youth, strength, genius, thoughts, achievements, simple hearts—all dies. . . . No matter.

"They loaded us at last. We shipped a crew. Eight able seamen and two boys. We hauled off one evening to the buoys at the dock gates, ready to go out, and with a fair prospect of beginning the voyage next day. Mrs. Beard was to start for home by a late train. When the ship was fast we went to tea. We sat rather silent through the meal—Mahon, the old couple, and I. I finished first, and slipped away for a smoke, my cabin being in a deckhouse just against the poop. It was high water, blowing fresh with a drizzle; the double dock gates were opened, and the steam colliers were going in and out in the darkness with their lights burning bright, a great plashing of propellers, rattling of winches, and a lot of hailing on the pierheads. I watched the procession of headlights gliding high and of green lights gliding low in the night, when suddenly a red gleam flashed at me, vanished, came into view again, and remained. The fore end of a steamer loomed up close. I shouted down the cabin, 'Come up, quick!' and then heard a startled voice saying afar in the dark, 'Stop her, sir.' A bell jingled. Another voice cried warningly, 'We are going right into that bark, sir.' The answer to this was a gruff 'All right,' and the next thing was a heavy crash as the steamer struck a glancing blow with the bluff of her bow about our forerigging. There was a moment of confusion, yelling, and running about. Steam roared. Then somebody was heard saying, 'All clear, sir.' . . . 'Are you all right?' asked the gruff voice. I had jumped forward to see the damage, and hailed back, 'I think so.' 'Easy astern,' said the gruff voice. A bell jingled. 'What steamer is that?' screamed Mahon. By that time she was no more to us than a bulky shadow maneuvering a little way off. They shouted at us some name—a woman's name, Miranda or Melissa—or some such thing. 'This

means another month in this beastly hole,' said Mahon to me, as we peered with lamps about the splintered bulwarks and broken braces. 'But where's the captain?'

"We had not heard or seen anything of him all that time. We went aft to look. A doleful voice arose hailing somewhere in the middle of the dock, 'Judea ahoy!' . . . How the devil did he get there? . . . 'Hallo!' we shouted. 'I am adrift in our boat without oars,' he cried. A belated water-man offered his services, and Mahon struck a bargain with him for a half crown to tow our skipper alongside; but it was Mrs. Beard that came up the ladder first. They had been floating about the dock in that mizzly cold rain for nearly an hour. I was never so surprised in my life.

"It appears that when he heard my shout 'Come up' he understood at once what was the matter, caught up his wife, ran on deck, and across, and down into our boat, which was fast to the ladder. Not bad for a sixty-year-old. Just imagine that old fellow saving heroically in his arms that old woman—the woman of his life. He set her down on a thwart, and was ready to climb back on board when the painter came adrift somehow, and away they went together. Of course in the confusion we did not hear him shouting. He looked abashed. She said cheerfully, 'I suppose it does not matter my losing the train now?' 'No, Jenny—you go below and get warm,' he growled. Then to us: 'A sailor has no business with a wife—I say. There I was, out of the ship. Well, no harm done this time. Let's go and look at what that fool of a steamer smashed.'

"It wasn't much, but it delayed us three weeks. At the end of that time, the captain being engaged with his agents, I carried Mrs. Beard's bag to the railway station and put her all comfy into a third-class carriage. She lowered the window to say, 'You are a good young man. If you see John—Captain Beard—without his muffler at night, just remind him from me to keep his throat well wrapped up.' 'Certainly, Mrs. Beard,' I said. 'You are a good young man; I noticed how attentive you are to John—to Captain—' The train pulled out suddenly; I took my cap off to the old woman: I never saw her again. . . . Pass the bottle.

"We went to sea next day. When we made that start for Bangkok we had been already

three months out of London. We had expected to be a fortnight or so—at the outside.

"It was January, and the weather was beautiful—the beautiful sunny winter weather that has more charm than in the summertime, because it is unexpected, and crisp, and you know it won't, it can't, last long. It's like a windfall, like a godsend, like an unexpected piece of luck.

"It lasted all down the North Sea, all down Channel; and it lasted till we were three hundred miles or so to the westward of the Lizards; then the wind went round to the south-west and began to pipe up. In two days it blew a gale. The *Judea*, hove to, wallowed on the Atlantic like an old candle-box. It blew day after day: it blew with spite, without interval, without mercy, without rest. The world was nothing but an immensity of great foaming waves rushing at us, under a sky low enough to touch with the hand and dirty like a smoked ceiling. In the stormy space surrounding us there was as much flying spray as air. Day after day and night after night there was nothing round the ship but the howl of the wind, the tumult of the sea, the noise of water pouring over her deck. There was no rest for her and no rest for us. She tossed, she pitched, she stood on her head, she sat on her tail, she rolled, she groaned, and we had to hold on while on deck and cling to our bunks when below, in a constant effort of body and worry of mind.

"One night Mahon spoke through the small window of my berth. It opened right into my very bed, and I was lying there sleepless, in my boots, feeling as though I had not slept for years, and could not if I tried. He said excitedly:

"You got the sounding rod in here, Marlow? I can't get the pumps to suck. By God! It's no child's play."

"I gave him the sounding rod and lay down again, trying to think of various things—but I thought only of the pumps. When I came on deck they were still at it, and my watch relieved at the pumps. By the light of the lantern brought on deck to examine the sounding rod I caught a glimpse of their weary, serious faces. We pumped all the four hours. We pumped all night, all day, all the week—watch and watch. She was working herself loose, and leaked badly—not enough to drown us at once,

but enough to kill us with the work at the pumps. And while we pumped the ship was going from us piecemeal: the bulwarks went, the stanchions were torn out, the ventilators smashed, the cabin door burst in. There was not a dry spot in the ship. She was being gutted bit by bit. The longboat changed, as if by magic, into matchwood where she stood in her gripes. I had lashed her myself, and was rather proud of my handiwork, which had withstood so long the malice of the sea. And we pumped. And there was no break in the weather. The sea was white like a sheet of foam, like a caldron of boiling milk; there was not a break in the clouds, no—not the size of a man's hand—no, not for so much as ten seconds. There was for us no sky, there were for us no stars, no sun, no universe—nothing but angry clouds and an infuriated sea. We pumped watch and watch, for dear life, and it seemed to last for months, for years, for all eternity, as though we had been dead and gone to a hell for sailors. We forgot the day of the week, the name of the month, what year it was, and whether we had ever been ashore. The sails blew away, she lay broadside on under a weather cloth, the ocean poured over her, and we did not care. We turned those handles, and had the eyes of idiots. As soon as we had crawled on deck I used to take a round turn with a rope about the men, the pumps, and the mainmast, and we turned, we turned incessantly, with the water to our waists, to our necks, over our heads. It was all one. We had forgotten how it felt to be dry.

"And there was somewhere in me the thought: By Jove! This is the deuce of an adventure—something you read about; and it is my first voyage as second mate—and I am only twenty—and here I am lasting it out as well as any of these men, and keeping my chaps up to the mark. I was pleased. I would not have given up the experience for worlds. I had moments of exultation. Whenever the old dismantled craft pitched heavily with her counter high in the air, she seemed to me to throw up, like an appeal, like a defiance, like a cry to the clouds without mercy, the words written on her stern: '*Judea*, London. Do or Die.'

"O youth! The strength of it, the faith of it, the imagination of it! To me she was not an old rattletrap carting about the world a lot of

coal for a freight—to me she was the endeavor, the test, the trial of life. I think of her with pleasure, with affection, with regret—as you would think of someone dead you have loved. I shall never forget her. . . . Pass the bottle.

“One night when tied to the mast, as I explained, we were pumping on, deafened with the wind, and without spirit enough in us to wish ourselves dead, a heavy sea crashed aboard and swept clean over us. As soon as I got my breath I shouted, as in duty bound, ‘Keep on, boys!’ when suddenly I felt something hard floating on deck strike the calf of my leg. I made a grab at it and missed. It was so dark we could not see each other’s faces within a foot—you understand.

“After that thump the ship kept quiet for a while, and the thing, whatever it was, struck my leg again. This time I caught it—and it was a saucepan. At first, being stupid with fatigue and thinking of nothing but the pumps, I did not understand what I had in my hand. Suddenly it dawned upon me, and I shouted, ‘Boys, the house on deck is gone. Leave this, and let’s look for the cook.’

“There was a deckhouse forward, which contained the galley, the cook’s berth, and the quarters of the crew. As we had expected for days to see it swept away, the hands had been ordered to sleep in the cabin—the only safe place in the ship. The steward, Abraham, however, persisted in clinging to his berth, stupidly, like a mule—from sheer fright, I believe, like an animal that won’t leave a stable falling in an earthquake. So we went to look for him. It was chancing death, since once out of our lashings we were as exposed as if on a raft. But we went. The house was shattered as if a shell had exploded inside. Most of it had gone overboard—stove, men’s quarters, and their property, all was gone; but two posts, holding a portion of the bulkhead to which Abraham’s bunk was attached, remained as if by a miracle. We groped in the ruins and came upon this, and there he was, sitting in his bunk, surrounded by foam and wreckage, jabbering cheerfully to himself. He was out of his mind; completely and forever mad, with this sudden shock coming upon the fag-end of his endurance. We snatched him up, lugged him aft, and pitched him headfirst down the cabin companion. You understand there was no time to carry him down with in-

finite precautions and wait to see how he got on. Those below would pick him up at the bottom of the stairs all right. We were in a hurry to go back to the pumps. That business could not wait. A bad leak is an inhuman thing.

“One would think that the sole purpose of that fiendish gale had been to make a lunatic of that poor devil of a mulatto. It eased before morning, and next day the sky cleared, and as the sea went down the leak took up. When it came to bending a fresh set of sails the crew demanded to put back—and really there was nothing else to do. Boats gone, decks swept clean, cabin gutted, men without a stitch but what they stood in, stores spoiled, ship strained. We put her head for home, and—would you believe it? The wind came east right in our teeth. It blew fresh, it blew continuously. We had to beat up every inch of the way, but she did not leak so badly, the water keeping comparatively smooth. Two hours’ pumping in every four is no joke—but it kept her afloat as far as Falmouth.

“The good people there live on casualties of the sea, and no doubt were glad to see us. A hungry crowd of shipwrights sharpened their chisels at the sight of that carcass of a ship. And, by Jove! they had pretty pickings off us before they were done. I fancy the owner was already in a tight place. There were delays. Then it was decided to take part of the cargo out and calk her topsides. This was done, the repairs finished, cargo reshipped; a new crew came on board, and we went out—for Bangkok. At the end of a week we were back again. The crew said they weren’t going to Bangkok—a hundred and fifty days’ passage—in a something hooker that wanted pumping eight hours out of the twenty-four; and the nautical papers inserted again the little paragraph: ‘Judea. Bark. Tyne to Bangkok; coals; put back to Falmouth leaky and with crew refusing duty.’

“There were more delays—more tinkering. The owner came down for a day, and said she was as right as a little fiddle. Poor old Captain Beard looked like the ghost of a Geordie skipper—through the worry and humiliation of it. Remember, he was sixty, and it was his first command. Mahon said it was a foolish business and would end badly. I loved the ship more than ever, and wanted awfully to get to Bangkok. To Bangkok! Magic name, blessed name.

Mesopotamia wasn't a patch on it. Remember, I was twenty, and it was my first second-mate's billet, and the East was waiting for me.

"We went out and anchored in the outer roads with a fresh crew—the third. She leaked worse than ever. It was as if those confounded shipwrights had actually made a hole in her. This time we did not even go outside. The crew simply refused to man the windlass.

"They towed us back to the inner harbor, and we became a fixture, a feature, an institution of the place. People pointed us out to visitors as 'That 'ere bark that's going to Bangkok—has been here six months—put back three times.' On holidays the small boys pulling about in boats would hail, '*Judea*, ahoy!' and if a head showed above the rail shouted, 'Where you bound to?—Bangkok?' and jeered. We were only three on board. The poor old skipper mooned in the cabin. Mahon undertook the cooking, and unexpectedly developed all a Frenchman's genius for preparing nice little messes. I looked languidly after the rigging. We became citizens of Falmouth. Every shopkeeper knew us. At the barber's or tobacconist's they asked familiarly, 'Do you think you will ever get to Bangkok?' Meantime the owner, the underwriters, and the charterers squabbled amongst themselves in London, and our pay went on. . . . Pass the bottle.

"It was horrid. Morally it was worse than pumping for life. It seemed as though we had been forgotten by the world, belonged to nobody, would get nowhere; it seemed that, as if bewitched, we would have to live forever and ever in that inner harbor, a derision and a by-word to generations of longshore loafers and dishonest boatmen. I obtained three months' pay and a five days' leave, and made a rush for London. It took me a day to get there and pretty well another to come back—but three months' pay went all the same. I don't know what I did with it. I went to a music hall, I believe, lunched, dined, and supped in a swell place in Regent Street, and was back on time, with nothing but a complete set of Byron's works and a new railway rug to show for three months' work. The boatman who pulled me off to the ship said: 'Hallo! I thought you had left the old thing. *She* will never get to Bangkok.' 'That's all *you* know about it,' I said, scornfully—but I didn't like that prophecy at all.

"Suddenly a man, some kind of agent to somebody, appeared with full powers. He had grog-blossoms all over his face, an indomitable energy, and was a jolly soul. We leaped into life again. A hulk came alongside, took our cargo, and then we went into dry dock to get our copper stripped. No wonder she leaked. The poor thing, strained beyond endurance by the gale, had, as if in disgust, spat out all the oakum of her lower seams. She was recalked, new-coppered, and made as tight as a bottle. We went back to the hulk and reshipped our cargo.

"Then, on a fine moonlight night, all the rats left the ship.

"We had been infested with them. They had destroyed our sails, consumed more stores than the crew, affably shared our beds and our dangers, and now, when the ship was made seaworthy, concluded to clear out. I called Mahon to enjoy the spectacle. Rat after rat appeared on our rail, took a last look over his shoulder, and leaped with a hollow thud into the empty hulk. We tried to count them, but soon lost the tale. Mahon said: 'Well, well! don't talk to me about the intelligence of rats. They ought to have left before, when we had that narrow squeak from foundering. There you have the proof how silly is the superstition about them. They leave a good ship for an old rotten hulk, where there is nothing to eat, too, the fools! . . . I don't believe they know what is safe or what is good for them, any more than you or I.'

"And after some more talk we agreed that the wisdom of rats had been grossly overrated, being in fact no greater than that of men.

"The story of the ship was known, by this, all up the Channel from Land's End to the Forelands, and we could get no crew on the south coast. They sent us one all complete from Liverpool, and we left once more—for Bangkok.

"We had fair breezes, smooth water right into the tropics, and the old *Judea* lumbered along in the sunshine. When she went eight knots everything cracked aloft, and we tied our caps to our heads; but mostly she strolled on at the rate of three miles an hour. What could you expect? She was tired—that old ship. Her youth was where mine is—where yours is—you fellows who listen to this yarn; and what

friend would throw your years and your weariness in your face? We didn't grumble at her. To us aft, at least, it seemed as though we had been born in her, reared in her, had lived in her for ages, had never known any other ship. I would just as soon have abused the old village church at home for not being a cathedral.

"And for me there was also my youth to make me patient. There was all the East before me, and all life, and the thought that I had been tried in that ship and had come out pretty well. And I thought of men of old who, centuries ago, went that road in ships that sailed no better, to the land of palms, and spices, and yellow sands, and of brown nations ruled by kings more cruel than Nero the Roman, and more splendid than Solomon the Jew. The old bark lumbered on, heavy with her age and the burden of her cargo, while I lived the life of youth in ignorance and hope. She lumbered on through an interminable procession of days; and the fresh gilding flashed back at the setting sun, seemed to cry out over the darkening sea the words painted on her stern, 'Judea, London. Do or Die.'

"Then we entered the Indian Ocean and steered northerly for Java Head. The winds were light. Weeks slipped by. She crawled on, do or die, and people at home began to think of posting us as overdue.

"One Saturday evening, I being off duty, the men asked me to give them an extra bucket of water or so—for washing clothes. As I did not wish to screw on the fresh-water pump so late, I went forward whistling, and with a key in my hand to unlock the forepeak scuttle, intending to serve the water out of a spare tank we kept there.

"The smell down below was as unexpected as it was frightful. One would have thought hundreds of paraffin lamps had been flaring and smoking in that hole for days. I was glad to get out. The man with me coughed and said, 'Funny smell, sir.' I answered negligently, 'It's good for the health, they say,' and walked aft.

"The first thing I did was to put my head down the square of the midship ventilator. As I lifted the lid a visible breath, something like a thin fog, a puff of faint haze, rose from the opening. The ascending air was hot, and had a heavy, sooty, paraffin smell. I gave one sniff,

and put down the lid gently. It was no use choking myself. The cargo was on fire.

"Next day she began to smoke in earnest. You see, it was to be expected, for though the coal was of a safe kind, that cargo had been so handled, so broken up with handling, that it looked more like smithy coal than anything else. Then it had been wetted—more than once. It rained all the time we were taking it back from the hulk, and now with this long passage it got heated, and there was another case of spontaneous combustion.

"The captain called us into the cabin. He had a chart spread on the table, and looked unhappy. He said, 'The coast of West Australia is near, but I mean to proceed to our destination. It is the hurricane month, too; but we will just keep her head for Bangkok, and fight the fire. No more putting back anywhere, if we all get roasted. We will try first to stifle this 'ere damned combustion by want of air.'

"We tried. We battened down everything, and still she smoked. The smoke kept coming out through imperceptible crevices; it forced itself through bulkheads and covers; it oozed here and there and everywhere in slender threads, in an invisible film, in an incomprehensible manner. It made its way into the cabin, into the forecabin; it poisoned the sheltered places on the deck; it could be sniffed as high as the mainyard. It was clear that if the smoke came out the air came in. This was disheartening. This combustion refused to be stifled.

"We resolved to try water, and took the hatches off. Enormous volumes of smoke, whitish, yellowish, thick, greasy, misty, choking, ascended as high as the trucks. All hands cleared out aft. Then the poisonous cloud blew away, and we went back to work in a smoke that was no thicker now than that of an ordinary factory chimney.

"We rigged the force pump, got the hose along, and by and by it burst. Well, it was as old as the ship—a prehistoric hose, and past repair. Then we pumped with the feeble head pump, drew water with buckets, and in this way managed in time to pour lots of Indian Ocean into the main hatch. The bright stream flashed in sunshine, fell into a layer of white crawling smoke, and vanished on the black surface of coal. Steam ascended mingling with

the smoke. We poured salt water as into a barrel without a bottom. It was our fate to pump in that ship, to pump out of her, to pump into her; and after keeping water out of her to save ourselves from being drowned, we frantically poured water into her to save ourselves from being burnt.

"And she crawled on, do or die, in the serene weather. The sky was a miracle of purity, a miracle of azure. The sea was polished, was blue, was pellucid, was sparkling like a precious stone, extending on all sides, all round to the horizon—as if the whole terrestrial globe had been one jewel, one colossal sapphire, a single gem fashioned into a planet. And on the luster of the great calm waters the *Judea* glided imperceptibly, enveloped in languid and unclean vapors, in a lazy cloud that drifted to leeward, light and slow; a pestiferous cloud defiling the splendor of sea and sky.

"All this time of course we saw no fire. The cargo smoldered at the bottom somewhere. Once Mahon, as we were working side by side, said to me with a queer smile: 'Now, if she only would spring a tidy leak—like that time when we first left the Channel—it would put a stopper on this fire. Wouldn't it?' I remarked irrelevantly, 'Do you remember the rats?'

"We fought the fire and sailed the ship, too, as carefully as though nothing had been the matter. The steward cooked and attended on us. Of the other twelve men, eight worked while four rested. Everyone took his turn, captain included. There was equality, and if not exactly fraternity, then a deal of good feeling. Sometimes a man, as he dashed a bucketful of water down the hatchway, would yell out, 'Hurrah for Bangkok!' and the rest laughed. But generally we were taciturn and serious—and thirsty. Oh! how thirsty! And we had to be careful with the water. Strict allowance. The ship smoked, the sun blazed. . . . Pass the bottle.

"We tried everything. We even made an attempt to dig down to the fire. No good, of course. No man could remain more than a minute below. Mahon, who went first, fainted there, and the man who went to fetch him out did likewise. We lugged them out on deck. Then I leaped down to show how easily it could be done. They had learned wisdom by that time, and contented themselves by fishing

for me with a chainhook tied to a broom handle, I believe. I did not offer to go and fetch up my shovel, which was left down below.

"Things began to look bad. We put the long-boat into the water. The second boat was ready to swing out. We had also another, a fourteen-foot thing, on davits aft, where it was quite safe.

"Then, behold, the smoke suddenly decreased. We redoubled our efforts to flood the bottom of the ship. In two days there was no smoke at all. Everybody was on the broad grin. This was on a Friday. On Saturday no work, but sailing the ship of course, was done. The men washed their clothes and their faces for the first time in a fortnight, and had a special dinner given them. They spoke of spontaneous combustion with contempt, and implied *they* were the boys to put out combustions. Somehow we all felt as though we each had inherited a large fortune. But a beastly smell of burning hung about the ship. Captain Beard had hollow eyes and sunken cheeks. I had never noticed so much before how twisted and bowed he was. He and Mahon prowled soberly about hatches and ventilators, sniffing. It struck me suddenly poor Mahon was a very, very old chap. As to me, I was pleased and proud as though I had helped to win a great naval battle. O youth!

"The night was fine. In the morning a home-ward-bound ship passed us hull down—the first we had seen for months; but we were nearing the land at last, Java Head being about 190 miles off, and nearly due north.

"Next day it was my watch on deck from eight to twelve. At breakfast the captain observed, 'It's wonderful how that smell hangs about the cabin.' About ten, the mate being on the poop, I stepped down on the main deck for a moment. The carpenter's bench stood abaft the mainmast: I leaned against it sucking at my pipe, and the carpenter, a young chap, came to talk to me. He remarked, 'I think we have done very well, haven't we?' and then I perceived with annoyance the fool was trying to tilt the bench. I said curtly, 'Don't, Chips,' and immediately became aware of a queer sensation, of an absurd delusion—I seemed somehow to be in the air. I heard all round me like a pent-up breath released—as if a thousand giants simultaneously had said Phoo!—and felt

a dull concussion which made my ribs ache suddenly. No doubt about it—I was in the air, and my body was describing a short parabola. But short as it was, I had the time to think several thoughts in, as far as I can remember, the following order: 'This can't be the carpenter—What is it?—Some accident—Submarine volcano?—Coals, gas!—By Jove! We are being blown up—Everybody's dead—I am falling into the afterhatch—I see fire in it.'

"The coaldust suspended in the air of the hold had glowed dull-red at the moment of the explosion. In the twinkling of an eye, in an infinitesimal fraction of a second since the first tilt of the bench, I was sprawling full length on the cargo. I picked myself up and scrambled out. It was quick like a rebound. The deck was a wilderness of smashed timber, lying crosswise like trees in a wood after a hurricane; an immense curtain of solid rags waved gently before me—it was the mainsail blown to strips. I thought: the masts will be toppling over directly; and to get out of the way bolted on all fours towards the poop ladder. The first person I saw was Mahon, with eyes like saucers, his mouth open, and the long white hair standing straight on end round his head like a silver halo. He was just about to go down when the sight of the main deck stirring, heaving up, and changing into splinters before his eyes, petrified him on the top step. I stared at him in unbelief, and he stared at me with a queer kind of shocked curiosity. I did not know that I had no hair, no eyebrows, no eyelashes, that my young mustache was burnt off, that my face was black, one cheek laid open, my nose cut, and my chin bleeding. I had lost my cap, one of my slippers, and my shirt was torn to rags. Of all this I was not aware. I was amazed to see the ship still afloat, the poop deck whole—and, most of all, to see anybody alive. Also the peace of the sky and the serenity of the sea were distinctly surprising. I suppose I expected to see them convulsed with horror. . . . Pass the bottle.

"There was a voice hailing the ship from somewhere—in the air, in the sky—I couldn't tell. Presently I saw the captain—and he was mad. He asked me eagerly, 'Where's the cabin table?' and to hear such a question was a frightful shock. I had just been blown up, you understand, and vibrated with that experience—I wasn't quite sure whether I was alive. Mahon

began to stamp with both feet and yelled at him, 'Good God! don't you see the deck's blown out of her?' I found my voice, and stammered out as if conscious of some gross neglect of duty, 'I don't know where the cabin table is.' It was like an absurd dream.

"Do you know what he wanted next? Well, he wanted to trim the yards. Very placidly, and as if lost in thought, he insisted on having the foreyard squared. 'I don't know if there's anybody alive,' said Mahon, almost tearfully. 'Surely,' he said, gently, 'there will be enough left to square the foreyard.'

"The old chap, it seems, was in his own berth winding up the chronometers, when the shock sent him spinning. Immediately it occurred to him—as he said afterwards—that the ship had struck something, and ran out into the cabin. There, he saw, the cabin table had vanished somewhere. The deck being blown up, it had fallen down into the lazarette of course. Where we had our breakfast that morning he saw only a great hole in the floor. This appeared to him so awfully mysterious, and impressed him so immensely, that what he saw and heard after he got on deck were mere trifles in comparison. And, mark, he noticed directly the wheel deserted and his bark off her course—and his only thought was to get that miserable, stripped, undecked, smoldering shell of a ship back again with her head pointing at her port of destination. Bangkok! That's what he was after. I tell you this quiet, bowed, bandy-legged, almost deformed little man was immense in the singleness of his idea and in his placid ignorance of our agitation. He motioned us forward with a commanding gesture, and went to take the wheel himself.

"Yes; that was the first thing we did—trim the yards of that wreck! No one was killed, or even disabled, but everyone was more or less hurt. You should have seen them! Some were in rags, with black faces, like coal heavers, like sweeps, and had bullet heads that seemed closely cropped, but were in fact singed to the skin. Others, of the watch below, awakened by being shot out from their collapsing bunks, shivered incessantly, and kept on groaning even as we went about our work. But they all worked. That crew of Liverpool hard cases had in them the right stuff. It's my experience they always have. It is the sea that gives it—the

vastness, the loneliness surrounding their dark stolid souls. Ah! Well! We stumbled, we crept, we fell, we barked our shins on the wreckage, we hauled. The masts stood, but we did not know how much they might be charred down below. It was nearly calm, but a long swell ran from the west and made her roll. They might go at any moment. We looked at them with apprehension. One could not foresee which way they would fall.

"Then we retreated aft and looked about us. The deck was a tangle of planks on edge, of planks on end, of splinters, of ruined wood-work. The masts rose from that chaos like big trees above a matted undergrowth. The interstices of that mass of wreckage were full of something whitish, sluggish, stirring—of something that was like a greasy fog. The smoke of the invisible fire was coming up again, was trailing, like a poisonous thick mist in some valley choked with dead wood. Already lazy wisps were beginning to curl upwards amongst the mass of splinters. Here and there a piece of timber, stuck upright, resembled a post. Half of a fife rail had been shot through the foresail, and the sky made a patch of glorious blue in the ignobly soiled canvas. A portion of several boards holding together had fallen across the rail, and one end protruded overboard, like a gangway leading upon nothing, like a gangway leading over the deep sea, leading to death—as if inviting us to walk the plank at once and be done with our ridiculous troubles. And still the air, the sky—a ghost, something invisible was hailing the ship.

"Someone had the sense to look over, and there was the helmsman, who had impulsively jumped overboard, anxious to come back. He yelled and swam lustily like a merman, keeping up with the ship. We threw him a rope, and presently he stood amongst us streaming with water and very crestfallen. The captain had surrendered the wheel, and apart, elbow on rail and chin in hand, gazed at the sea wistfully. We asked ourselves, What next? I thought, Now, this is something like. This is great. I wonder what will happen. O youth!

"Suddenly Mahon sighted a steamer far astern. Captain Beard said, 'We may do something with her yet.' We hoisted two flags, which said in the international language of the sea, 'On fire. Want immediate assistance.' The

steamer grew bigger rapidly, and by and by spoke with two flags on her foremast, 'I am coming to your assistance.'

"In half an hour she was abreast, to windward, within hail, and rolling slightly, with her engines stopped. We lost our composure, and yelled all together with excitement, 'We've been blown up.' A man in a white helmet, on the bridge, cried, 'Yes! All right! all right!' and he nodded his head, and smiled, and made soothing motions with his hand as though at a lot of frightened children. One of the boats dropped in the water, and walked towards us upon the sea with her long oars. Four Calashes pulled a swinging stroke. This was my first sight of Malay seamen. I've known them since, but what struck me then was their unconcern: they came alongside, and even the bowman standing up and holding to our main chains with the boathook did not deign to lift his head for a glance. I thought people who had been blown up deserved more attention.

"A little man, dry like a chip and agile like a monkey, clambered up. It was the mate of the steamer. He gave one look, and cried, 'O boys—you had better quit!'

"We were silent. He talked apart with the captain for a time—seemed to argue with him. Then they went away together to the steamer.

"When our skipper came back we learned that the steamer was the *Somerville*, Captain Nash, from West Australia to Singapore via Batavia with mails, and that the agreement was she should tow us to Anjer or Batavia, if possible, where we could extinguish the fire by scuttling, and then proceed on our voyage—to Bangkok! The old man seemed excited. 'We will do it yet,' he said to Mahon, fiercely. He shook his fist at the sky. Nobody else said a word.

"At noon the steamer began to tow. She went ahead slim and high, and what was left of the *Judea* followed at the end of seventy fathom of towrope—followed her swiftly like a cloud of smoke with mastheads protruding above. We went aloft to furl the sails. We coughed on the yards, and were careful about the bunts. Do you see the lot of us there, putting a neat furl on the sails of that ship doomed to arrive nowhere? There was not a man who didn't think that at any moment the masts

would topple over. From aloft we could not see the ship for smoke, and they worked carefully, passing the gaskets with even turns. 'Harbor furl—aloft therel' cried Mahon from below.

"You understand this? I don't think one of those chaps expected to get down in the usual way. When we did I heard them saying to each other, 'Well, I thought we would come down overboard, in a lump—sticks and all—blame me if I didn't.' 'That's what I was thinking to myself,' would answer wearily another battered and bandaged scarecrow. And, mind, these were men without the drilled-in habit of obedience. To an onlooker they would be a lot of profane scallawags without a redeeming point. What made them do it—what made them obey me when I, thinking consciously how fine it was, made them drop the bunt of the foresail twice to try and do it better? What? They had no professional reputation—no examples, no praise. It wasn't a sense of duty; they all knew well enough how to shirk, and laze, and dodge—when they had a mind to it—and mostly they had. Was it the two pounds ten a month that sent them there? They didn't think their pay half good enough. No; it was something in them, something inborn and subtle and everlasting. I don't say positively that the crew of a French or German merchantman wouldn't have done it, but I doubt whether it would have been done in the same way. There was a completeness in it, something solid like a principle, and masterful like an instinct—a disclosure of something secret—of that hidden something, that gift of good or evil that makes racial difference, that shapes the fate of nations.

"It was that night at ten that, for the first time since we had been fighting it, we saw the fire. The speed of the towing had fanned the smoldering destruction. A blue gleam appeared forward, shining below the wreck of the deck. It wavered in patches, it seemed to stir and creep like the light of a glowworm. I saw it first, and told Mahon. 'Then the game's up,' he said. 'We had better stop this towing, or she will burst out suddenly fore and aft before we can clear out.' We set up a yell; rang bells to attract their attention; they towed on. At last Mahon and I had to crawl forward and cut the rope with an axe. There was no time to cast off the lashings. Red tongues could be seen

licking the wilderness of splinters under our feet as we made our way back to the poop.

"Of course they very soon found out in the steamer that the rope was gone. She gave a loud blast of her whistle, her lights were seen sweeping in a wide circle, she came up ranging close alongside, and stopped. We were all in a tight group on the poop looking at her. Every man had saved a little bundle or a bag. Suddenly a conical flame with a twisted top shot up forward and threw upon the black sea a circle of light, with the two vessels side by side and heaving gently in its center. Captain Beard had been sitting on the gratings still and mute for hours, but now he rose slowly and advanced in front of us, to the mizzen-shrouds. Captain Nash hailed: 'Come along! Look sharp. I have mailbags on board. I will take you and your boats to Singapore.'

"'Thank you! No!' said our skipper. 'We must see the last of the ship.'

"'I can't stand by any longer,' shouted the other. 'Mails—you know.'

"'Ay! ay! We are all right.'

"'Very well! I'll report you in Singapore. . . . Good-by!'

"He waved his hand. Our men dropped their bundles quietly. The steamer moved ahead, and passing out of the circle of light, vanished at once from our sight, dazzled by the fire which burned fiercely. And then I knew that I would see the East first as commander of a small boat. I thought it fine; and the fidelity to the old ship was fine. We should see the last of her. Oh, the glamor of youth! Oh, the fire of it, more dazzling than the flames of the burning ship, throwing a magic light on the wide earth, leaping audaciously to the sky, presently to be quenched by time, more cruel, more pitiless, more bitter than the sea—and like the flames of the burning ship surrounded by an impenetrable night.

"The old man warned us in his gentle and inflexible way that it was part of our duty to save for the underwriters as much as we could of the ship's gear. Accordingly we went to work aft, while she blazed forward to give us plenty of light. We lugged out a lot of rubbish. What didn't we save? An old barometer fixed with an absurd quantity of screws nearly cost me my life: a sudden rush of smoke came upon

me, and I just got away in time. There were various stores, bolts of canvas, coils of rope; the poop looked like a marine bazaar, and the boats were lumbered to the gunwales. One would have thought the old man wanted to take as much as he could of his first command with him. He was very, very quiet, but off his balance evidently. Would you believe it? He wanted to take a length of old stream-cable and a kedge anchor with him in the longboat. We said, 'Ay, ay, sir,' deferentially, and on the quiet let the things slip overboard. The heavy medicine chest went that way, two bags of green coffee, tins of paint—fancy, paint!—a whole lot of things. Then I was ordered with two hands into the boats to make a stowage and get them ready against the time it would be proper for us to leave the ship.

"We put everything straight, stepped the longboat's mast for our skipper, who was to take charge of her, and I was not sorry to sit down for a moment. My face felt raw, every limb ached as if broken, I was aware of all my ribs, and would have sworn to a twist in the backbone. The boats, fast astern, lay in a deep shadow, and all around I could see the circle of the sea lighted by the fire. A gigantic flame arose forward straight and clear. It flared fierce, with noises like the whirr of wings, with rumbles as of thunder. There were cracks, detonations, and from the cone of flame the sparks flew upwards, as man is born to trouble, to leaky ships, and to ships that burn.

"What bothered me was that the ship, lying broadside to the swell and to such wind as there was—a mere breath—the boats would not keep astern where they were safe, but persisted, in a pigheaded way boats have, in getting under the counter and then swinging alongside. They were knocking about dangerously and coming near the flame, while the ship rolled on them, and, of course, there was always the danger of the masts going over the side at any moment. I and my two boatkeepers kept them off as best we could, with oars and boathooks; but to be constantly at it became exasperating, since there was no reason why we should not leave at once. We could not see those on board, nor could we imagine what caused the delay. The boatkeepers were swearing feebly, and I had not only my share of the work but also had to keep at it two men who

showed a constant inclination to lay themselves down and let things slide.

"At last I hailed, 'On deck there,' and someone looked over. 'We're ready here,' I said. The head disappeared, and very soon popped up again. 'The captain says, All right, sir, and to keep the boats well clear of the ship.'

"Half an hour passed. Suddenly there was a frightful racket, rattle, clanking of chain, hiss of water, and millions of sparks flew up into the shivering column of smoke that stood leaning slightly above the ship. The catheads had burned away, and the two red-hot anchors had gone to the bottom, tearing out after them two hundred fathom of red-hot chain. The ship trembled, the mass of flame swayed as if ready to collapse, and the fore-topgallant mast fell. It darted down like an arrow of fire, shot under, and instantly leaping up within an oar's length of the boats, floated quietly, very black on the luminous sea. I hailed the deck again. After some time a man in an unexpectedly cheerful but also muffled tone, as though he had been trying to speak with his mouth shut, informed me, 'Coming directly, sir,' and vanished. For a long time I heard nothing but the whirr and roar of the fire. There were also whistling sounds. The boats jumped, tugged at the painters, ran at each other playfully, knocked their sides together, or, do what we would, swung in a bunch against the ship's side. I couldn't stand it any longer, and swarming up a rope, clambered aboard over the stern.

"It was as bright as day. Coming up like this, the sheet of fire facing me was a terrifying sight, and the heat seemed hardly bearable at first. On a settee cushion dragged out of the cabin Captain Beard, his legs drawn up and one arm under his head, slept with the light playing on him. Do you know what the rest were busy about? They were sitting on deck right aft, round an open case, eating bread and cheese and drinking bottled stout.

"On the background of flames twisting in fierce tongues above their heads they seemed at home like salamanders, and looked like a band of desperate pirates. The fire sparkled in the whites of their eyes, gleamed on patches of white skin seen through the torn shirts. Each had the marks as of a battle about him—bandaged heads, tied-up arms, a strip of dirty rag round a knee—and each man had a bottle be-

tween his legs and a chunk of cheese in his hand. Mahon got up. With his handsome and disreputable head, his hooked profile, his long white beard, and with an uncorked bottle in his hand, he resembled one of those reckless sea robbers of old making merry amidst violence and disaster. 'The last meal on board,' he explained solemnly. 'We had nothing to eat all day, and it was no use leaving all this.' He flourished the bottle and indicated the sleeping skipper. 'He said he couldn't swallow anything, so I got him to lie down,' he went on; and as I stared, 'I don't know whether you are aware, young fellow, the man had no sleep to speak of for days—and there will be dam' little sleep in the boats.' 'There will be no boats by and by if you fool about much longer,' I said, indignantly. I walked up to the skipper and shook him by the shoulder. At last he opened his eyes, but did not move. 'Time to leave her, sir,' I said quietly.

"He got up painfully, looked at the flames, at the sea sparkling round the ship, and black, black as ink farther away; he looked at the stars shining dim through a thin veil of smoke in a sky black, black as Erebus.

"Youngest first," he said.

"And the ordinary seaman, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand, got up, clambered over the taffrail, and vanished. Others followed. One, on the point of going over, stopped short to drain his bottle, and with a great swing of his arm flung it at the fire. 'Take this!' he cried.

"The skipper lingered disconsolately, and we left him to commune alone for a while with his first command. Then I went up again and brought him away at last. It was time. The ironwork on the poop was hot to the touch.

"Then the painter of the longboat was cut, and the three boats, tied together, drifted clear of the ship. It was just sixteen hours after the explosion when we abandoned her. Mahon had charge of the second boat, and I had the smallest—the fourteen-foot thing. The longboat would have taken the lot of us; but the skipper said we must save as much property as we could—for the underwriters—and so I got my first command. I had two men with me, a bag of biscuits, a few tins of meat, and a breaker of water. I was ordered to keep close to the longboat, that in case of bad weather we might be taken into her.

"And do you know what I thought? I thought I would part company as soon as I could. I wanted to have my first command all to myself. I wasn't going to sail in a squadron if there were a chance for independent cruising. I would make land by myself. I would beat the other boats. Youth! Ah, youth! The silly, charming, beautiful youth.

"But we did not make a start at once. We must see the last of the ship. And so the boats drifted about that night, heaving and setting on the swell. The men dozed, waked, sighed, groaned. I looked at the burning ship.

"Between the darkness of earth and heaven she was burning fiercely upon a disc of purple sea shot by the blood-red play of gleams; upon a disc of water glittering and sinister. A high, clear flame, an immense and lonely flame, ascended from the ocean, and from its summit the black smoke poured continuously at the sky. She burned furiously; mournful and imposing like a funeral pile kindled in the night, surrounded by the sea, watched over by the stars. A magnificent death had come like a grace, like a gift, like a reward to that old ship at the end of her laborious days. The surrender of her weary ghost to the keeping of stars and sea was stirring like the sight of a glorious triumph. The masts fell just before daybreak, and for a moment there was a burst and turmoil of sparks that seemed to fill with flying fire the night patient and watchful, the vast night lying silent upon the sea. At daylight she was only a charred shell, floating still under a cloud of smoke and bearing a glowing mass of coal within.

"Then the oars were got out, and the boats forming in a line moved round her remains as if in procession—the longboat leading. As we pulled across her stern a slim dart of fire shot out viciously at us, and suddenly she went down, head first, in a great hiss of steam. The unconsumed stern was the last to sink; but the paint had gone, had cracked, had peeled off, and there were no letters, there was no word, no stubborn device that was like her soul, to flash at the rising sun her creed and her name.

"We made our way north. A breeze sprang up, and about noon all the boats came together for the last time. I had no mast or sail in mine, but I made a mast out of a spare oar and hoist-

ed a boat-awning for a sail, with a boathook for a yard. She was certainly over-masted, but I had the satisfaction of knowing that with the wind aft I could beat the other two. I had to wait for them. Then we all had a look at the captain's chart, and, after a sociable meal of hard bread and water, got our last instructions. These were simple: steer north, and keep together as much as possible. 'Be careful with that jury-rig, Marlow,' said the captain; and Mahon, as I sailed proudly past his boat, wrinkled his curved nose and hailed, 'You will sail that ship of yours under water, if you don't look out, young fellow.' He was a malicious old man—and may the deep sea where he sleeps now rock him gently, rock him tenderly to the end of time!

"Before sunset a thick rain-squall passed over the two boats, which were far astern, and that was the last I saw of them for a time. Next day I sat steering my cockleshell—my first command—with nothing but water and sky round me. I did sight in the afternoon the uppersails of a ship far away, but said nothing, and my men did not notice her. You see I was afraid she might be homeward bound, and I had no mind to turn back from the portals of the East. I was steering for Java—another blessed name—like Bangkok, you know. I steered many days.

"I need not tell you what it is to be knocking about in an open boat. I remember nights and days of calm, when we pulled, we pulled, and the boat seemed to stand still, as if bewitched within the circle of the sea horizon. I remember the heat, the deluge of rain-squalls that kept us bailing for dear life (but filled our water cask), and I remember sixteen hours on end with a mouth dry as a cinder and a steering oar over the stern to keep my first command head on to a breaking sea. I did not know how good a man I was till then. I remember the drawn faces, the dejected figures of my two men, and I remember my youth and the feeling that will never come back any more—the feeling that I could last forever, outlast the sea, the earth, and all men; the deceitful feeling that lures us on to joys, to perils, to love, to vain effort—to death; the triumphant conviction of strength, the heat of life in the handful of dust, the glow in the heart that with every year grows dim, grows cold, grows small, and ex-

pires—and expires, too soon, too soon—before life itself.

"And this is how I see the East. I have seen its secret places and have looked into its very soul; but now I see it always from a small boat, a high outline of mountains, blue and afar in the morning; like faint mist at noon; a jagged wall of purple at sunset. I have the feel of the oar in my hand, the vision of a scorching blue sea in my eyes. And I see a bay, a wide bay, smooth as glass and polished like ice, shimmering in the dark. A red light burns far off upon the gloom of the land, and the night is soft and warm. We drag at the oars with aching arms, and suddenly a puff of wind, a puff faint and tepid and laden with strange odors of blossoms, of aromatic wood, comes out of the still night—the first sigh of the East on my face. That I can never forget. It was impalpable and enslaving, like a charm, like a whispered promise of mysterious delight.

"We had been pulling this finishing spell for eleven hours. Two pulled, and he whose turn it was to rest sat at the tiller. We had made out the red light in that bay and steered for it, guessing it must mark some small coasting port. We passed two vessels, outlandish and high-sterned, sleeping at anchor, and, approaching the light, now very dim, ran the boat's nose against the end of a jutting wharf. We were blind with fatigue. My men dropped the oars and fell off the thwarts as if dead. I made fast to a pile. A current rippled softly. The scented obscurity of the shore was grouped into vast masses, a density of colossal clumps of vegetation, probably—mute and fantastic shapes. And at their foot the semicircle of a beach gleamed faintly, like an illusion. There was not a light, not a stir, not a sound. The mysterious East faced me, perfumed like a flower, silent like death, dark like a grave.

"And I sat weary beyond expression, exulting like a conqueror, sleepless and entranced as if before a profound, a fateful enigma.

"A splashing of oars, a measured dip reverberating on the level of water, intensified by the silence of the shore into loud claps, made me jump up. A boat, a European boat, was coming in. I invoked the name of the dead; I hailed: 'Judea ahoy!' A thin shout answered.

"It was the captain. I had beaten the flagship by three hours, and I was glad to hear the old

man's voice again, tremulous and tired. 'Is it you, Marlow?' 'Mind the end of that jetty, sir,' I cried.

"He approached cautiously, and brought up with the deep-sea lead line which we had saved—for the underwriters. I eased my painter and fell alongside. He sat, a broken figure at the stern, wet with dew, his hands clasped in his lap. His men were asleep already. 'I had a terrible time of it,' he murmured. 'Mahon is behind—not very far.' We conversed in whispers, in low whispers, as if afraid to wake up the land. Guns, thunder, earthquakes would not have awakened the men just then.

"Looking round as we talked, I saw away at sea a bright light traveling in the night. 'There's a steamer passing the bay,' I said. She was not passing, she was entering, and she even came close and anchored. 'I wish,' said the old man, 'you would find out whether she is English. Perhaps they could give us a passage somewhere.' He seemed nervously anxious. So by dint of punching and kicking I started one of my men into a state of somnambulism, and giving him an oar, took another and pulled towards the lights of the steamer.

"There was a murmur of voices in her, metallic hollow clangs of the engine room, footsteps on the deck. Her ports shone, round like dilated eyes. Shapes moved about, and there was a shadowy man high up on the bridge. He heard my oars.

"And then, before I could open my lips, the East spoke to me, but it was in a Western voice. A torrent of words was poured into the enigmatical, the fateful silence; outlandish, angry words, mixed with words and even whole sentences of good English, less strange but even more surprising. The voice swore and cursed violently; it riddled the solemn peace of the bay by a volley of abuse. It began by calling me Pig, and from that went crescendo into unmentionable adjectives—in English. The man up there raged aloud in two languages, and with a sincerity in his fury that almost convinced me I had, in some way, sinned against the harmony of the universe. I could hardly see him, but began to think he would work himself into a fit.

"Suddenly he ceased, and I could hear him snorting and blowing like a porpoise. I said:

"What steamer is this, pray?"

"'Eh? What's this? And who are you?"

"'Castaway crew of an English bark burnt at sea. We came here tonight. I am the second mate. The captain is in the longboat, and wishes to know if you would give us a passage somewhere.'

"'Oh, my goodness! I say. . . . This is the *Celestial* from Singapore on her return trip. I'll arrange with your captain in the morning, . . . and, . . . I say, . . . did you hear me just now?"

"'I should think the whole bay heard you.'

"'I thought you were a shoreboat. Now, look here—this infernal lazy scoundrel of a caretaker has gone to sleep again—curse him. The light is out, and I nearly ran foul of the end of this damned jetty. This is the third time he plays me this trick. Now, I ask you, can anybody stand this kind of thing? It's enough to drive a man out of his mind. I'll report him. . . . I'll get the Assistant Resident to give him the sack, by—! See—there's no light. It's out, isn't it? I take you to witness the light's out. There should be a light, you know. A red light on the—'

"'There was a light,' I said, mildly.

"'But it's out, man! What's the use of talking like this? You can see for yourself it's out—don't you? If you had to take a valuable steamer along this Godforsaken coast you would want a light, too. I'll kick him from end to end of his miserable wharf. You'll see if I don't. I will—'

"'So I may tell my captain you'll take us?' I broke in.

"'Yes, I'll take you. Good night,' he said, brusquely.

"I pulled back, made fast again to the jetty, and then went to sleep at last. I had faced the silence of the East. I had heard some of its language. But when I opened my eyes again the silence was as complete as though it had never been broken. I was lying in a flood of light, and the sky had never looked so far, so high, before. I opened my eyes and lay without moving.

"And then I saw the men of the East—they were looking at me. The whole length of the jetty was full of people. I saw brown, bronze, yellow faces, the black eyes, the glitter, the color of an Eastern crowd. And all these beings stared without a murmur, without a sigh, with-

out a movement. They stared down at the boats, at the sleeping men who at night had come to them from the sea. Nothing moved. The fronds of palms stood still against the sky. Not a branch stirred along the shore, and the brown roofs of hidden houses peeped through the green foliage, through the big leaves that hung shining and still like leaves forged of heavy metal. This was the East of the ancient navigators, so old, so mysterious, resplendent and somber, living and unchanged, full of danger and promise. And these were the men. I sat up suddenly. A wave of movement passed through the crowd from end to end, passed along the heads, swayed the bodies, ran along the jetty like a ripple on the water, like a breath of wind on a field—and all was still again. I see it now—the wide sweep of the bay, the glittering sands, the wealth of green infinite and varied, the sea blue like the sea of a dream, the crowd of attentive faces, the blaze of vivid color—the water reflecting it all, the curve of the shore, the jetty, the high-sterned outlandish craft floating still, and the three boats with the tired men from the West sleeping, unconscious of the land and the people and of the violence of sunshine. They slept thrown across the thwarts, curled on bottomboards, in the careless attitudes of death. The head of the old skipper, leaning back in the stern of the longboat, had fallen on his breast, and he looked as though he would never wake. Farther out old Mahon's face was upturned to the sky, with the long white beard spread out on his breast, as though he had been shot where he sat at the tiller; and a map, all in a heap in the bows of the boat, slept with both arms embracing the stemhead and with his cheek laid on the gunwale. The East looked at them without a sound.

"I have known its fascination since; I have seen the mysterious shores, the still water, the lands of brown nations, where a stealthy Nemesis lies in wait, pursues, overtakes so many of the conquering race, who are proud of their wisdom, of their knowledge, of their strength. But for me all the East is contained in that vision of my youth. It is all in that moment when I opened my young eyes on it. I came upon it from a tussle with the sea—and I was young—and I saw it looking at me. And this is all that is left of it! Only a moment; a moment

of strength, of romance, of glamor—of youth! . . . A flick of sunshine upon a strange shore, the time to remember, the time for a sigh, and —good-by!—Night—Good-by . . . !"

5 He drank.

"Ah! The good old time—the good old time. Youth and the sea. Glamor and the sea! The good, strong sea, the salt, bitter sea, that could whisper to you and roar at you and knock
10 your breath out of you."

He drank again.

"By all that's wonderful it is the sea, I believe, the sea itself—or is it youth alone? Who can tell? But you here—you all had something out of life: money, love—whatever one gets on
15 shore—and, tell me, wasn't that the best time, that time when we were young at sea; young and had nothing, on the sea that gives nothing, except hard knocks—and sometimes a chance
20 to feel your strength—that only—that you all regret?"

And we all nodded at him: the man of finance, the man of accounts, the man of law, we all nodded at him over the polished table that like a still sheet of brown water reflected our faces, lined, wrinkled; our faces marked by toil, by deceptions, by success, by love; our weary eyes looking still, looking always, looking anxiously for something out of life, that while it is
30 expected is already gone—has passed unseen, in a sigh, in a flash—together with the youth, with the strength, with the romance of illusions.

WILLA CATHER

Although Willa Cather (1875–1947) was born in Virginia, she lived most of her life in the
40 Midwest. Her early novels (*O Pioneers!*, 1913; *The Song of the Lark*, 1915; and *My Antonia*, 1918) deal largely with the life of Bohemian and Swedish immigrants on Nebraska plains and prairies. "Neighbor Rosicky" exemplifies
45 Miss Cather's preoccupation with the characterization of persons in settings familiar to her; it also reveals the simplicity and clarity of her style. These two characteristics are evident in other fiction as well: *One of Ours*, 1922; *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, 1927; *Shadows on the Rock*, 1931; and *Sapphira and the Slave Girl*, 1940. "Neighbor Rosicky" is a calmly re-

alistic appraisal of the life of a man who possessed those qualities of courage, industry, and essential goodness which had a profound influence upon the development of America.

NEIGHBOR ROSICKY¹

When Doctor Burleigh told neighbor Rosicky he had a bad heart, Rosicky protested.

"So? No, I guess my heart was always pretty good. I got a little asthma, maybe. Just a awful short breath when I was pitchin' hay last summer, dat's all."

"Well now, Rosicky, if you know more about it than I do, what did you come to me for? It's your heart that makes you short of breath, I tell you. You're sixty-five years old, and you've always worked hard, and your heart's tired. You've got to be careful from now on, and you can't do heavy work any more. You've got five boys at home to do it for you."

The old farmer looked up at the doctor with a gleam of amusement in his queer triangular-shaped eyes. His eyes were large and lively, but the lids were caught up in the middle in a curious way, so that they formed a triangle. He did not look like a sick man. His brown face was creased but not wrinkled, he had a ruddy color in his smooth-shaven cheeks and in his lips, under his long brown mustache. His hair was thin and ragged around his ears, but very little gray. His forehead, naturally high and crossed by deep parallel lines, now ran all the way up to his pointed crown. Rosicky's face had the habit of looking interested—suggested a contented disposition and a reflective quality that was gay rather than grave. This gave him a certain detachment, the easy manner of an onlooker and observer.

"Well, I guess you ain't got no pills fur a bad heart, Doctor Ed. I guess the only thing is fur me to git me a new one."

Doctor Burleigh swung round in his desk chair and frowned at the old farmer. "I think if I were you I'd take a little care of the old one, Rosicky."

Rosicky shrugged. "Maybe I don't know how. I expect you mean fur me not to drink my coffee no more."

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"I wouldn't in your place. But you'll do as you choose about that. I've never yet been able to separate a Bohemian from his coffee or his pipe. I've quit trying. But the sure thing is you've got to cut out farm work. You can feed the stock and do chores about the barn, but you can't do anything in the fields that makes you short of breath."

"How about shelling corn?"

"Of course not!"

Rosicky considered with puckered brows.

"I can't make my heart go no longer'n it wants to, can I, Doctor Ed?"

"I think it's good for five or six years yet, maybe more, if you'll take the strain off it. Sit around the house and help Mary. If I had a good wife like yours, I'd want to stay around the house."

His patient chuckled. "It ain't no place fur a man. I don't like no old man hanging round the kitchen too much. An' my wife, she's a awful hard worker her own self."

"That's it; you can help her a little. My Lord, Rosicky, you are one of the few men I know who has a family he can get some comfort out of; happy dispositions, never quarrel among themselves, and they treat you right. I want to see you live a few years and enjoy them."

"Oh, they're good kids, all right," Rosicky assented.

The doctor wrote him a prescription and asked him how his oldest son, Rudolph, who had married in the spring, was getting on. Rudolph had struck out for himself, on rented land. "And how's Polly? I was afraid Mary mightn't like an American daughter-in-law, but it seems to be working out all right."

"Yes, she's a fine girl. Dat widder woman bring her daughters up very nice. Polly got lots of spunk, an' she got some style, too. Da's nice, for young folks to have some style." Rosicky inclined his head gallantly. His voice and his twinkly smile were an affectionate compliment to his daughter-in-law.

"It looks like a storm, and you'd better be getting home before it comes. In town in the car?" Doctor Burleigh rose.

"No, I'm in de wagon. When you got five boys, you ain't got much chance to ride round in de Ford. I ain't much for cars, noway."

"Well, it's a good road out to your place; but I don't want you bumping around in a wagon

much. And never again on a hay rake, remember!"

Rosicky placed the doctor's fee delicately behind the desk telephone, looking the other way, as if this were an absent-minded gesture. He put on his plush cap and his corduroy jacket with a sheepskin collar, and went out.

The doctor picked up his stethoscope and frowned at it as if he were seriously annoyed with the instrument. He wished it had been telling tales about some other man's heart, some old man who didn't look the doctor in the eye so knowingly, or hold out such a warm brown hand when he said good-by. Doctor Burleigh had been a poor boy in the country before he went away to medical school; he had known Rosicky almost ever since he could remember, and he had a deep affection for Mrs. Rosicky.

Only last winter he had had such a good breakfast at Rosicky's, and that when he needed it. He had been out all night on a long, hard confinement case at Tom Marshall's—a big, rich farm where there was plenty of stock and plenty of feed and a great deal of expensive farm machinery of the newest model, and no comfort whatever. The woman had too many children and too much work, and she was no manager. When the baby was born at last, and handed over to the assisting neighbor woman, and the mother was properly attended to, Burleigh refused any breakfast in that slovenly house, and drove his buggy—the snow was too deep for a car—eight miles to Anton Rosicky's place. He didn't know another farmhouse where a man could get such a warm welcome, and such good strong coffee with rich cream. No wonder the old chap didn't want to give up his coffee!

He had driven in just when the boys had come back from the barn and were washing up for breakfast. The long table, covered with a bright oilcloth, was set out with dishes waiting for them, and the warm kitchen was full of the smell of coffee and hot biscuit and sausage. Five big handsome boys, running from twenty to twelve, all with what Burleigh called natural good manners—they hadn't a bit of the painful self-consciousness he himself had to struggle with when he was a lad. One ran to put his horse away, another helped him off with his fur coat and hung it up, and Josephine, the

youngest child and the only daughter, quickly set another place under her mother's direction.

With Mary, to feed creatures was the natural expression of affection—her chickens, the calves, her big hungry boys. It was a rare pleasure to feed a young man whom she seldom saw and of whom she was as proud as if he belonged to her. Some country housekeepers would have stopped to spread a white cloth over the oilcloth, to change the thick cups and plates for their best china, and the wooden-handled knives for plated ones. But not Mary.

"You must take us as you find us, Doctor Ed. I'd be glad to put out my good things for you if you was expected, but I'm glad to get you any way at all."

He knew she was glad—she threw back her head and spoke out as if she were announcing him to the whole prairie. Rosicky hadn't said anything at all; he merely smiled his twinkling smile, put some more coal on the fire, and went into his own room to pour the doctor a little drink in a medicine glass. When they were all seated, he watched his wife's face from his end of the table and spoke to her in Czech. Then, with the instinct of politeness which seldom failed him, he turned to the doctor and said slyly, "I was just tellin' her not to ask you no questions about Mrs. Marshall till you eat some breakfast. My wife, she's terrible fur to ask questions."

The boys laughed, and so did Mary. She watched the doctor devour her biscuit and sausage, too much excited to eat anything herself. She drank her coffee and sat taking in everything about her visitor. She had known him when he was a poor country boy, and was boastfully proud of his success, always saying, "What do people go to Omaha for, to see a doctor, when we got the best one in the state right here?" If Mary liked people at all, she felt physical pleasure in the sight of them, personal exultation in any good fortune that came to them. Burleigh didn't know many women like that, but he knew she was like that.

When his hunger was satisfied, he did, of course, have to tell them about Mrs. Marshall, and he noticed what a friendly interest the boys took in the matter.

Rudolph, the oldest one (he was still living at home then), said, "The last time I was over

there, she was lifting them big heavy milk cans and I knew she oughtn't to be doing it."

"Yes, Rudolph told me about that when he come home, and I said it wasn't right," Mary put in warmly. "It was all right for me to do them things up to the last, for I was terrible strong, but that woman's weakly. And do you think she'll be able to nurse it, Ed?" She sometimes forgot to give him the title she was so proud of. "And to think of your being up all night and then not able to get a decent breakfast! I don't know what's the matter with such people."

"Why, Mother," said one of the boys, "if Doctor Ed had got breakfast there, we wouldn't have him here. So you ought to be glad."

"He knows I'm glad to have him, John, any time. But I'm sorry for that poor woman, how bad she'll feel the doctor had to go away in the cold without his breakfast."

"I wish I'd been in practice when these were getting born." The doctor looked down at the row of close-clipped heads. "I missed some good breakfasts by not being."

The boys began to laugh at their mother because she flushed so red, but she stood her ground and threw up her head. "I don't care, you wouldn't have got away from this house without breakfast. No doctor ever did. I'd have had something ready fixed that Anton could warm up for you."

The boys laughed harder than ever, and exclaimed at her, "I'll bet you would!" "She would, that!"

"Father, did you get breakfast for the doctor when we were born?"

"Yes, and he used to bring me my breakfast, too, mighty nice. I was always awful hungry!" Mary admitted with a guilty laugh.

While the boys were getting the doctor's horse, he went to the window to examine the house plants. "What do you do to your geraniums to keep them blooming all winter, Mary? I never pass this house that from the road I don't see your windows full of flowers."

She snapped off a dark red one and a ruffled new green leaf and put them in his buttonhole. "There, that looks better. You look too solemn for a young man, Ed. Why don't you git married? I'm worried about you. Settin' at breakfast, I looked at you real hard, and I seen you've got some gray hairs already."

"Oh, yes! They're coming. Maybe they'd come faster if I married."

"Don't talk so. You'll ruin your health eating at the hotel. I could send your wife a nice loaf of nut bread, if you only had one. I don't like to see a young man getting gray. I'll tell you something, Ed; you make some strong black tea and keep it handy in a bowl, and every morning just brush it into your hair, an' it'll keep the gray from showin' much. That's the way I do!"

Sometimes the doctor heard the gossipers in the drugstore wondering why Rosicky didn't get on faster. He was industrious, and so were his boys, but they were rather free and easy, weren't pushers, and they didn't always show good judgment. They were comfortable, they were out of debt, but they didn't get much ahead. Maybe, Doctor Burleigh reflected, people as generous and warmhearted and affectionate as the Rosickys never got ahead much; maybe you couldn't enjoy your life and put it into the bank, too.

When Rosicky left Doctor Burleigh's office he went into the farm-implement store to light his pipe and put on his glasses and read over the list Mary had given him. Then he went into the general merchandise place next door and stood about until the pretty girl with the plucked eyebrows, who always waited on him, was free. Those eyebrows, two thin India-ink strokes, amused him, because he remembered how they used to be. Rosicky always prolonged his shopping by a little joking; the girl knew the old fellow admired her, and she liked to chaff with him.

"Seems to me about every other week you buy ticking, Mr. Rosicky, and always the best quality," she remarked as she measured off the heavy bolt with red stripes.

"You see, my wife is always makin' goose-fedder pillows, an' de thin stuff don't hold in dem little down-fedders."

"You must have lots of pillows at your house."

"Sure. She makes quilts of dem, too. We sleeps easy. Now she's makin' a fedder quilt for my son's wife. You know Polly, that married my Rudolph. How much my bill, Miss Pearl?"

"Eight eighty-five."

"Chust make it nine, and put in some candy fur de women."

"As usual. I never did see a man buy so much candy for his wife. First thing you know, she'll be getting too fat."

"I'd like dat. I ain't much fur all dem slim women like what de style is now."

"That's one for me, I suppose, Mr. Bohunk!" Pearl sniffed and elevated her India-ink strokes.

When Rosicky went out to his wagon, it was beginning to snow—the first snow of the season, and he was glad to see it. He rattled out of town and along the highway through a wonderfully rich stretch of country, the finest farms in the county. He admired this High Prairie, as it was called, and always liked to drive through it. His own place lay in a rougher territory, where there was some clay in the soil and it was not so productive. When he bought his land, he hadn't the money to buy on High Prairie; so he told his boys, when they grumbled, that if their land hadn't some clay in it, they wouldn't own it at all. All the same, he enjoyed looking at these fine farms, as he enjoyed looking at a prize bull.

After he had gone eight miles, he came to the graveyard, which lay just at the edge of his own hay land. There he stopped his horses and sat still on his wagon seat, looking about at the snowfall. Over yonder on the hill he could see his own house, crouching low, with the clump of orchard behind and the windmill before, and all down the gentle hill-slope the rows of pale-gold cornstalks stood out against the white field. The snow was falling over the cornfield and the pasture and the hay land, steadily, with very little wind—a nice dry snow. The graveyard had only a light wire fence about it and was all overgrown with long red grass. The fine snow, settling into this red grass and upon the few little evergreens and the headstones, looked very pretty.

It was a nice graveyard, Rosicky reflected, sort of snug and homelike, not cramped or mournful—a big sweep all round it. A man could lie down in the long grass and see the complete arch of the sky over him, hear the wagons go by; in summer the mowing machine rattled right up to the wire fence. And it was so near home. Over there across the cornstalks his own roof and windmill looked so good to him that he promised himself to mind the

doctor and take care of himself. He was awful fond of his place, he admitted. He wasn't anxious to leave it. And it was a comfort to think that he would never have to go farther than the edge of his own hayfield. The snow, falling over his barnyard and the graveyard, seemed to draw things together like. And they were all old neighbors in the graveyard, most of them friends; there was nothing to feel awkward or embarrassed about. Embarrassment was the most disagreeable feeling Rosicky knew. He didn't often have it—only with certain people whom he didn't understand at all.

Well, it was a nice snowstorm; a fine sight to see the snow falling so quietly and graciously over so much open country. On his cap and shoulders, on the horses' backs and manes, light, delicate, mysterious it fell; and with it a dry cool fragrance was released into the air. It meant rest for vegetation and men and beasts, for the ground itself; a season of long nights for sleep, leisurely breakfasts, peace by the fire. This and much more went through Rosicky's mind, but he merely told himself that winter was coming, clucked to his horses, and drove on.

When he reached home, John, the youngest boy, ran out to put away his team for him, and he met Mary coming up from the outside cellar with her apron full of carrots. They went into the house together. On the table, covered with oilcloth figured with clusters of blue grapes, a place was set, and he smelled hot coffeecake of some kind. Anton never lunched in town; he thought that extravagant, and anyhow he didn't like the food. So Mary always had something ready for him when he got home.

After he was settled in his chair, stirring his coffee in a big cup, Mary took out of the oven a pan of *kolache* stuffed with apricots, examined them anxiously to see whether they had got too dry, put them beside his plate, and then sat down opposite him.

Rosicky asked her in Czech if she wasn't going to have any coffee.

She replied in English, as being somehow the right language for transacting business, "Now what did Doctor Ed say, Anton? You tell me just what."

"He said I was to tell you some compliments, but I forgot 'em." Rosicky's eyes twinkled.

"About you, I mean. What did he say about your asthma?"

"He says I ain't got no asthma." Rosicky took one of the little rolls in his broad brown fingers. The thickened nail of his right thumb told the story of his past.

"Well, what is the matter? And don't try to put me off."

"He don't say nothing much, only I'm a little older, and my heart ain't so good like it used to be."

Mary started and brushed her hair back from her temples with both hands as if she were a little out of her mind. From the way she glared, she might have been in a rage with him.

"He says there's something the matter with your heart? Doctor Ed says so?"

"Now don't yell at me like I was a hog in de garden, Mary. You know I always did like to hear a woman talk soft. He didn't say anything de matter wid my heart, only it ain't so young like it used to be, an' he tell me not to pitch hay or run de corn sheller."

Mary wanted to jump up, but she sat still. She admired the way he never under any circumstances raised his voice or spoke roughly. He was city-bred, and she was country-bred; she often said she wanted her boys to have their papa's nice ways.

"You never have no pain there, do you? It's your breathing and your stomach that's been wrong. I wouldn't believe nobody but Doctor Ed about it. I guess I'll go see him myself. Didn't he give you no advice?"

"Chust to take it easy like, an' stay round de house dis winter. I guess you got some carpenter work for me to do. I kin make some new shelves for you, and I want dis long time to build a closet in de boys' room and make dem two little fellers keep dere clo'es hung up."

Rosicky drank his coffee from time to time, while he considered. His mustache was of the soft long variety and came down over his mouth like the teeth of a buggy rake over a bundle of hay. Each time he put down his cup, he ran his blue handkerchief over his lips. When he took a drink of water, he managed very neatly with the back of his hand.

Mary sat watching him intently, trying to find any change in his face. It is hard to see anyone who has become like your own body

to you. Yes, his hair had got thin, and his high forehead had deep lines running from left to right. But his neck, always clean shaved except in the busiest seasons, was not loose or baggy. It was burned a dark reddish brown, and there were deep creases in it, but it looked firm and full of blood. His cheeks had a good color. On either side of his mouth there was a half-moon down the length of his cheek, not wrinkles, but two lines that had come there from his habitual expression. He was shorter and broader than when she married him; his back had grown broad and curved, a good deal like the shell of an old turtle, and his arms and legs were short.

He was fifteen years older than Mary, but she had hardly ever thought about it before. He was her man, and the kind of man she liked. She was rough, and he was gentle—city-bred, as she always said. They had been shipmates on a rough voyage and had stood by each other in trying times. Life had gone well with them because, at bottom, they had the same ideas about life. They agreed, without discussion, as to what was most important and what was secondary. They didn't often exchange opinions, even in Czech—it was as if they had thought the same thought together. A good deal had to be sacrificed and thrown overboard in a hard life like theirs, and they had never disagreed as to the things that could go. It had been a hard life, and a soft life, too. There wasn't anything brutal in the short, broad-backed man with the three-cornered eyes and the forehead that went on to the top of his skull. He was a city man, a gentle man, and though he had married a rough farm girl, he had never touched her without gentleness.

They had been at one accord not to hurry through life, not to be always skimping and saving. They saw their neighbors buy more land and feed more stock than they did, without discontent. Once when the creamery agent came to the Rosickys, to persuade them to sell him their cream, he told them how much money the Fasslers, their nearest neighbors, had made on their cream last year.

"Yes," said Mary, "and look at them Fassler children! Pale, pinched little things, they look like skimmed milk. I'd rather put some color into my children's faces than put money into the bank."

The agent shrugged and turned to Anton.
 "I guess we'll do like she says," said Rosicky.

Mary very soon got into town to see Doctor Ed, and then she had a talk with her boys and set a guard over Rosicky. Even John, the youngest, had his father on his mind. If Rosicky went to throw hay down from the loft, one of the boys ran up the ladder and took the fork from him. He sometimes complained that though he was getting to be an old man, he wasn't an old woman yet.

That winter he stayed in the house in the afternoons and carpentered, or sat in the chair between the window full of plants and the wooden bench where the two pails of drinking water stood. This spot was called "Father's corner," though it was not a corner at all. He had a shelf there, where he kept his Bohemian papers and his pipes and tobacco, and his shears and needles and thread and tailor's thimble. Having been a tailor in his youth, he couldn't bear to see a woman patching at his clothes, or at the boys'. He liked tailoring, and always patched all the overalls and jackets and work shirts. Occasionally he made over a pair of pants one of the older boys had outgrown, for the little fellow.

While he sewed, he let his mind run back over his life. He had a good deal to remember, really; life in three countries. The only part of his youth he didn't like to remember was the two years he had spent in London, in Cheap-side, working for a German tailor who was wretchedly poor. Those days, when he was nearly always hungry, when his clothes were dropping off him for dirt, and the sound of a strange language kept him in continual bewilderment, had left a sore spot in his mind that wouldn't bear touching.

He was twenty when he landed at Castle Garden in New York, and he had a protector who got him work in a tailor shop in Vesey Street, down near the Washington Market. He looked upon that part of his life as very happy. He became a good workman, he was industrious, and his wages were increased from time to time. He minded his own business and envied nobody's good fortune. He went to night school and learned to read English. He often did overtime work and was well paid for it, but somehow he never saved anything. He

couldn't refuse a loan to a friend, and he was self-indulgent. He liked a good dinner, and a little went for beer, a little for tobacco; a good deal went to the girls. He often stood through an opera on Saturday nights; he could get standing room for a dollar. Those were the great days of opera in New York, and it gave a fellow something to think about for the rest of the week. Rosicky had a quick ear, and a childish love of all the stage splendor; the scenery, the costumes, the ballet. He usually went with a chum, and after the performance they had beer and maybe some oysters somewhere. It was a fine life; for the first five years or so it satisfied him completely. He was never hungry or cold or dirty, and everything amused him. a fire, a dog fight, a parade, a storm, a ferry ride. He thought New York the finest, richest, friendliest city in the world.

Moreover, he had what he called a happy home life. Very near the tailor shop was a small furniture factory, where an old Austrian, Loeffler, employed a few skilled men and made unusual furniture, most of it to order, for the rich German housewives uptown. The top floor of Loeffler's five-story factory was a loft, where he kept his choice lumber and stored the odd pieces of furniture left on his hands. One of the young workmen he employed was a Czech, and he and Rosicky became fast friends. They persuaded Loeffler to let them have a sleeping room in one corner of the loft. They bought good beds and bedding and had their pick of the furniture kept up there. The loft was low-pitched, but light and airy, full of windows, and good-smelling by reason of the fine lumber put up there to season. Old Loeffler used to go down to the docks and buy wood from South America and the East from the sea captains. The young men were as foolish about their house as a bridal pair. Zichec, the young cabinetmaker, devised every sort of convenience, and Rosicky kept their clothes in order. At night and on Sundays, when the quiver of machinery underneath was still, it was the quietest place in the world, and on summer nights all the sea winds blew in. Zichec often practiced on his flute in the evening. They were both fond of music and went to the opera together. Rosicky thought he wanted to live like that forever.

But as the years passed, all alike, he began

to get a little restless. When spring came around, he would begin to feel fretted, and he got to drinking. He was likely to drink too much of a Saturday night. On Sunday, he was languid and heavy, getting over his spree. On Monday he plunged into work again. So he never had time to figure out what ailed him, though he knew something did. When the grass turned green in Park Place, and the lilac hedge at the back of Trinity churchyard put out its blossoms, he was tormented by a longing to run away. That was why he drank too much; to get a temporary illusion of freedom and wide horizons.

Rosicky, the old Rosicky, could remember as if it were yesterday the day when the young Rosicky found out what was the matter with him. It was on a Fourth of July afternoon, and he was sitting in Park Place in the sun. The lower part of New York was empty. Wall Street, Liberty Street, Broadway, all empty. So much stone and asphalt with nothing going on, so many empty windows. The emptiness was intense, like the stillness in a great factory when the machinery stops and the belts and bands cease running. It was too great a change, it took all the strength out of one. Those blank buildings, without the stream of life pouring through them, were like empty jails. It struck young Rosicky that this was the trouble with big cities; they built you in from the earth itself, cemented you away from any contact with the ground. You lived in an unnatural world, like the fish in an aquarium, who were probably much more comfortable than they ever were in the sea.

On that very day he began to think seriously about the articles he had read in the Bohemian papers, describing prosperous Czech farming communities in the West. He believed he would like to go out there as a farm hand; it was hardly possible that he could ever have land of his own. His people had always been workmen; his father and grandfather had worked in shops. His mother's parents had lived in the country, but they rented their farm and had a hard time to get along. Nobody in his family had ever owned any land—that belonged to a different station of life altogether. Anton's mother died when he was little, and he was sent into the country to her parents. He stayed with them until he was

twelve, and formed those ties with the earth and the farm animals and growing things which are never made at all unless they are made early. After his grandfather died, he went back to live with his father and stepmother, but she was very hard on him, and his father helped him to get passage to London.

After that Fourth of July day in Park Place, the desire to return to the country never left him. To work on another man's farm would be all he asked; to see the sun rise and set and to plant things and watch them grow. He was a very simple man. He was like a tree that has not many roots, but one taproot that goes down deep. He subscribed for a Bohemian paper printed in Chicago, then for one printed in Omaha. His mind got farther and farther west. He began to save a little money to buy his liberty. When he was thirty-five, there was a great meeting in New York of Bohemian athletic societies, and Rosicky left the tailor shop and went home with the Omaha delegates to try his fortune in another part of the world.

Perhaps the fact that his own youth was well over before he began to have a family was one reason why Rosicky was so fond of his boys. He had almost a grandfather's indulgence for them. He had never had to worry about any of them—except, just now, a little about Rudolph.

On Saturday night the boys always piled into the Ford, took little Josephine, and went to town to the moving-picture show. One Saturday morning they were talking at the breakfast table about starting early that evening, so that they would have an hour or so to see the Christmas things in the stores before the show began. Rosicky looked down the table.

"I hope you boys ain't disappointed, but I want you to let me have de car tonight. Maybe some of you can go in with de neighbors."

Their faces fell. They worked hard all week, and they were still like children. A new jack-knife or a box of candy pleased the older ones as much as the little fellow.

"If you and Mother are going to town," Frank said, "maybe you could take a couple of us along with you anyway."

"No, I want to take de car down to Rudolph's, and let him an' Polly go in to de show."

She don't git into town enough, an' I'm afraid she's gettin' lonesome, an' he can't afford no car yet."

That settled it. The boys were a good deal dashed. Their father took another piece of apple cake and went on: "Maybe next Saturday night de two little fellers can go along wid dem."

"Oh, is Rudolph going to have the car every Saturday night?"

Rosicky did not reply at once; then he began to speak seriously: "Listen, boys; Polly ain't lookin' so good. I don't like to see nobody lookin' sad. It comes hard fur a town girl to be a farmer's wife. I don't want no trouble to start in Rudolph's family. When it starts, it ain't so easy to stop. An American girl don't git used to our ways all at once. I like to tell Polly she and Rudolph can have the car every Saturday night till after New Year's, if it's all right with you boys."

"Sure it's all right, Papa," Mary cut in. "And it's good you thought about that. Town girls is used to more than country girls. I lay awake nights, scared she'll make Rudolph discontented with the farm."

The boys put as good a face on it as they could. They surely looked forward to their Saturday nights in town. That evening Rosicky drove the car the half-mile down to Rudolph's new, bare little house.

Polly was in a short-sleeved gingham dress, clearing away the supper dishes. She was a trim, slim little thing, with blue eyes and shingled yellow hair, and her eyebrows were reduced to a mere brush stroke, like Miss Pearl's.

"Good evening, Mr. Rosicky. Rudolph's at the barn, I guess." She never called him father, or Mary mother. She was sensitive about having married a foreigner. She never in the world would have done it if Rudolph hadn't been such a handsome, persuasive fellow and such a gallant lover. He had graduated in her class in the high school in town, and their friendship began in the ninth grade.

Rosicky went in, though he wasn't exactly asked. "My boys ain't goin' to town tonight, an' I brought de car over fur you two to go in to de picture show."

Polly, carrying dishes to the sink, looked over her shoulder at him. "Thank you. But I'm late

with my work tonight, and pretty tired. Maybe Rudolph would like to go in with you."

"Oh, I don't go to de shows! I'm too old-fashioned. You won't feel so tired after you ride in de air a ways. It's a nice clear night, an' it ain't cold. You go an' fix yourself up, Polly, an' I'll wash de dishes an' leave every-thing nice fur you."

Polly blushed and tossed her bob. "I couldn't let you do that, Mr. Rosicky. I wouldn't think of it."

Rosicky said nothing. He found a bib apron on a nail behind the kitchen door. He slipped it over his head and then took Polly by her two elbows and pushed her gently toward the door of her own room. "I washed up de kitchen many times for my wife, when de babies was sick or somethin'. You go an' make yourself look nice. I like you to look prettier'n any of dem town girls when you go in. De young folks must have some fun, an' I'm goin' to look out fur you, Polly."

That kind, reassuring grip on her elbows, the old man's funny bright eyes, made Polly want to drop her head on his shoulder for a second. She restrained herself, but she lingered in his grasp at the door of her room, murmuring tearfully, "You always lived in the city when you were young, didn't you? Don't you ever get lonesome out here?"

As she turned around to him, her hand fell naturally into his, and he stood holding it and smiling into her face with his peculiar, knowing, indulgent smile without a shadow of reproach in it. "Dem big cities is all right fur de rich, but dey is terrible hard fur de poor."

"I don't know. Sometimes I think I'd like to take a chance. You lived in New York, didn't you?"

"An' London. Da's bigger still. I learned my trade dere. Here's Rudolph comin', you better hurry."

"Will you tell me about London some time?"

"Maybe. Only I ain't no talker, Polly. Run an' dress yourself up."

The bedroom door closed behind her, and Rudolph came in from the outside, looking anxious. He had seen the car and was sorry any of his family should come just then. Supper hadn't been a very pleasant occasion. Halting in the doorway, he saw his father in a kitchen apron, carrying dishes to the sink. He flushed

crimson and something flashed in his eye. Rosicky held up a warning finger.

"I brought de car over fur you an' Polly to go to de picture show, an' I made her let me finish here so you won't be late. You go put on a clean shirt, quick!"

"But don't the boys want the car, Father?"

"Not tonight dey don't." Rosicky fumbled under his apron and found his pants pocket. He took out a silver dollar and said in a hurried whisper, "You go an' buy dat girl some ice cream an' candy tonight, like you was courtin'. She's awful good friends wid me."

Rudolph was very short of cash, but he took the money as if it hurt him. There had been a crop failure all over the county. He had more than once been sorry he'd married this year.

In a few minutes the young people came out, looking clean and a little stiff. Rosicky hurried them off, and then he took his own time with the dishes. He scoured the pots and pans and put away the milk and swept the kitchen. He put some coal in the stove and shut off the drafts, so the place would be warm for them when they got home late at night. Then he sat down and had a pipe and listened to the clock tick.

Generally speaking, marrying an American girl was certainly a risk. A Czech should marry a Czech. It was lucky that Polly was the daughter of a poor widow woman; Rudolph was proud, and if she had a prosperous family to throw up at him, they could never make it go. Polly was one of four sisters, and they all worked; one was bookkeeper in the bank, one taught music, and Polly and her younger sister had been clerks, like Miss Pearl. All four of them were musical, had pretty voices, and sang in the Methodist choir, which the eldest sister directed.

Polly missed the sociability of a store position. She missed the choir, and the company of her sisters. She didn't dislike housework, but she disliked so much of it. Rosicky was a little anxious about this pair. He was afraid Polly would grow so discontented that Rudy would quit the farm and take a factory job in Omaha. He had worked for a winter up there, two years ago, to get money to marry on. He had done very well, and they would always take him back at the stockyards. But to Rosicky that meant the end of everything for his son. To be

a landless man was to be a wage earner, a slave, all your life, to have nothing, to be nothing.

Rosicky thought he would come over and do a little carpentering for Polly after the New Year. He guessed she needed jollyng. Rudolph was a serious sort of chap, serious in love and serious about his work.

Rosicky shook out his pipe and walked home across the fields. Ahead of him the lamplight shone from his kitchen windows. Suppose he were still in a tailor shop on Vesey Street, with a bunch of pale, narrow-chested sons working on machines, all coming home tired and sullen to eat supper in a kitchen that was a parlor also; with another crowded, angry family quarreling just across the dumb-waiter shaft, and squeaking pulleys at the windows where dirty washings hung on dirty lines above a court full of old brooms and mops and ash cans . . .

He stopped by the windmill to look up at the frosty winter stars and draw a long breath before he went inside. That kitchen with the shining windows was dear to him; but the sleeping fields and bright stars and the noble darkness were dearer still.

On the day before Christmas the weather set in very cold; no snow, but a bitter, biting wind that whistled and sang over the flat land and lashed one's face like fine wires. There was baking going on in the Rosicky kitchen all day, and Rosicky sat inside, making over a coat that Albert had outgrown into an overcoat for John. Mary had a big red geranium in bloom for Christmas, and a row of Jerusalem cherry trees, full of berries. It was the first year she had ever grown these; Doctor Ed brought her the seeds from Omaha when he went to some medical convention. They reminded Rosicky of plants he had seen in England; and all afternoon, as he stitched, he sat thinking about those two years in London, which his mind usually shrank from even after all this while.

He was a lad of eighteen when he dropped down into London, with no money and no connections except the address of a cousin who was supposed to be working at a confectioner's. When he went to the pastry shop, however, he found that the cousin had gone to America. Anton tramped the streets for several days, sleeping in doorways and on the Embankment,

until he was in utter despair. He knew no English and the sound of the strange language all about him confused him. By chance he met a poor German tailor who had learned his trade in Vienna, and could speak a little Czech. This tailor, Lifschnitz, kept a repair shop in a Cheapside basement, underneath a cobbler. He didn't much need an apprentice, but he was sorry for the boy and took him in for no wages but his keep and what he could pick up. The pickings were supposed to be coppers given you when you took work home to a customer. But most of the customers called for their clothes themselves, and the coppers that came Anton's way were very few. He had, however, a place to sleep. The tailor's family lived upstairs in three rooms; a kitchen, a bedroom, where Lifschnitz and his wife and five children slept, and a living room. Two corners of this living room were curtained off for lodgers; in one Rosicky slept on an old horsehair sofa, with a feather quilt to wrap himself in. The other corner was rented to a wretched, dirty boy, who was studying the violin. He actually practiced there. Rosicky was dirty, too. There was no way to be anything else. Mrs. Lifschnitz got the water she cooked and washed with from a pump in a brick court, four flights down. There were bugs in the place, and multitudes of fleas, though the poor woman did the best she could. Rosicky knew she often went empty to give another potato or a spoonful of dripping to the two hungry, sad-eyed boys who lodged with her. He used to think he would never get out of there, never get a clean shirt to his back again. What would he do, he wondered, when his clothes actually dropped to pieces and the worn cloth wouldn't hold patches any longer?

It was still early when the old farmer put aside his sewing and his recollections. The sky had been a dark gray all day, with not a gleam of sun, and the light failed at four o'clock. He went to shave and change his shirt while the turkey was roasting. Rudolph and Polly were coming over for supper.

After supper they sat round in the kitchen, and the younger boys were saying how sorry they were it hadn't snowed. Everybody was sorry. They wanted a deep snow that would lie long and keep the wheat warm, and leave the ground soaked when it melted.

"Yes, sir!" Rudolph broke out fiercely. "If we have another dry year like last year, there's going to be hard times in this country."

Rosicky filled his pipe. "You boys don't know what hard times is. You don't owe nobody, you got plenty to eat an' keep warm, an' plenty water to keep clean. When you got them, you can't have it very hard."

Rudolph frowned, opened and shut his big right hand, and dropped it clenched upon his knee. "I've got to have a good deal more than that, Father, or I'll quit this farming gamble. I can always make good wages railroading, or at the packing house, and be sure of my money."

"Maybe so," his father answered dryly.

Mary, who had just come in from the pantry and was wiping her hands on the roller towel, thought Rudy and his father were getting too serious. She brought her darning basket and sat down in the middle of the group.

"I ain't much afraid of hard times, Rudy," she said heartily. "We've had a plenty, but we've always come through. Your father wouldn't never take nothing very hard, not even hard times. I got a mind to tell you a story on him. Maybe you boys can't hardly remember the year we had that terrible hot wind, that burned everything up on the Fourth of July? All the corn an' the gardens. An' that was in the days when we didn't have alfalfa yet—I guess it wasn't invented."

"Well, that very day your father was out cultivatin' corn, and I was here in the kitchen makin' plum preserves. We had bushels of plums that year. I noticed it was terrible hot, but it's always hot in the kitchen when you're preservin', an' I was too busy with my plums to mind. Anton come in from the field about three o'clock, an' I asked him what was the matter."

"'Nothin',' he says, 'but it's pretty hot, an' I think I won't work no more today.' He stood round for a few minutes, an' then he says: 'Ain't you near through? I want you should git up a nice supper for us tonight. It's Fourth of July.'"

"I told him to git along, that I was right in the middle of preservin', but the plums would taste good on hot biscuit. I'm goin' to have fried chicken, too," he says, and he went off an' killed a couple. You three oldest boys was little fellers, playin' round outside, real hot an'

sweaty, an' your father took you to the horse tank down by the windmill an' took off your clothes an' put you in. Them two box-elder trees was little then, but they made shade over the tank. Then he took off all his own clothes, an' got in with you. While he was playin' in the water with you, the Methodist preacher drove into our place to say how all the neighbors was goin' to meet at the schoolhouse that night, to pray for rain. He drove right to the windmill, of course, and there was your father and you three with no clothes on. I was in the kitchen door, an' I had to laugh, for the preacher acted like he ain't never seen a naked man before. He surely was embarrassed, an' your father couldn't git to his clothes; they was all hangin' up on the windmill to let the sweat dry out of 'em. So he laid in the tank where he was, an' put one of you boys on top of him to cover him up a little, an' talked to the preacher.

"When you got through playin' in the water, he put clean clothes on you and a clean shirt on himself, an' by that time I'd begun to get supper. He says, 'It's too hot in here to eat comfortable. Let's have a picnic in the orchard. We'll eat our supper behind the mulberry hedge, under them linden trees.'

"So he carried our supper down, an' a bottle of my wild-grape wine, an' everything tasted good, I can tell you. The wind got cooler as the sun was goin' down, and it turned out pleasant, only I noticed how the leaves was curled up on the linden trees. That made me think, an' I asked your father if that hot wind all day hadn't been terrible hard on the gardens an' the corn.

"'Corn,' he says, 'there ain't no corn.'

"'What you talkin' about?' I said. 'Ain't we got forty acres?'

"'We ain't got an ear,' he says, 'nor nobody else ain't got none. All the corn in this country was cooked by three o'clock today, like you'd roasted it in an oven.'

"'You mean you won't get no crop at all?' I asked him. I couldn't believe it, after he'd worked so hard.

"'No crop this year,' he says. 'That's why we're havin' a picnic. We might as well enjoy what we got.'

"An' that's how your father behaved, when all the neighbors was so discouraged they couldn't look you in the face. An' we enjoyed

ourselves that year, poor as we was, an' our neighbors wasn't a bit better off for bein' miserable. Some of 'em grieved till they got poor digestions and couldn't relish what they did have."

The younger boys said they thought their father had the best of it. But Rudolph was thinking that, all the same, the neighbors had managed to get ahead more, in the fifteen years since that time. There must be something wrong about his father's way of doing things. He wished he knew what was going on in the back of Polly's mind. He knew she liked his father, but he knew, too, that she was afraid of something. When his mother sent over coffeecake or prune tarts or a loaf of fresh bread, Polly seemed to regard them with a certain suspicion. When she observed to him that his brothers had nice manners, her tone implied that it was remarkable they should have. With his mother she was stiff and on her guard. Mary's hearty frankness and gusts of good humor irritated her. Polly was afraid of being unusual or conspicuous in any way, of being "ordinary," as she said!

When Mary had finished her story, Rosicky laid aside his pipe.

"You boys like me to tell you about some of dem hard times I been through in London?" Warnly encouraged, he sat rubbing his forehead along the deep creases. It was bothersome to tell a long story in English (he nearly always talked to the boys in Czech), but he wanted Polly to hear this one.

"Well, you know about dat tailor shop I worked in in London? I had one Christmas dere I ain't never forgot. Times was awful bad before Christmas; de boss ain't got much work, an' have it awful hard to pay his rent. It ain't so much fun, bein' poor in a big city like London, I'll say! All de windows is full of good t'ings to eat, an' all de pushcarts in de streets is full, an' you smell 'em all de time, an' you ain't got no money—not a damn bit. I didn't mind de cold so much, though I didn't have no overcoat, chust a short jacket I'd outgrown so it wouldn't meet on me, an' my hands was chapped raw. But I always had a good appetite, like you all know, an' de sight of dem pork pies in de windows was awful fur me!

"Day before Christmas was terrible foggy dat year, an' dat fog gits into your bones and

nakes you all damp like. Mrs. Lifschnitz didn't give us nothin' but a little bread an' drippin' for supper, because she was savin' to try for to give us a good dinner on Christmas Day. After supper de boss say I can go an' enjoy myself, so I went into de streets to listen to de Christmas singers. Dey sing old songs an' make very nice music, an' I run round after dem a good ways, till I got awful hungry. I t'ink maybe if I go home, I can sleep till morning an' forgit my belly.

"I went into my corner real quiet, and roll up in my fedder quilt. But I ain't got my head down, till I smell sometin' good. Seem like it git stronger an' stronger, an' I can't git to sleep noway. I can't understand dat smell. Dere was a gas light in a hall across de court, dat always shine in at my window a little. I got up an' look around. I got a little wooden box in my corner fur a stool, 'cause I ain't got no chair. I picks up dat box, and under it dere is a roast goose on a platter! I can't believe my eyes. I carry it to de window where de light comes in, an' touch it and smell it to find out, an' den I taste it to be sure. I say, I will eat chust one little bite of dat goose, so I can go to sleep, and tomorrow I won't eat none at all. But I tell you, boys, when I stop, one half of dat goose was gone!"

The narrator bowed his head, and the boys shouted. But little Josephine slipped behind his chair and kissed him on the neck beneath his ear.

"Poor little Papa, I don't want him to be hungry!"

"Da's long ago, child. I ain't never been hungry since I had your mudder to cook fur me."

"Go on and tell us the rest, please," said Polly.

"Well, when I come to realize what I done, of course, I felt terrible. I felt better in de stomach, but very bad in de heart. I set on my bed wid dat platter on my knees, an' it all come to me; how hard dat poor woman save to buy dat goose, and how she get some neighbor to cook it dat got more fire, an' how she put it in my corner to keep it away from dem hungry children. Dey was a old carpet hung up to shut my corner off, an' de children was n't allowed to go in dere. An' I know she put it in my corner because she trust me more'n she

did de violin boy. I can't stand it to face her after I spoil de Christmas. So I put on my shoes and go out into de city. I tell myself I better throw myself in de river; but I guess I ain't dat kind of a boy.

"It was after twelve o'clock, an' terrible cold, an' I start out to walk about London all night. I walk along de river awhile, but dey was lots of drunks all along; men, and women too. I chust move along to keep away from de police. I git onto de Strand, an' den over to New Oxford Street, where dere was a big German restaurant on de ground floor, wid big windows all fixed up fine, an' I could see de people havin' parties inside. While I was lookin' in, two men and two ladies come out, laughin' and talkin' and feelin' happy about all dey been eatin' an' drinkin', and dey was speakin' Czech—not like de Austrians, but like de home folks talk it.

"I guess I went crazy, an' I done what I ain't never done before nor since. I went right up to dem gay people an' begun to beg dem: 'Fellow countrymen, for God's sake give me money enough to buy a goose!'

"Dey laugh, of course, but de ladies speak awful kind to me, an' dey take me back into de restaurant and give me hot coffee and cakes, an' make me tell all about how I happened to come to London, an' what I was doin' dere. Dey take my name and where I work down on paper, an' both of dem ladies give me ten shillings.

"De big market at Covent Garden ain't very far away, an' by dat time it was open. I go dere an' buy a big goose an' some pork pies, an' potatoes and onions, an' cakes an' oranges fur de children—all I could carry! When I git home, everybody is still asleep. I pile all I bought on de kitchen table, an' go in an' lay down on my bed, an' I ain't waken up till I hear dat woman scream when she come out into her kitchen. My goodness, but she was surprisel! She laugh an' cry at de same time, an' hug me and waken all de children. She ain't stop fur no breakfast; she git de Christmas dinner ready dat morning, and we all sit down an' eat all we can hold. I ain't never seen dat violin boy have all he can hold before.

"Two three days after dat, de two men come to hunt me up, an' dey ask my boss, and he give me a good report an' tell dem I was a steady

boy all right. One of dem Bohemians was very smart an' run a Bohemian newspaper in New York, an' de odder was a rich man, in de importing business, an' dey been traveling togedder. Dey told me how t'ings was easier in New York, an' offered to pay my passage when dey was goin' home soon on a boat. My boss say to me, 'You go. You ain't got no chance here, an' I like to see you git ahead, fur you always been a good boy to my woman, and fur dat fine Christmas dinner you give us all.' An' da's how I got to New York."

That night when Rudolph and Polly, arm in arm, were running home across the fields with the bitter wind at their backs, his heart leaped for joy when she said she thought they might have his family come over for supper on New Year's Eve. "Let's get up a nice supper, and not let your mother help at all; make her be company for once."

"That would be lovely of you, Polly," he said humbly. He was a very simple, modest boy, and he, too, felt vaguely that Polly and her sisters were more experienced and worldly than his people.

The winter turned out badly for farmers. It was bitterly cold, and after the first light snows before Christmas there was no snow at all—and no rain. March was as bitter as February. On those days when the wind fairly punished the country, Rosicky sat by his window. In the fall he and the boys had put in a big wheat planting, and now the seed had frozen in the ground. All that land would have to be plowed up and planted over again, planted in corn. It had happened before, but he was younger then, and he never worried about what had to be. He was sure of himself and of Mary; he knew they could bear what they had to bear, that they would always pull through somehow. But he was not so sure about the young ones, and he felt troubled because Rudolph and Polly were having such a hard start.

Sitting beside his flowering window while the panes rattled and the wind blew in under the door, Rosicky gave himself to reflection as he had not done since those Sundays in the loft of the furniture factory in New York, long ago. Then he was trying to find what he wanted in life for himself; now he was trying to find what he wanted for his boys, and why it was he so

hungered to feel sure they would be here, working this very land, after he was gone.

They would have to work hard on the farm, and probably they would never do much more than make a living. But if he could think of them as staying here on the land, he wouldn't have to fear any great unkindness for them. Hardships, certainly; it was a hardship to have the wheat freeze in the ground when seed was so high; and to have to sell your stock because you had no feed. But there would be other years when everything came along right, and you caught up. And what you had was your own. You didn't have to choose between bosses and strikers, and go wrong either way. You didn't have to do with dishonest and cruel people. They were the only things in his experience he had found terrifying and horrible; the look in the eyes of a dishonest and crafty man, of a scheming and rapacious woman.

In the country, if you had a mean neighbor, you could keep off his land and make him keep off yours. But in the city, all the foulness and misery and brutality of your neighbors was part of your life. The worst things he had come upon in his journey through the world were human—depraved and poisonous specimens of man. To this day he could recall certain terrible faces in the London streets. There were mean people everywhere, to be sure, even in their own country town here. But they weren't tempered, hardened, sharpened, like the treacherous people in cities who live by grinding or cheating or poisoning their fellow men. He had helped to bury two of his fellow workmen in the tailoring trade, and he was distrustful of the organized industries that see one out of the world in big cities. Here, if you were sick, you had Doctor Ed to look after you; and if you died, fat Mr. Haycock, the kindest man in the world, buried you.

It seemed to Rosicky that for good, honest boys like his, the worst they could do on the farm was better than the best they would be likely to do in the city. If he'd had a mean boy, now, one who was crooked and sharp and tried to put anything over on his brothers, then town would be the place for him. But he had no such boy. As for Rudolph, the discontented one, he would give the shirt off his back to anyone who touched his heart. What Rosicky really hoped for his boys was that they could

get through the world without ever knowing much about the cruelty of human beings. "Their mother and me ain't prepared them for that," he sometimes said to himself.

These thoughts brought him back to a grateful consideration of his own case. What an escape he had had, to be sure! He, too, in his time, had had to take money for repair work from the hand of a hungry child who let it go so wistfully; because it was money due his boss. And now, in all these years, he had never had to take a cent from anyone in bitter need—never had to look at the face of a woman become like a wolf's from struggle and famine. When he thought of these things, Rosicky would put on his cap and jacket and slip down to the barn and give his work horses a little extra oats, letting them eat it out of his hand in their slobbery fashion. It was his way of expressing what he felt, and made him chuckle with pleasure.

The spring came warm, with blue skies—but dry, dry as a bone. The boys began plowing up the wheat fields to plant them over in corn. Rosicky would stand at the fence corner and watch them, and the earth was so dry it blew up in clouds of brown dust that hid the horses and the sulky plow and the driver. It was a bad outlook.

The big alfalfa field that lay between the home place and Rudolph's came up green, but Rosicky was worried because during that open windy winter a great many Russian thistle plants had blown in there and lodged. He kept asking the boys to rake them out; he was afraid their seed would root and "take the alfalfa." Rudolph said that was nonsense. The boys were working so hard planting corn, their father felt he couldn't insist about the thistles, but he set great store by that big alfalfa field. It was a feed you could depend on—and there was some deeper reason, vague, but strong. The peculiar green of that clover woke early memories in old Rosicky, went back to something in his childhood in the old world. When he was a little boy, he had played in fields of that strong blue-green color.

One morning, when Rudolph had gone to town in the car, leaving a work team idle in his barn, Rosicky went over to his son's place, put the horses to the buggy rake, and set about quietly raking up those thistles. He behaved

with guilty caution, and rather enjoyed stealing a march on Doctor Ed, who was just then taking his first vacation in seven years of practice and was attending a clinic in Chicago. Rosicky got the thistles raked up, but did not stop to burn them. That would take some time, and his breath was pretty short, so he thought he had better get the horses back to the barn.

He got them into the barn and to their stalls, but the pain had come on so sharp in his chest that he didn't try to take the harness off. He started for the house, bending lower with every step. The cramp in his chest was shutting him up like a jackknife. When he reached the windmill, he swayed and caught at the ladder. He saw Polly coming down the hill, running with the swiftness of a slim greyhound. In a flash she had her shoulder under his armpit.

"Lean on me, Father, hard! Don't be afraid. We can get to the house all right."

Somehow they did, though Rosicky became blind with pain; he could keep on his legs, but he couldn't steer his course. The next thing he was conscious of was lying on Polly's bed, and Polly bending over him wringing out bath towels in hot water and putting them on his chest. She stopped only to throw coal into the stove, and she kept the teakettle and the black pot going. She put these hot applications on him for nearly an hour, she told him afterward, and all that time he was drawn up stiff and blue, with the sweat pouring off him.

As the pain gradually loosed its grip, the stiffness went out of his jaws, the black circles round his eyes disappeared, and a little of his natural color came back. When his daughter-in-law buttoned his shirt over his chest at last, he sighed.

"Da's fine, de way I feel now, Polly. It was a awful bad spell, an' I was so sorry it all come on you like it did."

Polly was flushed and excited. "Is the pain really gone? Can I leave you long enough to telephone over to your place?"

Rosicky's eyelids fluttered. "Don't telephone, Polly. It ain't no use to scare my wife. It's nice and quiet here, an' if I ain't too much trouble to you, just let me lay still till I feel like myself. I ain't got no pain now. It's nice here."

Polly bent over him and wiped the moisture from his face. "Oh, I'm so glad it's over!" she

broke out impulsively. "It just broke my heart to see you suffer so, Father."

Rosicky motioned her to sit down on the chair where the teakettle had been, and looked up at her with that lively affectionate gleam in his eyes. "You was awful good to me, I won't never forgit dat. I hate it to be sick on you like dis. Down at de barn I say to myself, dat young girl ain't had much experience in sickness, I don't want to scare her, an' maybe she's got a baby comin' or somet'ing."

Polly took his hand. He was looking at her so intently and affectionately and confidingly; his eyes seemed to caress her face, to regard it with pleasure. She frowned with her funny streaks of eyebrows, and then smiled back at him.

"I guess maybe there is something of that kind going to happen. But I haven't told anyone yet, not my mother or Rudolph. You'll be the first to know."

His hand pressed hers. She noticed that it was warm again. The twinkle in his yellow-brown eyes seemed to come nearer.

"I like mighty well to see dat little child, Polly," was all he said. Then he closed his eyes and lay half-smiling. But Polly sat still, thinking hard. She had a sudden feeling that nobody in the world, not her mother, not Rudolph, or anyone, really loved her as much as old Rosicky did. It perplexed her. She sat frowning and trying to puzzle it out. It was as if Rosicky had a special gift for loving people, something that was like an ear for music or an eye for color. It was quiet, unobtrusive; it was merely there. You saw it in his eyes—perhaps that was why they were merry. You felt it in his hands, too. After he dropped off to sleep, she sat holding his warm, broad, flexible brown hand. She had never seen another in the least like it. She wondered if it wasn't a kind of gypsy hand, it was so alive and quick and light in its communications—very strange in a farmer. Nearly all the farmers she knew had huge lumps of fists, like mauls, or they were knotty and bony and uncomfortable-looking, with stiff fingers. But Rosicky's was like quicksilver, flexible, muscular, about the color of a pale cigar, with deep, deep creases across the palm. It wasn't nervous, it wasn't a stupid lump; it was a warm brown human hand, with some cleverness in it, a great deal of generosity, and something else which Polly could only call "gypsy-like"—something

nimble and lively and sure, in the way that animals are.

Polly remembered that hour long afterward; it had been like an awakening to her. It seemed to her that she had never learned so much about life from anything as from old Rosicky's hand. It brought her to herself; it communicated some direct and untranslatable message.

When she heard Rudolph coming in the car, she ran out to meet him.

"Oh, Rudy, your father's been awful sick! He raked up those thistles he's been worrying about, and afterward he could hardly get to the house. He suffered so I was afraid he was going to die."

Rudolph jumped to the ground. "Where is he now?"

"On the bed. He's asleep. I was terribly scared, because, you know, I'm so fond of your father." She slipped her arm through his and they went into the house. That afternoon they took Rosicky home and put him to bed, though he protested that he was quite well again.

The next morning he got up and dressed and sat down to breakfast with his family. He told Mary that his coffee tasted better than usual to him, and he warned the boys not to bear any tales to Doctor Ed when he got home. After breakfast he sat down by his window to do some patching and asked Mary to thread several needles for him before she went to feed her chickens—her eyes were better than his, and her hands steadier. He lit his pipe and took up John's overalls. Mary had been watching him anxiously all morning, and as she went out of the door with her bucket of scraps, she saw that he was smiling. He was thinking, indeed, about Polly, and how he might never have known what a tender heart she had if he hadn't got sick over there. Girls nowadays didn't wear their heart on their sleeve. But now he knew Polly would make a fine woman after the foolishness wore off. Either a woman had that sweetness at her heart or she hadn't. You couldn't always tell by the look of them; but if they had that, everything came out right in the end.

After he had taken a few stitches, the cramp began in his chest, like yesterday. He put his pipe cautiously down on the window sill and bent over to ease the pull. No use—he had better try to get to his bed if he could. He rose

and groped his way across the familiar floor, which was rising and falling like the deck of a ship. At the door he fell. When Mary came in, she found him lying there, and the moment she touched him she knew that he was gone.

Doctor Ed was away when Rosicky died, and for the first few weeks after he got home he was hard driven. Every day he said to himself that he must get out to see that family that had lost their father. One soft, warm moonlight night in early summer he started for the farm. His mind was on other things, and not until his road ran by the graveyard did he realize that Rosicky wasn't over there on the hill where the red lamplight shone, but here, in the moonlight. He stopped his car, shut off the engine, and sat there for a while.

A sudden hush had fallen on his soul. Everything here seemed strangely moving and significant, though signifying what, he did not know. Close by the wire fence stood Rosicky's mowing machine, where one of the boys had been cutting hay that afternoon; his own work horses had been going up and down there. The new-cut hay perfumed all the night air. The moon-

light silvered the long, billowy grass that grew over the graves and hid the fence; the few little evergreens stood out black in it, like shadows in a pool. The sky was very blue and soft, the stars rather faint because the moon was full.

For the first time it struck Doctor Ed that this was really a beautiful graveyard. He thought of city cemeteries; acres of shrubbery and heavy stone, so arranged and lonely and unlike anything in the living world. Cities of the dead, indeed; cities of the forgotten, of the "put away." But this was open and free, this little square of long grass which the wind forever stirred. Nothing but the sky overhead, and the many-colored fields running on until they met that sky. The horses worked here in summer; the neighbors passed on their way to town; and over yonder, in the cornfield, Rosicky's own cattle would be eating fodder as winter came on. Nothing could be more undearthlike than this place; nothing could be more right for a man who had helped to do the work of great cities and had always longed for the open country and had got to it at last. Rosicky's life seemed to him complete and beautiful.

STATE CENTRAL LIBRARY

WESTERN BRANCH

CLINTON

FURTHER READINGS IN NARRATION

1. THE NOVEL

The following books will prove helpful in a study of the novel:

Cross, Wilbur L., *The Development of the English Novel*, 1899.
Saintsbury, George, *The English Novel*, 1913.
Forster, E. M., *Aspects of the Novel*, 1927.
Grabo, Carl H., *Technique of the Novel*, 1928.
Beach, Joseph Warren, *The Twentieth Century Novel*, 1932; *American Fiction*, 1941.
Quinn, Arthur H., *American Fiction*, 1936.
Daiches, David, *The Novel and the Modern World*, 1939.
Van Doren, Carl, *The American Novel, 1789-1939*, 1940.
Wagenknecht, Edward, *Cavalcade of the English Novel*, 1943.

The list below will serve as an introductory guide to some of the more important British and American novelists from early times to the present day. Included are a number of long short stories.

EARLY PROSE FICTION

Lyly, John (1554?-1606), *Euphues, or the Anatomy of Wit*, 1579.
Sidney, Sir Philip (1554-1586), *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, 1590.
Nashe, Thomas (1567-1601), *The Unfortunate Traveller, or the Life of Jack Wilton*, 1594.
Bunyan, John (1628-1688), *The Pilgrim's Progress*, 1678.
Behn, Mrs. Aphra (1640-1689), *Oroonoko, or the Royal Slave*, 1688.

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Defoe, Daniel (1659?-1731), *Robinson Crusoe*,

1719; *Captain Singleton*, 1720; *Moll Flanders*, 1722.

Swift, Jonathan (1667-1745), *Gulliver's Travels*, 1726.

Richardson, Samuel (1689-1761), *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*, 1740; *Clarissa*, 1747, 1748.

Fielding, Henry (1707-1754), *Joseph Andrews*, 1742; *Tom Jones*, 1749.

Smollett, Tobias George (1721-1771), *Roderick Random*, 1748; *Humphry Clinker*, 1771.

Sterne, Laurence (1713-1768), *Tristram Shandy*, 1759-1767; *A Sentimental Journey*, 1768.

Johnson, Samuel (1709-1784), *Rasselas*, 1759.

Walpole, Horace (1717-1797), *The Castle of Otranto*, 1764.

Goldsmith, Oliver (1728-1774), *The Vicar of Wakefield*, 1766.

Burney, Fanny (1752-1840), *Evelina*, 1778.

Radcliffe, Mrs. Ann (1764-1823), *The Romance of the Forest*, 1791; *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 1794.

Godwin, William (1756-1836), *Caleb Williams*, 1794.

Lewis, Matthew Gregory (1775-1818), *The Monk*, 1795.

NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES

Edgeworth, Maria (1767-1849), *Castle Rackrent*, 1800.

Austen, Jane (1775-1817), *Sense and Sensibility*, 1811; *Pride and Prejudice*, 1813; *Persuasion*, 1818.

Scott, Sir Walter (1771-1832), *Guy Mannering*, 1815; *Old Mortality*, 1816; *Ivanhoe*, 1819; *Quentin Durward*, 1823.

Shelley, Mrs. Mary W. (1797-1851), *Frankenstein*, 1818.

FURTHER READINGS IN NARRATION

- Cooper, James Fenimore (1789–1851), *The Spy*, 1821; *The Last of the Mohicans*, 1826.
- Bulwer-Lytton, Edward, Lord Lytton (1803–1873), *Paul Clifford*, 1830, *The Last Days of Pompeii*, 1834; *The Haunted and the Haunters*, 1859.
- Marryat, Captain Frederick (1792–1848), *Peter Simple*, 1834.
- Disraeli, Benjamin, Earl of Beaconsfield (1804–1881), *Coningsby*, 1844; *Sybil*, 1845.
- Dickens, Charles (1812–1870), *The Pickwick Papers*, 1837; *David Copperfield*, 1850, *A Tale of Two Cities*, 1859; *Great Expectations*, 1861.
- Melville, Herman (1819–1891), *Typee*, 1846, *Moby Dick*, 1851.
- Brontë, Charlotte (1816–1855), *Jane Eyre*, 1847, *Villette*, 1853.
- Brontë, Emily (1818–1848), *Wuthering Heights*, 1847.
- Thackeray, William Makepeace (1811–1863), *Vanity Fair*, 1848; *Pendennis*, 1850, *Henry Esmond*, 1852.
- Gaskell, Mrs. Elizabeth (1810–1865), *Mary Barton*, 1848; *Cranford*, 1853; *Cousin Phillis*, 1865.
- Hawthorne, Nathaniel (1804–1864), *The Scarlet Letter*, 1850; *The House of the Seven Gables*, 1851; *The Marble Faun*, 1860.
- Borrow, George (1803–1881), *Lancashire*, 1851.
- Kingsley, Charles (1819–1875), *Hypatia*, 1853.
- Trollope, Anthony (1815–1882), *The Warden*, 1855; *Barchester Towers*, 1857.
- “Eliot, George” (Mary Ann Cross, née Evans, 1819–1880), *Adam Bede*, 1859, *Silas Marner*, 1861; *Middlemarch*, 1871, 1872.
- Meredith, George (1828–1909), *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, 1859; *The Egoist*, 1870, *Diana of the Crossways*, 1885.
- Collins, Wilkie (1824–1889), *The Woman in White*, 1860; *The Moonstone*, 1868.
- Reade, Charles (1814–1884), *The Cloister and the Hearth*, 1861.
- Butler, Samuel (1835–1902), *Erewhon*, 1872; *The Way of All Flesh*, 1903.
- Hardy, Thomas (1840–1928), *Far from the Madding Crowd*, 1874; *The Return of the Native*, 1878; *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, 1886; *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, 1891; *Jude the Obscure*, 1895.
- Twain, Mark (1835–1910), *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, 1876, *Huckleberry Finn*, 1884.
- James, Henry (1843–1916), *The American*, 1877; *Daisy Miller*, 1878; *The Ambassadors*, 1903.
- Stevenson, Robert Louis (1850–1894), *Treasure Island*, 1883; *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, 1886; *Kidnapped*, 1886.
- Cassington, George (1857–1903), *The Unclassed*, 1884; *The Nether World*, 1889; *New Grub Street*, 1891.
- Howells, William D. (1837–1920), *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, 1885.
- Hudson, William Henry (1841–1922), *A Crystal Age*, 1887; *Green Mansions*, 1904.
- Ward, Mrs. Humphry (1851–1920), *Robert Elsmere*, 1888.
- Wilde, Oscar (1856–1900), *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 1891.
- Kipling, Rudyard (1865–1936), *The Jungle Book*, 1894, *Kim*, 1901.
- Moore, George (1852–1933), *Esther Waters*, 1894; *Memoirs of My Dead Life*, 1906; *Heloise and Abelard*, 1921, *Celibate Lives*, 1927.
- Wells, Herbert George (1866–), *The Time Machine*, 1895, *Tono-Bungay*, 1909, *Mr. Britling Sees It Through*, 1916.
- Crane, Stephen (1871–1900), *The Red Badge of Courage*, 1895, *The Open Boat*, 1898.
- Conrad, Joseph (1857–1924), *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, 1897, *Lord Jim*, 1900; *Nostromo*, 1904, *The Arrow of Gold*, 1919.
- Norris, Frank (1870–1902), *The Octopus*, 1901; *The Pit*, 1903.
- London, Jack (1876–1916), *The Sea Wolf*, 1904.
- Galsworthy, John (1867–1933), *The Man of Property*, 1906, *Fraternity*, 1909; *In Chancery*, 1920; *To Let*, 1921.
- Sinclair, Upton (1878–), *The Jungle*, 1906.
- Bennett, Arnold (1867–1931), *The Old Wives' Tale*, 1908; *Clayhanger*, 1910; *Riceman Steps*, 1923.
- Forster, Edward Morgan (1879–), *A Room with a View*, 1908; *Howard's End*, 1910; *A Passage to India*, 1924.
- Beerbohm, Max (1872–), *Zuleika Dobson*, 1911.
- Dreiser, Theodore (1871–1945), *Jennie Gerhardt*, 1911; *An American Tragedy*, 1925.
- Wharton, Edith (1862–1937), *Ethan Frome*, 1911.
- Lawrence, David Herbert (1885–1930), *Sons and Lovers*, 1913, *The Plumed Serpent*, 1926; *The Man Who Died*, 1931.
- Maugham, William Somerset (1874–), *Of Human Bondage*, 1915.
- Joyce, James (1882–1941), *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, 1916; *Ulysses*, 1922.
- Douglas, Norman (1868–), *South Wind*, 1917.
- Swinnerton, Frank (1884–), *Nocturne*, 1917.
- Cather, Willa (1875–1947), *My Antonia*, 1918; *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, 1927.
- Lewis, Sinclair (1885–), *Main Street*, 1920; *Babbitt*, 1922; *Arrowsmith*, 1925.
- Macaulay, Rose (1889?–), *Potterism*, 1920; *Told by an Idiot*, 1923.

FURTHER READINGS IN NARRATION

- De la Mare, Walter (1873–), *Memots of a Midget*, 1921.
- Woolf, Mrs. Virginia (1882–1941), *Jacob's Room*, 1922; *Mrs. Dalloway*, 1925; *To the Lighthouse*, 1927; *The Waves*, 1931.
- Huxley, Aldous (1894–), *Antic Hay*, 1923; *Point Counter Point*, 1928; *Brave New World*, 1932; *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan*, 1939.
- Glasgow, Ellen (1874–1945), *Barren Ground*, 1925.
- Fitzgerald, F. Scott (1896–1940), *The Great Gatsby*, 1925.
- Hemingway, Ernest (1898–), *The Sun Also Rises*, 1926; *A Farewell to Arms*, 1929; *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, 1940.
- Wilder, Thornton (1897–), *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, 1927; *The Ides of March*, 1948.
- Rølvaag, O. E. (1876–1931), *Giants in the Earth*, 1927.
- Hughes, Richard (1900–), *The Innocent Voyage*, 1929.
- Faulkner, William (1897–), *The Sound and the Fury*, 1929.
- Wolfe, Thomas (1900–1938), *Look Homeward, Angel*, 1929.
- Dos Passos, John (1896–), *U. S. A. (The 42nd Parallel)*, 1930; *Nineteen-Nineteen*, 1931; *The Big Money*, 1936).
- Buck, Pearl (1892–), *The Good Earth*, 1931.
- Waugh, Evelyn (1903–), *A Handful of Dust*, 1934.
- Steinbeck, John (1902–), *The Grapes of Wrath*, 1939.
- Porter, Katherine Anne (1894–), *Pale Horse, Pale Rider*, 1939.
- Warren, Robert Penn (1905–), *All the King's Men*, 1947.

2. THE SHORT STORY

Only by wide and discriminating reading of short stories can one attain a full understanding of the type. Stories by writers represented in this volume are available in separate editions, frequently inexpensive ones. Among British writers of the short story the following deserve mention in addition to those represented: Sir James M. Barrie, Thomas Burke, G. K. Chesterton, H. G. Wells, A. E. Coppard, Lord Dunsany, John Galsworthy, James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, James Stephens, Walter de la Mare, Somerset Maugham, "Saki" (H. H. Munro), Elizabeth Bibesco, T. O. Beachcroft, Stacy Aumonier, Elizabeth Bowen, W. W. Jacobs, P. G. Wodehouse, Sheila Kaye-Smith, Liam O'Flaherty, and Aldous Huxley.

Leading American short story writers of the past and present whose short fiction is not represented in this volume include Bret Harte, Herman Melville, Stephen Crane, Mark Twain, Jack London,

O. Henry (William Sydney Porter), George W. Cable, Ambrose Bierce, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Joseph Hergesheimer, Irvin S. Cobb, Thomas Beer, Conrad Aiken, Ring Lardner, Dorothy Parker, Sally Benson, Theodore Dreiser, Kay Boyle, William Saroyan, Walter D. Edmonds, William March, Thomas Wolfe, Richard Wright, Katherine Anne Porter, Robert Penn Warren, Irwin Shaw, Eudora Welty, Mark Schorer, and Tess Slesinger.

The following books will also supply further examples of the type, or expert criticism, or both:

- Pattee, F. L., *The Development of the American Short Story*, 1923.
- Newman, Frances, *The Short Story's Mutations*, 1925.
- Canby, H. S., and Bailey, Robeson, *The Book of the Short Story*, 1948.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

This table is a convenient means of locating an author in chronological relation to other writers, both British and American. (Anonymous selections are also listed chronologically.) In this list, the author's name comes first and is followed by the date of his birth. Next is given the type (or types) by which the writer is represented in this anthology. The Roman numeral I before a page number refers to Volume I, the numeral II to Volume II.

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Richard Steele	1672-1729	Essay	II, 38
Alexander Pope	1688-1744	Narrative, Lyric Poetry	I, 101; I, 242
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Samuel Johnson	1709-1784	Essay	II, 45
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James Boswell	1740-1795	Biography	II, 295
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Washington Irving	1783-1859	Essay	II, 75
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Robert Browning	1812-1889	Narrative, Lyric Poetry	I, 158; I, 304
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